

Veterans Against Drugs

Anti-Violence



Veterans Against Drugs
A Community Service Project



Presented by

**Veterans Support Foundation, Vietnam Veterans of America,
various other Veterans groups and concerned citizens.**

This lesson plan of the Veteran Against Drugs program is

dedicated to

Louis Richard Rocco, CMH

(Congressional Medal Of Honor Recipient)

A true friend to Vietnam Veterans of America and all Veterans, an advocate of his heritage and mentor and protector of children everywhere.

What is Veterans Support Foundation ?

Veterans Support Foundation, formerly Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund is a 501 (c) (3) Nonprofit humanitarian and educational organization founded to improve the quality of life for deserving veterans and their families. The Foundation's office is located in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The main objectives of the Foundation are to:

- ★ To help fund non profit organizations in support of veteran related projects throughout the United States;
- ★ To assist disabled veterans and their qualifying dependents/family members;
- ★ To assist and provide transitional and permanent housing for homeless and at risk veterans;
- ★ To enrich the lives of all veterans and their families.

Established in 1991, the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund, now Veterans Support Foundation was founded by and for veterans. The Foundation is committed to serving today's needy veterans and their families by awarding grants to organizations that address essential housing, education and medical needs.

Veterans Against Drugs Core Values

Respect & Camaraderie: We support each other and feel we're all members of one family.

Loyalty & Compassion: We care about comrades and others in need.

Honesty & Integrity: We tell the truth and take responsibility.

Meaningful Achievement: We want to make a difference, focusing on issues that stand as critical barriers to a fulfilling life of all Americans.

Advocacy: As veterans, we are committed to these core values for fairness in the treatment of children. As caring mentors we can help them avoid the pitfalls of violence and drugs.

How To Use This Manual

The goal of this program is to establish a mentoring relationship between a Veteran and a group of students. The program should consist of three to five scheduled visits throughout the school year. The Veteran should make direct contact with the school principal and any other administrator necessary. Once this communication takes place and participating classrooms are identified, the Veteran and teacher or school representative should meet to schedule the number and dates of the visits.

There will be much latitude within this guide since the location, age, number of students and particular needs of a community must be taken into consideration when initialing your individual lesson plan. It may also be necessary to meet students in an after-school or extra-curricular activity. As always, the more Veterans and Associate Members you have working together, the more children you can accommodate.

REMEMBER TO RELAX, ENLIST THE TEACHER'S SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED, HAVE SOME FUN, JUST TALK TO THE STUDENTS AND GUIDE THEM THROUGH EACH LESSON.

The Object of VSF's Veterans Against Drugs Program

VSF's Veterans Against Drugs Program responds to the needs of youth and families today by focusing on two main outcomes:

1. Helping young people develop positive social behaviors, such as self-discipline, responsibility, good judgment and the ability to get along with others.
2. Helping young people develop positive commitments to their families, schools, peers and communities, including a commitment to leading a healthy, drug & violence free lives.

Lesson One

Violence

Violence includes words or actions used to purposely harm someone.

- Each Veteran and Associate gives a brief biography of themselves starting from their military service to present day.
- Depending on group size, children may introduce themselves.
- Elicit from children definition of violence and types of violence, i.e. at home, in the community (gangs or street crime), at school (gangs or bullies), in entertainment (cartoons, movies, videos, music) and in the news. Discuss examples of each.
- Use Veteran's personal experience in and out of the military to explain how you coped with violence. Much of your time may be spent explaining combat. (Keep in mind age of student)
- Lead small group discussions of ways of diffusing violence in their lives.
- Homework - Write journal entry on violence they've witnessed or heard about and what they could do to avoid it.
- Optional - allow children one question each or a certain length of time (10 min) for Veterans to answer any questions (within reason) military or personal. This will strengthen the bond between the Veteran & student.

CLOSING

1. Take time for questions and answers.
2. Have students name something important they have learned today.
3. Say good-bye and let them know when your next visit will be.
4. Thank the teacher for their assistance.

REMEMBER, DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK THE TEACHER FOR ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDED AND TO ADJUST YOUR PRESENTATION TO THE AGE GROUP YOU ARE ADDRESSING.

Lesson Two

Bullying

Starts with teasing & name calling and escalates to intimidation and ridicule & possibly culminating in violence.

- Greet and re-introduce Veteran and Associate members.
- On board or chart paper draw outline of a bully. Fill in outline with characteristics of a bully.
- Veterans can share experiences with bullies that they have encountered and how they handled them.
- In platoons if possible, have students share their encounters with bullies and how they handled them.
- Come together to make a class list of possible ways to deal with bullies.

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**REMEMBER WE ARE TRYING TO TEACH THE STUDENTS TO
MAKE GOOD & HEALTHY CHOICES IN LIFE.**

Lesson Three

Conflict Resolution

Calm yourself, listen to what other party is saying, restate problem, find alternate solutions.

- Greet and re-introduce Veteran and Associate members. Introduce new members and have them give individual biographies.
- Share journal entry from homework if available.
- As a whole group discuss conflict resolution. Veterans explain how conflicts were resolved in military or their present occupation. Students explain how conflicts are resolved in classroom, school or family.
- Introduce 3-step method for handling conflict peacefully
 1. Identify true problem.
 2. Think of all possible solutions.
 3. Choose best option.
- If possible, divide group into platoons (groups of 5 or 6) with VAD member as leader.
- Role-play a conflict with mediator. Discuss all possible solutions and choose best one.

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Lesson Four

Tolerance

Recognizing and accepting differences in ourselves and in others.

- Elicit from group as a whole meaning and examples of tolerance and prejudice. Allow personal stories, but limit time.
- Have Veterans relate makeup of their platoon and any instances of prejudice and/or tolerance. Discuss outcomes of situations together and devise alternate coping mechanisms for a situation if needed.
- As time permits, break into small groups to define prejudices present in the students' school. Make list of coping strategies to address these concerns. Students can make a class list of strategies to be displayed in the classroom. (You may take several lists to display at your next Tolerance session.)

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Lesson Five

School Violence

Violence can break out in any school regardless of size or location

- Greet students. Introduce this lesson's objective. Remind students that this is the final lesson and they will be receiving a certificate of completion at the end.
- If possible, break into groups or platoons of 6-10 students and at least one veteran. (If not possible, do the best you can with a few larger groups or one whole group.)
- Within your group, discuss school violence both locally & nationally. Lead into early warning signs of violent behavior:
 1. Social withdrawal - few friends, avoids social contact.
 2. Being a victim of violence - physical, sexual or verbal.
 3. Problems at school - low interest in classes, chronic discipline problems.
 4. An interest in violence - writes or draws about violent themes, violent movies, videos and music, fascination with weapons.
 5. Uncontrolled anger.
 6. History of aggressive or violent behavior.
 7. Other signs - prejudice, alcohol or drugs or gang membership.
- Discuss steps students should take
 1. Learn to deal with conflict
 2. Tell an adult about your concerns
 3. Report illegal activities
 4. Have students add additional measures they can take.
- Students may be presented with certificates of completion.
- End session with question and answer period.

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STRATEGIC PLANNING

1. These lesson plans are a starting point. You can alter these to fit the students you will be working with.
2. Interaction between Veteran and student is best but when not feasible, a guest speaker is a good alternative. There are local townspeople as well as representatives from various service organizations that may be willing to help.
3. Interaction should always take place in a group situation, never one on one with a student.
4. If the venue is after school or an extra curricular event a different plan will be necessary and the plan should be altered to the occasion.
5. The Veteran Group may become a people resource for the school to draw from in other situations (i.e. Readers in a National Read Across America Day).
6. It is highly recommended that prior to introduction, you develop a list of local resources for students or situations that need further intervention. Contact your local and county level police and agencies, school guidance departments and houses of worship. This list should consist of agency names, contact persons, addresses and phone numbers.

School Expectations

For the Principal

- ★ Meet with and welcome the veterans prior to the start of the program and introduce him/her to the teacher.
- ★ Tour the school, making sure the veterans know where the restrooms are located, where they can make a phone call and where the classroom is located.
- ★ Discuss the rules specific to your school and other traditions that might affect the students or their program.
- ★ Inform the teacher of any scheduling problems or other information that will make the program more successful.

For the Teacher

- ★ Welcome and make the veteran feel part of the classroom community.
- ★ Schedule the Veterans Against Drugs Program into your regular lesson plans.
- ★ Have materials (charts, paper and pens) ready for the veteran so that the lesson can begin on time and be taught in a timely manner.
- ★ Provide classroom monitoring and take care of discipline while veteran is presenting the lesson.
- ★ Participate and interact with the class and/or the veteran during the lessons when appropriate.
- ★ Call the veteran if you will be having a substitute teacher during a scheduled visit.
- ★ DO NOT leave the veteran alone with your students; he/she is not a credentialed teacher.

VSF Expectations

For the Veteran

- ★ Contact the teacher in advance to coordinate your scheduled visits.
- ★ Remember, you are there to support the teacher and the curriculum, not to replace either.
- ★ Take interest in the students - they are excited to have you visit. Be a role model.
- ★ ENJOY YOURSELF.

This booklet was produced in collaboration with the Veterans Support Foundation for use in the Veterans Against Drugs project.

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