



Discussion Guide for

GLASS GUNS

Objectives

- To convey the deadly consequences of heroin use.
- To portray in a realistic and compelling storyline how adolescents can get into situations in which they will share needles, even knowing this blood transfer can lead to AIDS.
- To promote self-efficacy by having other peers, including the protagonist's boyfriend, be clear about their own pro-health choices.
- To dramatize some of the social consequences of substance abuse.
- To present clearly the truth that some at-risk behaviors, such as sharing needles, can lead to irreversible consequences.

Synopsis

Sharing needles is one of the most common ways young people contract the HIV virus. *Glass Guns* dramatizes high school students in a believable and compelling life situation in which a choice is made to use a "dirty" needle to inject heroin. Crystal, an attractive girl with lots of friends, wants a job at Wolf's Pizza, a local restaurant which pays well. She needs money to support a new "hobby," which turns out to be heroin. She tries to entice her boyfriend, Peter to "fly with her" by shooting up. Peter, who thinks he might be able to talk her out of it, is horrified to find himself watching Crystal about to shoot up with a used needle. He understands the dangers of infection, but Crystal is only focused on her magic white powder. When Peter refuses to join her, Crystal tells him to get lost. She has gradually shut herself off from her friends, and now looks only to heroin for "help."

Questions To Ask Before Viewing

1. What are some of the most common ways adolescents contract the HIV virus?
2. What is the connection between HIV and AIDS?
3. What is heroin, and how is it used?
4. How would you react if a good friend reveals that he or she is using heroin?
5. What are some sources of help for someone addicted to a substance like heroin?
6. Could a normal, intelligent, attractive peer ever use heroin? Explain.
7. What are 5 ways you could die from heroin use?
8. How can you get AIDS from shared needles?

'Time Out' Exploring Possibilities

Bird: The ball's in your court. What're you gonna do?

1. What are some options Peter has at this point?
2. What are some positive and negative consequences of each option?
3. Given what you know about Peter and his situation, what do you think he will do? Why?

Questions To Ask After Viewing

1. What are some reasons Peter refuses to take heroin with Crystal? (Peter may love Crystal, but he knows that heroin is a very dangerous drug, and that Crystal is using a shared needle which, according to Peter, is suicidal.)
2. Does Crystal know she is doing something very dangerous by using a shared needle? (Yes, but basically she doesn't care. She's in too much of a hurry to shoot up.)
3. Crystal seems to be losing most of her friends in the video. Who is her new "friendship that she is not losing? (At this stage in her addiction, Crystal looks to her "friend", the white powder, for her needs. She rejects and alienates others because she is so dependent on heroin.)
4. Heroin is an expensive habit. Since the Pizza Restaurant job did not work out, what are some ways she might get heroin in the future? (She can be a "mule", meaning carry heroin from place to place for dealers. She can deal drugs herself. She can turn to prostitution as a trade-off for drugs. Note: all these activities are, of course, illegal and can lead to serious time in prison.)



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5. What could Peter have done, if anything, to help Crystal? (This is a difficult question. It's very hard to talk someone out of an addiction. However, he could seek help from responsible adults such as parents, teachers, counselors, agencies, etc. In seeking help for a peer in trouble, you do run the risk of having that person get angry with you. On the other hand, that may be better than going to your friend's funeral.)

6. Will Crystal and Sheila ever be friends again? Explain. (It all depends on what happens with Crystal in the future. However, it is highly unlikely that Sheila would get "in the life" with Crystal. Sheila seems like someone who will seek outside help for Crystal.)

7. Do you agree with the blonde waitress, Slo Mo, when she refuses to hire Crystal after she scores heroin? Explain. (Slo Mo is concerned with the pizza business having a reduced staff, and with the business having a good reputation. Someone who scores and uses serious drugs like heroin has very little chance of fitting into a work force.)

8. What did you feel at the end of the video when you saw Crystal reject Peter and go off into her own trip? (Subjective, but worth talking about since the ending elicits strong emotions.)

9. What do you think will happen to Crystal in the future? (Subjective, Some students will decide she breaks the habit at some point, others will decide she goes down hill.)

10. What are some reasons you think Crystal started taking heroin in the first place? (Again, subjective, but worth exploring. It may have been peer pressure, boredom, emptiness, lack of being able to keep friends, poor school performance, etc. It is worth noting that many of her personality traits may have developed after she started taking heroin. Sheila talks about how Crystal has changed, but when they meet at the pizza restaurant they hug, demonstrating that they once were good friends.)

Additional inquiry

- What are some reasons it is so hard to convince others not to do risky things, like take drugs?
- What might be another, more effective way Peter could have dealt with Crystal in the final scene?
- If drugs like heroin are illegal, why are they so available? If all drugs were made legal, would drug use go up or down? Explain.
- An addict will do anything to get the next dose of his/her drug. Do you agree? Explain.

Programs Details

Length:

13 minutes

Subject Areas:

Health & Guidance

Audience Levels:

Junior-Senior High

Order Number:

1-9107SG

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