

Moving Beyond Zero Tolerance

A Reality-Based Approach to
Substance Use among Young
People

Assumptions of BZT

- Young people feel the right to make lifestyle choices including use of alcohol and, for many, illicit drugs.
- Substance use by a young person is usually not problematic, but does imply risk that should be recognized and confronted.

Principles

- *All* young people need to examine issues relating to use of alcohol and illicit drugs.
- Even abstainers encounter peers or adults who abuse alcohol and, if not already, still others whose relationship to illicit drugs is problematic.

Necessary Conditions for Learning

- Mutually respectful relations between youth and adult leader
- Trusting the adult's knowledge and intentions
- Mixed-gender groups elicit experiences and issues that would not otherwise surface. but also reveal similarities that transcend gender and class.

Three Components of BZT

- Interactive, honest drug education
- Assistance for young people who use substances problematically
- In most cases restorative experiences as consequences rather than deterrent punishments

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Beyond Zero Tolerance Model

CURRENT	PROPOSED
Pre or early secondary	Secondary, age 14 & over
Didactic, adult centered	Interactive, non-judgmental
Curriculum/information focused	Process focused, sharing experience
Structured/sequential	Flexible, seeks "teachable moments"
Indoctrinates, abstinence only goal	Educates, includes risk reduction for users
Fails to identify/assist problematic users	Identifies/assists problematic users

Education: The UpFront Approach

- For secondary school students
- Five weekly sessions with regular classroom groups in a neutral location
- Session focus on a broad topic
- Discussion rather than lecture
- Offers groups for students wanting to evaluate their own substance use
- Individual counseling for those who need it

Student Assistance

- A safe, non-judgmental group educational process helps identify and assist students who drink or use problematically.
- The facilitator is available for a private meeting on request or may approach a student directly if there is reason for concern.

BZT and Discipline

- Zero tolerance promotes deterrent punishment.
- Purpose to deter peers rather than reform the offender
- Instead of being helped, affected students are further disadvantaged

Restorative Justice in Adult Crime

- Focuses on
 - (a) Needs of the victim(s) of a crime
 - (b) Perpetrator realizing the harm he/she has caused to the victim
 - (c) Perpetrator “makes things right” (amends) in mutually agreed action
- Does not replace sanctions required by law or institutional regulations

Restorative Practice in Schools

Three components:

- “Circles”: Teacher-led group discussions
- Restorative interviews conducted by school counselors or administrators
- Conferencing: analog of restorative justice procedures for adults

Restorative Questions I: Person Responsible for the Action

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Restorative Questions II: Person(s) Affected by the Action

- What did you think when you realized what happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Contacts

BZT: www.beyondzerotolerance.org

UpFront Program: www.upfront.org

Restorative Practices:

www.restorativepractices.org

www.safersanerschools.org

www.realjustice.org

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