

DISMISSAL TIME

Discussion & Study Guide

INTRODUCTION

The short film Dismissal Time addresses profound issues about the impact of bullying, racism, and mental health within the environment of a private high school. This discussion guide will help you reflect on your own or within a group. The guide can be used in conjunction with your curriculum or as a stand-alone. It can be used in its entirety or in small sections.

USES

- Educational/Academic Settings
- Victim Groups
- Small Groups
- Youth Prison Populations

SOME GROUND RULES

Topics in the film can be controversial, and that's okay, but it is key to show respect to opinions that differ from our own. This is where true growth comes from – a willingness to truly “see” others, even if we don't agree.

GOALS

- To encourage reflection and dialogue
- To create a sense of empathy and compassion for those impacted by bullying and/or racism
- To lead individuals and groups to action plans in the school system
- To encourage speaking out when an injustice is witnessed
- To encourage seeking help when one feels depressed or suicidal

POSSIBLE JOURNALING PROMPTS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. How do you define victim, and where do you think that definition comes from?
2. What emotional responses might one expect from someone who has experienced victimization? Would you imagine those responses might be different according to the severity of the bullying? If so, how?
3. How can communities become involved when a bullying/racial incident is committed against a student?
4. We have all suffered various degrees of victimization in our lives. Write about a time in your life when you were the victim. Some questions you might consider:
 - How did you make sense of what happened to you?

- What ways did you find to heal or grow through that experience?
- How did the experience of victimization change you, your perspective on others, and influence your relationships

AFTER THE MOVIE

DISCUSSION

1. What major issues do you think the film raises?
2. What character did you most relate to in the film and for what reason?
3. Was it right for Chantelle to be held to account for her actions?
4. In your opinion, are there factors that may have influenced Chantelle's decision to frame TK for the kill list and not feel sympathy for him?
5. Did Vance do the right thing by pursuing the truth about TK being pranked and framed?
6. Would you have gone out of your way to exonerate TK?
7. Would you stand by or take action if you knew someone was being bullied because of their race, personality, and/or sexual orientation?
8. Why do you think the school was quick to believe the accusations against TK?
9. As a teacher or an administrator, would you pursue the truth if a student was accused of something serious or try to ignore it?
10. What could have been done to prevent TK from self-harming himself?

WRITING AND REFLECTION

1. Can you apply the film to your own life, and if so in what way(s)?
2. Has the film influenced your view of "victim" or of "bully?" In what way?
3. Did the film change your perspective on our school system?
4. In examining your own life, why does bullying happen, and who can you turn to for help?