

# TRIGGER STORIES

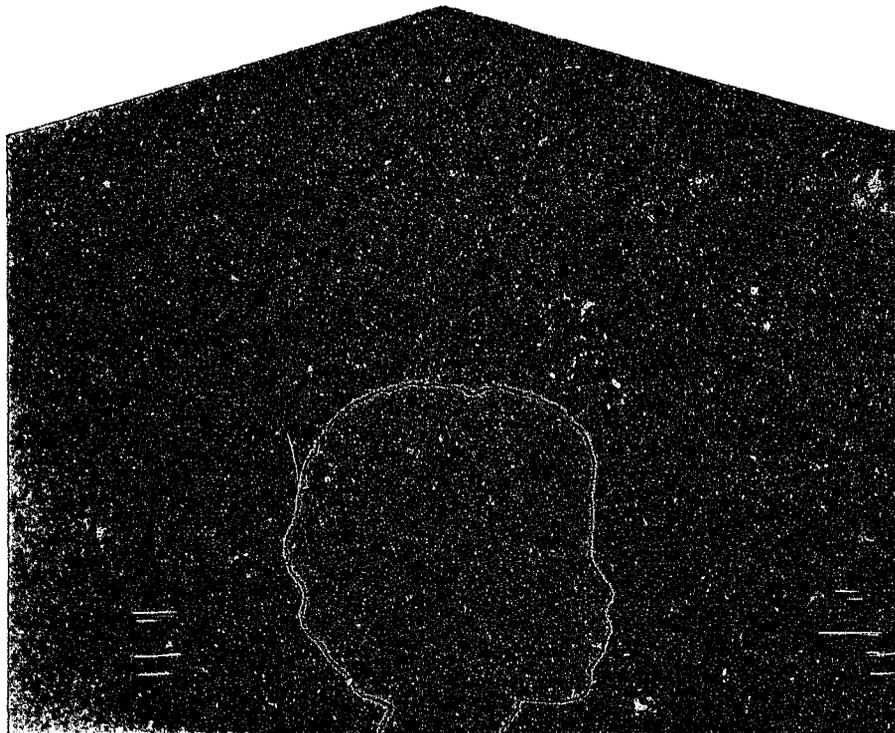


102405

INSTITUTIONAL  
CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION  
THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF POSITIVE STAFF NORMS

# TRIGGER STORIES

Preventing Institutional Child Abuse  
through the Development of  
Positive Norms for Staff



INTERSTATE CONSORTIUM ON RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE, INC.  
POST OFFICE BOX 1714  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08607  
(609) 396-6845

**U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Justice**

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this ~~copyrighted~~ material has been granted by

Public Domain/U.S. Department  
of Health and Human Services

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the ~~copyright~~ owner.

This publication was made possible by Grant No. 90CA897/01 from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, Children's Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Family, Office of Human Development Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.

The materials presented herein have been developed by the Interstate Consortium on Residential Child Care, Inc. The contents should not be construed as official policy of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect or any agency of the Federal Government.

## PREFACE

The Secure Care Consortium is a group of professionals involved in secure correctional care for juveniles in twelve Northeastern states, the District of Columbia, Ohio and Michigan. The Consortium includes Commissioner level staff from participating states and involves detention providers as well as representatives of long-term facilities. The Consortium project is funded by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect.

Secure care for juveniles has never been a high priority for any level of government. The slim resources available for treating delinquents have tended, in the past several years, to be channeled into community-based programming.

Dwindling resources and hardened public attitudes toward crime have resulted in an increasing number of juveniles in secure institutions for longer sentences. A new national focus on making secure care work is both necessary and timely.

In the past year the Consortium has pursued a number of approaches to encourage sharing of information on new programs and useful approaches in the secure care field. Several new materials addressing needs of secure care providers have been produced.

Institutional abuse has been and continues to be a major concern of the Consortium. Fundamentally, institutional abuse is a critical symptom of pervasive patterns of inadequate and inappropriate resident care in some correctional facilities.

In our opinion, serious patterns of abuse in some systems reflect the slender resources allocated to juvenile correctional institutions. The provision of effective security, good programming and high-quality resident care, the necessary combination for state-of-the-art secure care, requires a highly trained, highly motivated staff.

The Consortium identifies a strong need for creative new materials and approaches for training secure care staff. The *Trigger Stories* package is an effort to create a new way to familiarize direct care staff with the issues around institutional abuse and to encourage the development of positive resident care norms.

The Consortium's major product during the current year will be the soon-to-be-produced *Secure Care Catalogue*, a collection of promising practices and useful information for secure care providers. For further information on us or our products, write or call:

The Interstate Consortium on Residential Child Care, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1714  
Trenton, N.J. 08607  
609-396-6845

## THE CONSORTIUM

The Secure Care Consortium is a project funded by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. The Consortium is sponsored and staffed by the Interstate Consortium on Residential Child Care. The Secure Care Consortium members are:

Warren Albrecht, Director  
MacCormick Secure Center  
Brooktondale, NY

Alan L. Alcon, Program Services Coordinator  
Division for Youth  
Albany, NY

Vicki L. Agee, Director  
Closed Adolescent Treatment Center  
Denver, Colorado

Dave Armor  
Gloucester County Juvenile Unit  
Clarksboro, NJ

Frank Bishop, Commissioner  
Department of Corrections  
Richmond, VA

Ronald A. Boucher, Chief  
Social & Rehabilitation Services  
Waterbury, VT

Joseph Cardin, Superintendent  
RI Training School for Youth  
Cranston, RI

Donald E. Carey, Director  
Robert F. Kennedy Action Corps, Inc.  
Boston, MA

Jack Corrigan, Chief, Program, Policy & Planning  
NCCAN  
Washington, DC

Donald Cox, Chief  
Bureau of Juvenile Corrections  
Wilmington, DE

Artha Freebury, Director  
Good Neighbors, Inc.  
Portland, ME

Frank E. Gripp, Deputy Director  
Department of Corrections  
Division of Juvenile Services  
Trenton, NJ

Bob Harrington, Chief  
Diagnostic Reception Services  
Juvenile Services Administration  
Baltimore, MD

Les Horne, Coordinator  
Advocacy Unit  
Ministry of Community & Social Services  
Toronto, Ontario Canada

Thomas R. Jenkins, Director  
North Central Secure Treatment Unit  
Danville, PA

Edward J. Loughran,  
Deputy Commissioner for Operations  
Department of Youth Services  
Boston, MA

Thomas F. Lynch, Jr., Asst. Commissioner  
Department of Corrections  
Division of Juvenile Services  
Trenton, NJ

Louis A. Marciano, Director  
Secure Facilities Management  
Division for Youth  
Albany, NY

Michael J. Molloy,  
Director of Correctional Programs  
Department of Corrections  
Augusta, ME

Michael Morello, Asst. Director  
Department for Children & Families  
Cranston, RI

Edward Murphy, Commissioner  
Department of Youth Services  
Boston, MA

Manros A. Nickens  
D.C. Administration of Youth Services  
Institutional Monitoring & Evaluation  
Washington, D.C.

Dr. John M. Pierce, Executive Director  
PA Council of Voluntary Child Care Agencies  
Harrisburg, PA

Mary T. Previte, Administrator  
Camden County Youth Center  
Blackwood, NJ

Robert Riols, Deputy Director  
Department of Human Services  
Division of Youth Services  
Atlanta, GA

Kenneth R. Roulx, Assistant to Deputy Commissioner  
for Program Services  
State Department of Children & Youth Services  
Hartford, CT

David W. Roush, Director  
Calhoun County Juvenile Home  
Marshall, MI

George M. Pippin, Superintendent  
Stevenson House  
Bureau of Juvenile Corrections  
Milford, DE

John J. Sheridan, Superintendent  
NH Youth Development Center  
Manchester, NH

Robert Sobolevitch, Director  
Group Residential Services  
Office for Children, Youth & Families  
Harrisburg, Pa

Connie Springmann  
Director, Community Programs  
Federal Bureau of Prisons  
Washington, DC

Connie Steinman  
Bureau of Group Residential Services  
Office for Children, Youth & Families  
Harrisburg, PA

Jackie Tashman, Licensing Chairman  
Social & Rehabilitation Services  
Waterbury, VT

Perry Tchorni  
National Juvenile Detention Association  
Somerville, NJ

#### THE STAFF MEMBERS OF THE CONSORTIUM ARE:

Connie Mercer, Director  
Marc Mercer, Staff Writer  
John Garrett, Consultant  
Michael Jupp, Consultant  
Irene Renda, Administrative Assistant

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are deeply grateful to RCA Americom for their contribution in printing this book. We wish to especially thank Alan Cook and Fred Kiegel for their many kindnesses.

**NCJRS**  
**AUG 35 1986**  
**ACQUISITIONS**

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Package*

The *Trigger Stories* package consists of a group of exercises designed to assist managers of secure care facilities for juveniles in creating and sustaining positive norms for a staff group around the care and treatment of residents.

The package contains a series of stories to be used to create discussions of concrete child care issues. The process of discussing these issues leads to increased clarity on the goals, values and practices of good resident care.

Using the *Trigger Stories* package, a group leader can explore what really happens at the facility – what standards staff members place on their own behavior in interactions with residents.

*Trigger Stories* raises a large number of potential issues including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, failure to provide adequate supervision, sleeping on duty, the possibility of a malicious abuse allegation by a resident, racism and a variety of other potential problems.

We do not mean to suggest that such problems are commonplace or that all secure facilities have them. *Trigger Stories*, as an instrument to encourage discussion, is deliberately provocative. The incidents described in *Trigger Stories* may indeed be rare, considering the huge majority of staff members who do *not* commit abusive acts, but bad things do happen – sometimes in the best of facilities.

In failing to report a suspicion – or even knowledge – that abuse has occurred, a secure care worker is following a powerful norm of modern American society. He is “not getting involved.” He may feel that reporting a fellow employee will get strong disapproval from others – and, sometimes, he may be right.

When an employee reports a colleague, others often react negatively, even though they individually disapprove of the abusive act. The reporter has brought external forces into the closed world of the facility, an uncomfortable state of affairs.

In our experience, staff members will, given an opportunity to think and talk about the matter openly and in advance, establish a norm that incidents should be reported – and prevented. This norm, we believe, makes reports more likely – and may mitigate many of the negative consequences to the reporter.

We would stress one simple reality about institutional abuse. The circumstances of an abusive act are often far from clear-cut. Very often, no-one but the staff member involved and the resident really knows what happened – and sometimes neither tells anyone else the full story. The reporter often goes through a long period of torment and suspicion trying to sort out if, indeed, abuse is occurring or has occurred. It is terribly easy to decide to look the other way.

When we tested the *Trigger Stories* package, we achieved results far beyond our expectations. At one test site, use of the *Trigger Stories* resulted, immediately, in an embarrassed but honest discussion of the fact that night staff at the facility frequently sleep on duty. A few weeks later, one of the participants reported a longstanding concern about possible sexual abuse, uncovering a disturbing pattern of incidents by a particular individual.

We hasten to add that the facility in question is, in our opinion, one of the best in the country and has a very highly trained staff and an excellent program. It can happen anywhere – and it does.

### *How To Use It*

*Trigger Stories* is designed for use at staff meetings. The package provides exercises which may be conducted and discussed in 15-30 minutes. The process is simple. Select those stories which seem to have relevance to your facility's program. Make sure that you have copies of each story for all staff members.

The stories can be assigned as "homework," to be read during the week and discussed at the next meeting, or you can set aside time during the meeting to read *and* discuss the exercise. Although we generally prefer the second procedure, using the stories as "homework" reduces the commitment of valuable staff meeting time to a bare minimum. In any case, no more than two *Trigger Stories* should be discussed at any one meeting.

Following completion of all the selected exercises, the leader should devote at least one entire meeting to the "wrap-up session." At this session the group clarifies and states its own norms for conduct drawing from previous *Trigger Stories* discussions.

### *The Leader's Role*

The *Trigger Stories* package is a tool for creating a safe way for a staff group to discuss some very threatening subjects. Most staff members would rather not talk about sexual abuse, assaults on residents or even less serious matters like sleeping on duty. In facilities where serious abuses are occurring, the reluctance to discuss these matters may be even stronger.

As discussion leader, your role is very important. It's up to you to set the tone. Obviously if you start off by saying "You people sleep on duty and I think that we should talk about it," you'll get nowhere.

Begin by asking a general question like "Any comments on the story?" Go through the discussion questions at the end of the story. Ask any additional questions which you feel may be important.

A *Trigger Stories* discussion can sometimes turn into a confrontation of a particular staff member. If this happens, your role is referee, not judge. Just make sure that the confrontation and the response to it are reasonably appropriate. This may be hard for a group leader who is also the staff group's supervisor. In some cases it is preferable to assign a line staff member to be discussion leader. In some facilities, separate group discussions for line staff and supervisors may be required, followed by one or more joint meetings.

While field testing, we never encountered an actual report of serious physical or sexual abuse during a *Trigger Stories* meeting, though several occurred soon after meetings. We admit it is a possibility and gave some serious thought to how we would handle it.

*In the final analysis, legal requirements on child abuse reporting are not altered by circumstances. Any abuse allegation must be handled as required by law.* When we talk about creating a safe situation for discussing child abuse, we do *not* mean to suggest that allegations of abuse, if they do occur, can be ignored.

## *The Wrap-up Session*

### *Listing Norms*

Begin by listing staff norms on a blackboard or newsprint tablet.

Explain carefully that norms are *not* institutional rules. Norms are the standards for behavior a group has for itself. To find out what the norms are, ask these questions.

- How do we want staff members to behave toward each other and toward residents?
- What kind of behavior will the staff group not tolerate from staff members?

Try to identify negative as well as positive norms. Is it against the current norms to report a staff member for an abusive act? Are staff members allowed to respectfully disagree with each other? Are staff members polite and professional in dealing with each other and with residents?

### *Changing Norms*

What can the group do about negative norms? Norms can only be changed if the group – *all* of the group, especially management – makes a commitment to establish a new norm and to confront those who violate it. Identify those norms that need change. Get consensus from the group on new, positive norms to replace them.

Following this process you need to think through what the group can do to change negative norms while also reinforcing positive ones.

Write a list of the new norms on a sheet of paper. Get the group to select *one* norm to work on for the first two weeks. Get a commitment from staff to confront other staff when they violate the norm. Check back at *each* staff meeting to see if the new norm is working. When the first norm is established, proceed to the next, until the list is exhausted.

*Remember:* In any process of changing norms, management people must be good models. If supervisory personnel violate the norm, change cannot occur. Make sure that all supervisory personnel are aware of this.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE WRAP-UP SESSION

Are we professional?

- Does the staff arrive at work on time and work *all* assigned hours?
- Do staff dress appropriately for work?
- Do staff sleep on duty or otherwise goldbrick, dope-off, etc.
- Do the reports and other records staff keep *accurately* reflect what happened?
- Do staff steal from the facility?
- Do staff leave personal problems behind when they enter the facility or is their work strongly affected by what's happening at home?
- Do staff *always* confront negative behavior by other staff? When don't they?
- Would staff report an incident involving child abuse as legally required?
- What potentially abusive situations might they fail to report?
- Do staff maintain the confidentiality of information about residents?

Are we loyal?

- Who are staff members loyal to? To certain other staff members? To the staff group? To the facility?
- Does loyalty mean never disagreeing? What does loyalty mean?
- Do staff members constantly gripe about facility policies and downgrade the facility as a whole?
- Do staff generally feel proud of the facility and responsible for what happens in it?
- Do residents feel proud of the facility and responsible for it?

# **A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SITUATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Marc has been at your facility longer than most staff, ever since he was convicted for stealing cars from old ladies and selling them to buy himself designer clothes. Once you get to know him, you know why: he is quick, charming, persuasive, self-centered, and utterly untrustworthy.

So when Marc tells you that Mr. Pierce is "beating the shit out of Howard," your first impulse is to try to figure out what Marc is trying to put over on you.

*FOR MORE INFORMATION, TURN TO A.*

A.

You know that Marc is capable of anything, but when he suggests that Mr. Pierce is abusing Howard you have to figure that Marc has gone off the deep end. Mr. Pierce has been the heart of the program staff for ten years: he trained you and most of the other workers, and you respect him greatly — and fear him a little too.

He is quiet, strong, impeccably organized, perfectly groomed, and demands and gets instant obedience from the kids. He is Mr. to everyone, including the Director, and he never calls anyone — staff or kid — by their first name. He is the first one there when there's trouble, and usually his presence is enough to slow things down. You've seen him put a kid against the wall once or twice, but the kid always seemed to deserve it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, TURN TO B.

---

---

*B.*

A number of kids follow Mr. Pierce around, and go to him for problems before they'll talk to any other staff member. Howard seems to be more devoted to him than anyone else; he's a skinny, quiet kid who has a hard time just surviving the program. You don't know much about him, but you do know that he's very close to Mr. Pierce.

While you're thinking these things through, Marc is waiting impatiently for your response. "So what you going to do about it, huh? I bet you're chickenshit, like the rest of them."

*IF YOU ASK MARC FOR MORE INFORMATION, TURN TO C.*

*IF YOU SEND MARC AWAY AND DECIDE TO CHECK IT OUT FOR YOURSELF, TURN TO D.*

*IF YOU SEND MARC AWAY AND DECIDE TO DO NOTHING ABOUT IT, TURN TO E.*

---

---

C

You ask Marc what happened.

"Yesterday after lunch," he says, "we was lined up on the way to the shop, with Pierce and the other guy, you know, Wee Willie. The guys was poking Howard a little, like they do, 'cause he don't do nothing except he bitches about it sometimes, but this time Howard gets sore and takes a poke at the guy behind him, who's doing most of it, anyway. Pierce he has a hair across his ass all day, he don't see what the guys is doing, but he sees Howard, and anyway the other guy hollers so Pierce hears him. So Pierce don't say nothing, he just picks up Howard by the shirt and sets him up against the wall like he does, and Howard's head hits the wall real good, and it looks like he's out for the count, but Pierce he keeps shaking him, hard, and then stops, and he slaps Howard around a little, and Howard wakes up, and we go to shop. If you don't believe me, you can ask Wee Willie, he was there. He saw the whole thing. But he don't do nothing - you staff always stick together."

Marc continues, "You and me, we can get that guy - good."

*IF YOU SEND MARC AWAY AND DECIDE TO DO NOTHING ABOUT IT, TURN TO E.  
IF YOU DECIDE TO CHECK IT OUT YOURSELF, TURN TO D.*

---

D.

Your attention is diverted by a mini-food fight at lunch, and two kids who say they're suddenly too sick to do the dishes (and, besides, they don't want to spread their germs). So you're home that evening before you get the chance to think through what Marc told you. You know you can't trust him, but you wonder if something might have happened that you ought to know about. You also recognize that Wee Willie isn't likely to help much, and you're not looking forward to raising it with Mr. Pierce. You figure you have three alternatives, none of them pleasant.

IF YOU DECIDE TO DO NOTHING, TURN TO E.

IF YOU DECIDE TO CHECK OUT THE STORY WITH MR. PIERCE, TURN TO F.

IF YOU DECIDE TO TALK TO HOWARD, TURN TO H.

---

E.

Next Sunday, you are on weekend duty during the visiting hours. Marc's mother shows up early, as always, with new clothes, money, and a basket full of junk food for Marc, and dirty looks for you. She is accompanied by an official looking man you've never seen before; he is carrying a briefcase.

Marc takes his mother's offerings with a grunt, and barely talks to her during the visit; he spends most of his time eating Cheez-Its, and talking to the man.

After they leave, Marc corners you and says, "That guy, he's my lawyer. He costs a lot, but my Ma says nothing's too good for me. I told him about what Pierce did to Howard, and he says that's child abuse for sure, and we can hang him. I told him I talked to you about it, and you didn't do nothing. He says that makes you a something, a accessory, and we can probably hang you, too. But he says that we'd be better off hanging Pierce if you report him, which you got to do, 'cause you're on the staff, and I'm a kid, and they'll probably listen to you. So what you gonna do?"

He pauses for a moment. "You want a Cheez-It?"

*IF YOU DECIDE TO REPORT THE INCIDENT TO YOUR SUPERVISOR, TURN TO I.*  
*IF YOU DECIDE TO DO NOTHING, TURN TO K.*  
*IF YOU DECIDE TO TALK TO MR. PIERCE, TURN TO F.*

---

F.

It takes you two days to make up your mind to talk to Mr. Pierce, and another day to figure out how to do it. An opportunity arises just after a shift change, when you're both in the staff lounge, alone. You say, "I heard this crazy story from a kid, the other day, and I wanted to check it out with you." You give him the general outlines of what Marc told you.

Mr. Pierce listens impassively, and says nothing. "Who was it?" he asks. "Marc? Marc must learn that every society has to have its rules, and even he must abide by them. Sometimes I wonder if I'm making any progress with him at all."

Mr. Pierce starts to leave. "Marc may file charges. . . ," you add. Mr. Pierce interrupts: "I merely applied the disciplinary measure required to control a potentially dangerous situation. Is there anything else? No? Then, good day."

IF YOU DECIDE TO DO NOTHING FURTHER, TURN TO K.  
IF YOU DECIDE TO TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR, TURN TO I.  
IF YOU DECIDE TO CHECK OUT THE STORY WITH WEE WILLIE, TURN TO G.  
IF YOU DECIDE TO TALK TO HOWARD, TURN TO H.

---

---

G.

You find Wee Willie in the weight room in the basement, where he's working on his triceps. Eventually he takes a break, and you ask him if Howard's head is O.K. "Howard?" he asks. "Head?" You say that you heard Howard hit his head against the wall the other day, and you wondered if he was all right. "Was I there?" Willie asks. "I heard you were," you answer. "Well, then, I didn't see nothing. Hand me that bar, huh?" You struggle to lift the bar; Willie takes it in one hand, and goes back to his triceps.

*IF YOU DECIDE TO DO NOTHING FURTHER, TURN TO K.*

*IF YOU DECIDE TO TALK TO HOWARD, TURN TO H.*

*IF YOU DECIDE TO TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR, TURN TO I.*

---

---

H.

You catch Howard at the end of lunch, and tell him that you want to talk to him. He looks worried, but says nothing as he follows you into an empty room. But then, Howard always looks worried.

You tell him that you heard he hit his head on the way to the shop the other day, and ask what happened. "Nothin' happened," he says. "I was losing my control, and Mr. Pierce he straightened me out, just like I needed, and I goofed, and I hit my head, and I'm all right now."

You wait a moment. "Mr. Pierce said he was proud of me," Howard continues. "I told him I was sorry afterwards, 'cause I know how he don't like it when I lose my control and he has to straighten me out, and he said he was proud of me for being man enough to say I was sorry. I'm trying real hard so he don't have to straighten me out again. If I can get those guys off my case, maybe I can do it. Mr. Pierce, he says he straightens me out more than the other guys 'cause he knows I can take it. I can too."

There is a pause as you get ready to leave. "That Mr. Pierce, he's really something," Howard says. You agree.

IF YOU DECIDE TO TALK TO WEE WILLIE, TURN TO G.  
IF YOU DECIDE TO TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR, TURN TO I.  
IF YOU DECIDE TO DO NOTHING, TURN TO K.

---

---

1.

You know you'll find Ted Davidson in his office — you always do. Ted is moving stacks of forms and reports from his in-basket to his out-basket, and he pauses as you come in.

You describe what you know to Davidson. He listens without expression. "You realize," he replies, "that I will need to conduct an investigation. You will be interviewed again, and I will also interview all of the parties you allege are involved. I will then prepare findings which will determine whether further action, if any, is required. Please close the door when you leave."

Two weeks later, Ted Davidson calls you in. "I've completed my investigation," he says, "and there are no grounds for filing an abuse report. I talked with Mr. Pierce about his actions, and he told me that he limits disciplinary measures to those necessary to maintain or restore control. Any questions? No? Please close the door when you leave."

K.

Marc's lawyer files a formal child abuse complaint against Mr. Pierce with the Attorney General, based on the incident with Howard. There is a formal investigation; you are interviewed by a bored-looking young lawyer. You basically tell her everything you know, although you skip the specifics of what Howard and Mr. Pierce said to you. The investigation is concluded, and the report finds no need for further action.

Nothing much changes; you continue to show up, do your job, and go home. Marc stops speaking to you, except to mutter "chickenshit" when he passes you in the hall. One afternoon around the pool table, you see Mr. Pierce moving in on a kid who's getting out of line. Marc is leaning against the wall, hands in his pockets, watching carefully.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a problem here? If so, what is it?
2. Are there problems in the facility which would have permitted this situation to arise? What could/should be done about them?
3. Were there positive options for responding that weren't included in the incident? At what points? What were they?
4. Was T, Davidson's response appropriate? What options did he have? What should he have done?
5. Should the facility have policies or procedures to control situations like this one? What should they be?
6. Was Howard adequately protected in this process? If not, what could/should have been done to protect him? What does he need to be protected against (if anything)?

## ROOMIES

It's been a long day; as Shift Supervisor, you still have a couple more things to clear up before you can go home. Waiting outside your office is Tom, one of your shift workers, with Bill and Charlie, two kids you've been seeing all too frequently over the last few weeks. Bill and Charlie have been fighting again, and this time you probably ought to do something about it.

You call them into your office. Tom and Charlie sit on the two folding chairs, and Bill leans against the back wall. "They were fighting again," Tom says. "This time they got going in the dining room, and they broke up a couple of chairs before we could stop them."

Not really wanting to know, you ask the kids what happened this time. "I didn't do nothing," Charlie replies. "I never do nothing, but he goes for me, and I got to go back at him. I don't know; it's just not working out. I can't stay with this guy any more. You got to do something."

You look to Bill. "Me and him, we just don't get along. You got to move us. If I could room with Jim, I'd be O.K., I promise. But if you keep us together, we just got to keep hassling each other. That's the way it is."

You send the boys outside to wait — "and no hassles!" You ask Tom what he thinks. "We spend half our time getting those guys off each other," he says. "It sure would be easier if we changed their roommates — put Bill with Jim and Charlie with Paul. Then we could all do a better job, working with the kids. And the night guys would love it."

The boys are waiting outside, and you need to decide what you're going to do. Changing roommates would make everyone's life easier, but you don't want the

kids to force you into it. And you've heard some stories about Bill and Jim that make you think you know why they get along so well.

What do you tell Tom and the kids?

What do you do next?

When? Why?

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What do you tell Tom and the kids?
2. What do you do next? When? Why?
3. What could the facility do to prevent this situation from arising?
4. Is it reasonable to expect to prevent relationships among residents from arising? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. What is likely to happen if you don't do anything?
6. Will changing roommates cause problems in other areas? What could they be?

## **IT COULD HAPPEN TO ANYONE**

It's been raining steadily for three days. You have a headache and a slight sore throat, but not enough to justify calling in sick. Just as you're leaving, you check the mailbox to find out that your bank bounced the last check you wrote to the Supermarket, though you can't figure out why; you should have just enough money in your account. Not only that, there's a twenty dollar penalty they're charging you. You shrug your shoulders, mutter a curse and go on out to your car.

All the rain has shorted out the wiring in your car. It won't start. It won't even turn over. So on top of everything else, there's a repair bill and you have to wait for the bus in the rain.

You arrive at work ten minutes late and soaking wet. You get a lecture from Sheila, one of the day staff, on messing up the shift change.

*PROCEED TO A FOR FURTHER INFORMATION*

A.

Bob, your partner on the night shift, comes up to you and says, "Man, this is going to be absolute hell. These kids haven't been outside in three days and they're going crazy. We're just going to have to sit on the lid all night."

When you hit the floor, you find out just how right he is. You also realize that he's subtly criticizing you because he feels that you don't exercise enough control. You know he doesn't like it when you let the kids joke around a little, or make a little healthy noise. In fact, you frequently feel that he's far too controlling and strict.

PROCEED TO B FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

---

*B.*

You've always had a good relationship with Bill, based on a lot of harmless jokes and playing around. Lately, he's been very cool toward you. He's made an alliance with John, a new kid with a really active hostility toward authority. You've tried to approach John, but he just gives you a lot of lip.

For that reason, you're surprised when John comes walking up to you with a big smile on his face.

"Let me show you a new trick I learned today," he says.

Naturally, you agree. He tells you to hold both your hands toward him with your wrists together.

PROCEED TO C FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

---

C.

When you hold your hands out, John grabs them and holds on, pulling you slightly off balance. Bill, who's been standing behind you, neatly slips your wallet out of your back pocket.

"I got it," he yells and dances away.

"Okay, Bill," you say, "That's going too far, give it back."

Out of the corner of your eye you see Bob coming. He'd like nothing better than to show you up by handling this situation before you get a chance to.

"Watch it, Bill," John yells. "Here comes the other one."

D.

Bill turns and runs into the bathroom, slamming the door in your face as you follow him.

You open the door. He holds your wallet toward you and giggles.

"Give it to me, Bill," you say.

"Make him say please," John says.

As you reach for your wallet, Bill giggles again and throws it over his shoulder. It goes directly into the toilet.

You can hear Bob struggling with John in the doorway.

"Flush it!" John yells, "Flush it!"

Bill turns. John screams. There is a sound of a body hitting the wall behind you.

PROCEED TO E FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

---

E.

Your wallet hitting the toilet is the last straw. You grab him, turn him around and slap him across the face. You push him against the wall. He falls to the floor. You turn and retrieve your wallet.

Bill is lying on the floor. There are tears in his eyes.

"I was joking," he cries, "You motherfucker, you didn't have to hit me, motherfucker."

"Are you okay?" you ask.

"Fuck off."

PROCEED TO F FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

---

F.

As you leave the bathroom, you see Bob standing with his arms folded. He is smiling slightly. John is doubled up on the floor holding his stomach, and breathing in gasps. Bob looks at you.

“Nothing happened,” he says. “Right?”

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What should you do now?
2. Are there differences between what Bob did and what you did? What are they?
3. At what point did this situation go out of control? How should you have changed it?
4. What could you have done before the incident to prevent it? What could the facility have done?
5. What would have happened if, instead of chasing Bill into the bathroom, you had done absolutely nothing?
6. What action should the facility take, assuming that the situation becomes known?

## **ESCAPE VALVE?**

It's your first week on the job as a Supervisor. You don't know your staff very well; in fact, you haven't really been able to put all the faces together with names.

You decide to break the ice by taking Phil and Vinnie out for a drink. Phil and Vinnie are your senior staff; both are experienced and, from the personnel files, seem to have been well regarded by the previous Supervisor.

"I gotta be honest," Phil says. "Sometimes I think about taking one of the little bastards into his room, smothering him with the Policy Manual, hiding him in his bed and telling the night shift that he retired early with a headache."

"I guess we've all felt like that," you say.

"Yeah," Vinnie says, "Only when I feel like that, I think about punching the shit out of one of them, you know, just beating on him until he finally keeps his damn mouth shut! Nothing fancy. I guess we all feel like that, too."

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In this episode Phil and Vinnie both describe violent fantasies about children. Does Phil's fantasy make you uncomfortable? Vinnie's? Why?
2. What, if anything, should you do about it?
3. Are fantasies a way of letting off steam? When is a fantasy a sign of serious problems to come?
4. What are your options in dealing with this situation?
5. What happens if you don't do anything?

## **BURN OUT**

The phone rings. You look at the clock. It's 6:00 a.m. You briefly consider ignoring it. Finally, you pick up the receiver. Merry Christmas, you think to yourself.

A few minutes later you're in the shower. Two days before Christmas is a rough time for half the staff to come down with the flu. You have screwed up your schedule for a month to get these three days off to spend with the family. Now you're working a day shift – and if things don't get better, you'll probably end up working tomorrow.

You're mad and, more than that, you're tired. Work is getting to be depressing. The holidays are never good at the facility, but it's worse than usual. The place is packed. You're sleeping kids in the staff room, in the gym, everywhere but the boss's office, you think grimly.

TURN TO A FOR MORE INFORMATION

A.

You suspect that some of the “flu” among the staff is just people slacking off or calling in sick when all they really have is a hangover. It makes you mad, but what can you do?

It’s affecting your marriage, too. You think about all the things you promised to do today; you can’t remember the last time you kept a promise to your own family. And when you come home from work, you just feel like watching TV and sleeping. You get irritated easily. You’re not much fun to live with anymore.

It takes you about 20 minutes to dig your car out of last night’s snow. You arrive at the facility wet, cold and bone tired. On the way you hear this radio ad about vacations in Mexico. You can’t afford a vacation in Mexico – you can’t afford to buy a car with a heater that works.

PROCEED TO B FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

---

B.

"I hate to do this to you, but we're spread awfully thin today. You're the only old hand I've got and I'm going to put you where you're needed. I'm putting you on Unit Three, but I may have to pull you if we have any trouble anywhere else."

Your supervisor looks like death warmed over. She's been in since three o'clock dealing with an attempted suicide. You just nod. Why bother complaining?

You've never worked Unit Three before. You don't know the kids and the young staff member you find when you get there looks like he shaves about three times a week. You don't bother getting his name.

"What do we do?" he asks.

"Beats the hell out of me," you answer and smile just a little at the look he gives you.

You get the kids up and fed and get the chores done.

TURN TO C FOR MORE INFORMATION

C.

It goes okay, for a series of disasters. What with the snow and the flu, the school program is cancelled. You can't get the gym until afternoon – for an hour. The yard, of course, is out; it looks like Siberia out there. So you and Fuzz Face are stuck in a confined space with 14 bored, unruly kids.

You pull yourself together and start a pool tournament. You get some of the other kids going with board games. You put Fuzz Face with the pool players and float around refereeing.

The phone rings. It's your supervisor.

"Get to Two; there's a fight." she says.

As you turn around, you see Fuzz Face with a pool cue in his hand.

"It's broken," he says, "Do we have another one?"

You just look at him.

PROCEED TO D FOR MORE INFORMATION

D.

Two is a shambles. In one corner there is a staff member trying to separate two kids who are fighting. A couple of chairs have been broken. The floor is covered with pieces from a Monopoly game. The other staff member is trying to keep the other kids back. The kids are whistling, screaming and shouting encouragement to the fighters.

You get them separated. One of them has to go to the nurse with a bloody nose. The other one has to be put into an isolation room; he just won't stop struggling.

The other kids are about to blow up. They're shouting abuse at staff, now that the fight's over.

IF YOU LOCK THEM IN THEIR ROOMS, PROCEED TO E  
IF YOU TRY TO CALM THEM DOWN PROCEED TO F

---

---

E.

Luckily, only one kid resists. He reaches up and manages to pull the television down. The picture tube blows up in about a million pieces and, of course, he gets the other isolation room. The other kids are pounding on the doors and yelling.

About then the phone rings. Back to Three.

PROCEED TO G

---

---

F.

About then the phone rings. You have to go back to Three. You have to lock them up anyway. One kid resists and manages, somehow, to pull the television off its shelf. The picture tube breaks in about a million pieces. You put him in the other isolation room. As you leave the kids are yelling and banging on the doors.

PROCEED TO G

---

---

G.

Fuzz Face has multiplied. Now there's two of him. All in all, though, it could be worse. Fuzz Face #2 has managed to assist Fuzz Face #1 in locking the kids down.

"Why?" you ask.

"They just keep asking questions." He has the brains to look a little sheepish.

"What kind of questions?"

"When's lunch? Can we go out in the yard? They wanted to play basketball."

*IF YOU UNLOCK THEM, PROCEED TO H*  
*IF YOU LEAVE THEM LOCKED UP, PROCEED TO I*

---

---

*H.*

The phone rings. It's a problem in the cafeteria. The kids stay locked up while you go to help settle it.

It's another fight. You don't even bother to ask. You just get the two kids involved back to their rooms. All the isolation rooms are in use.

By the time you get back to Three, it's time for lunch.

PROCEED TO J

---

---

I.

The phone rings. It's a problem in the cafeteria. You leave.

It's another fight. You don't even bother to ask. You just help get the kids involved back to their rooms. All the isolation rooms are in use.

By the time you get back to Three, it's time for lunch.

PROCEED TO J

---

---

*J.*

Lunch is hell. The kids spent most of the morning in their rooms and they're full of nervous energy.

You pull yourself together and start talking up a basketball game. You figure that if you can get them really tired during their gym period, the rest of the shift should be easy.

Your supervisor drops by a few minutes before the end of the lunch period. You can't use the gym. A pipe has burst, damaging the floor. It may be weeks before repairs can be made. You take the kids back to the Unit.

PROCEED TO K

---

---

K.

You decide to play it safe. You just turn the television on and let them play games if they want to. Why bother trying?

A few minutes before the end of your shift, you get a call. The volunteer group that was going to give a Christmas party for the kids has pulled out at the last moment. Christmas is cancelled. Several staff members are holding an emergency meeting to plan an alternative. You remember that you promised to take your own kids Christmas shopping.

---

---

## QUESTIONS

1. Make a list of the problems which you feel this facility may have. Which are the most serious?
2. Why do staff members "burn out"? What should be done to prevent "burn out"?
3. What do you think will happen to the staff member in the story? To "Fuzz Face," the young staff members?

## JUST ONE

“Michael gave me a beer when we went out one-to-one.”

Elton, an eighteen-year-old resident, is trying to get you to stop and buy him a drink on the way back in the facility after a community activity you’ve attended together.

“I won’t tell,” he says.

“You’re telling on Michael,” you say.

There is a distinct pause before he tells you that he is joking.

You decide to talk to Michael. When you ask him about it in the staff room, he gets redfaced and asks you to speak to him outside.

“Listen,” he says, “Elton’s eighteen and you know he drinks when he’s at home. I just think it’s better for him to learn how to handle it with us than with his folks, who drink too much already. Besides, it was just one.”

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What should/could you do now?
2. What could happen as a result of this incident?  
If Michael continues to allow residents over 18 to drink?
3. What are your responsibilities to Michael? To Elton?  
To the program?

## IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE

You are a recently hired juvenile corrections worker at a 40 bed, publicly operated secure facility. You have just picked up your morning cup of coffee, and are heading through the Common Room on your way to start waking up the kids.

The room is nearly dark, lit only by the morning sun filtered through the shades. You see movement in the far corner. You recognize Tom, an experienced and respected night staff member, and Rinaldo, a fifteen year old resident. Tom seems to have his arms around Rinaldo, but Rinaldo isn't struggling.

*IF YOU:*

- IGNORE IT AND GO ON ABOUT YOUR WORK,  
PROCEED TO H;*
- WALK OVER TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON,  
PROCEED TO B.*

## B.

You are about ten feet away from Tom and Rinaldo before they notice you. Tom has Rinaldo's head pressed against his chest, and Tom's hands are on Rinaldo's behind. Tom hears you first and pulls suddenly from Rinaldo; Rinaldo looks around and sees you too.

Tom says, "What do you think you're doing?" You reply, "I couldn't tell who was over here – just thought I'd take a look." "Aren't your kids supposed to be up by 7?" Tom asks. "It's 7:05 already."

By now, Rinaldo has disappeared. As Tom goes out the door, he says, "the kid had a rough night – withdrawal, I guess. He just needed someone to talk to. . . See you." "See you," you reply.

## IF YOU:

- FORGET ABOUT IT AND GET ON WITH YOUR WORK, PROCEED TO H;
- DECIDE TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN FIND OUT INFORMALLY ABOUT THE INCIDENT, PROCEED TO F;
- DECIDE TO REPORT THE INCIDENT TO YOUR SUPERVISOR, PROCEED TO D;
- DECIDE TO FILE A FORMAL CHILD ABUSE INCIDENT REPORT, PROCEED TO K.

C.

"Excuse me, Jim," you ask, "But I do want to know what you plan to do about this."

Jim looks up from his work, a little irritated, and says that he is going to continue to look into it, and if it's suspicious he is going to file a report with his Supervisor.

"I'd appreciate it if you'd let me know what you do about it," you reply. Jim is really irritated. "It's my job now," he says. "You just do your job, and I'll do my job, and we'll get along fine. . . I think."

IF YOU:

- HEAR NOTHING FURTHER, FOR A WEEK, AND YOU DECIDE TO FILE A CHILD ABUSE INCIDENT REPORT, PROCEED TO K;
- HEAR NOTHING FOR A WEEK, AND DECIDE TO DROP IT, PROCEED TO L;
- HEAR FROM JIM THAT HE FILED AN INCIDENT REPORT, PROCEED TO R.

D.

You catch Jim, your Supervisor, late in the day; he seems even more harried than usual. You tell him what you've seen and heard, and add that you wonder whether something improper might be going on with Tom and Rinaldo. Jim listens carefully to what you have to say.

IF HE:

- CONVINCES YOU NOT TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION BECAUSE TOM IS A FINE STAFF MEMBER AND WHAT YOU HAVE REPORTED IS CIRCUMSTANTIAL, PROCEED TO L;
- SAYS THAT HE WILL LOOK INTO IT HIMSELF, AND GET BACK TO YOU, PROCEED TO N;  
IF YOU FILE A FORMAL INCIDENT REPORT DESPITE YOUR SUPERVISOR'S OPPOSITION, PROCEED TO K.

## F.

During your break, you ask a couple of more experienced staff members about Rinaldo, saying that you'd seen him around but didn't know him at all. They look at each other and smile.

One says to you, "my friend, you've got a lot to learn. We always have at least one House Fag on the premises, and right now Rinaldo is the number one pretty boy. But that's nobody's business but his own."

"Aren't we supposed to do something about it?" you ask.

The other staff member says, "Maybe so, maybe not. But right now, things are real peaceful around here, and nobody's kicking your butt or my butt. I would not advise you, or anyone, to do anything to screw up what we got. Understand?"

Get off him," says the first staff member. "He knows what the deal is. Besides, Rinaldo's Tom's business – everyone knows that." The break is over, and you all start back to work.

## IF YOU:

- DECIDE THAT IT REALLY ISN'T ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS, PROCEED TO L;
- DECIDE TO DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR, PROCEED TO D;
- DECIDE TO FILE A FORMAL INCIDENT REPORT, PROCEED TO K.

H.

It's about a week later. You are supervising lunch, and you overhear some kids teasing Rinaldo. "Hey, man, which end is up?", laughs one. "I guess if you pet teacher, you get to be teacher's pet," says another. "How come Tom gets all the goodies," he goes on, "ain't you gonna save one little mouthful for me?" The other staff member in the lunchroom doesn't hear, or ignores, what is going on.

In the middle of it, Rinaldo gets up, sees you, blushes, and says he has to go to the bathroom. You accompany him, and wait outside. Inside, you can hear Rinaldo saying, "Screw them! I know what I got to do to survive!"

IF YOU:

- FORGET ABOUT IT AND GET BACK TO WORK, PROCEED TO L;
  - DECIDE TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN FIND OUT INFORMALLY, PROCEED TO F;
  - DECIDE TO REPORT THE INCIDENT TO YOUR SUPERVISOR, PROCEED TO D;
  - DECIDE TO FILE A FORMAL INCIDENT REPORT, PROCEED TO K.
- 
-

K.

You file a formal Incident Report with the Facility Director and/or Attorney General's Office, describing what you have seen, heard, and surmised. You are quickly identified throughout the facility as the person responsible for the investigation, and the rest of the staff stops speaking to you.

When you are interviewed, it is clear that no evidence has been provided which supports your charges. The investigation is completed, and Tom is cleared. A week later, your Supervisor calls you in to say that your performance is inadequate, and you probably should be looking for another job. When you ask for specifics, he doesn't respond.

Finally, when your car tires are slashed for the second time, you've had it. You quit the job, collect unemployment, and start reading the papers again. There, you learn. . .

*PROCEED DIRECTLY TO M.*

---

L.

You can hardly believe it. It's 7:00 in the morning again, and you have just started your shift. You hear sounds coming from the bathroom off the main hall, and you go over to investigate. As you approach, you hear someone being slapped, hard, and then silence. Just as you get to the door, Tom bursts through it, a little disheveled. He is carrying Rinaldo in his arms. He pushes past you, saying, "He must have fainted... got to get him to his room... calm him down... don't worry about it... everything's under control..." He is gone.

IF YOU:

- DON'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT, PROCEED TO M;
- INITIATE A FORMAL INCIDENT REPORT, PROCEED TO R.

*M.*

The paper reports that an investigation is underway following the death of Rinaldo Sanchez at Mercyl Hospital. He was admitted with multiple bruises and contusions; unconfirmed reports alleged evidence of homosexual activity. Two days later, you are called in by the Attorney General's Office for a routine interview. What do you really know? How much can you really say?

N.

A week has gone by, and you haven't heard anything from your Supervisor about his informal investigation.

*IF YOU DECIDE TO FORGET ABOUT IT, PROCEED TO L.*

You try to make an appointment with your Supervisor, but he can't see you until the next day. The time comes, and he asks you to close the door behind you. He tells you that he has taken charge of the informal investigation, and that you will be informed when and if he needs you. He goes back to his paperwork, expecting you to leave.

*IF YOU:*

- DECIDE TO LEAVE IT UP TO HIM, PROCEED TO L;*
- DECIDE TO ASK FOR CLARIFICATION, PROCEED TO C;*
- DECIDE TO FILE A FORMAL INCIDENT REPORT, PROCEED TO K.*

R.

Over the next several days, you hear rumblings from other staff about an investigation of a report of child abuse. Several staff are interviewed, and they say that the investigation seems to be centering around Tom and Rinaldo. As you listen, there seems to be much more concern among staff about finding out who blew the whistle than about what really happened. Several people ask you whether you've been called in yet; eventually, your turn comes.

It's not clear, in your interview, whether the Social Worker interviewing you knows that you initiated the investigation. You tell her everything you know; she takes careful notes, and asks specific questions about what you saw and heard. She doesn't ask for your conclusions, and you don't share them.

Arriving at work two days later, you learn that Tom has been suspended, and Rinaldo has been transferred to another facility. Gradually, you notice that other staff aren't talking to you much, or acknowledging your presence. Finally, when your car tires are slashed for the second time, you've had it. You quit the job, collect unemployment, and start reading the papers again. Surely you accomplished something. . . but what?

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What problem in the facility permitted this situation to arise? What could/should have been done about them?
2. How could/should Jim (the Supervisor) have responded to information about the situation?
3. Did you have positive options for responding to the situation that weren't included in the incident? At what points? What were they?
4. What policies or procedures could/should the facility develop to prevent similar incidents? How should they be implemented?
5. What is the facility's responsibility to Rinaldo? How should it be exercised?
6. If you had been asked to conduct an internal investigation based on the initial story, what would you have done and how would you have done it?

## HANDYMAN

"This time you got to do something! All night long, it's bad enough, but we can stand it, but I can't even get my homework done, the springs is bad enough, but the noises that boy makes, you wouldn't believe it, once or twice I can understand, but he must be pulling his pud eight, ten, twelve times a day! That ain't good for him, and it sure ain't good for me and Marvin who have to live with him. You don't do something about it, we're going to take care of it our own way, and I'll get me his thing for a three inch trophy to hang on my wall!"

This is the third time Dick has approached you about Jack's problem. This time, he may be right; you may have to do something. But what? Trying to stop masturbation is like trying to pick your nose with your elbow: embarrassing, and ultimately useless. Even if you could get Jack under control, did you have the right to stop him without stopping everybody else? Or should you just look for a single room for Jack, and figure he'll grow out of it?

Meanwhile, Dick isn't going to go away. You can hear Jack's bed creaking in the background. What are you going to tell him?

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What are your options for responding to this situation?
2. What do you do now?
3. What could you have done to prevent or control this incident?
4. What is the facility's responsibility to Dick? To Jack?
5. Should the facility have a policy to cover this issue?
6. What will happen if you do nothing?

## THE AWAKENING

You've promised to take an early morning jog around the yard with several kids. It means getting to the facility at 6:30 in the morning, so you go to bed early.

You wake up, well before your alarm is set to ring, at 4:30. You're awake and there doesn't seem to be any point in going back to sleep for an hour. You shower and just go on over. You figure to spend a little while talking with the night staff, Ben, who's a good friend of yours. May as well.

You get there about 5:15 and ring the bell. Nothing happens. You ring again. Finally, after you've been waiting for about ten minutes, you ring and look through the window beside the door. You see Ben coming out of the staff lounge. There's only one conclusion: he's been sleeping.

When he opens the door, you don't know what to say. You don't approve of what he's doing, but he is your friend.

"Ben," you say, with some embarrassment, "You were sleeping on the shift."

He looks at you for a moment. "So what?" he says, "So does everyone else." His tone is openly hostile.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What should/would you do now?
2. What might happen if you do nothing?
3. What is your responsibility to Ben? To the kids?

## **THE GOOD GROUP**

Jim and Gary are the real reasons that you have such a good group. Both of them really bought into the values that the program tries to teach and both are strong natural leaders. Gary's gone home and seems to be doing well, though everyone misses him. Jim won't be around long, but while he is, it's like having an extra staff member.

Jim handles leadership well. Your philosophy is that the group should be allowed as much responsibility as it's able to handle, and, of course, should receive corresponding freedoms and privileges. At this point the kids in your unit have been handling their own disciplinary situations, none too serious, and making their own decisions, with minimal staff interaction.

*TURN TO A FOR MORE INFORMATION*

A.

Before he left Gary helped put together a project to sell some of the art and woodwork the group has made to buy a new stereo for the rec room. That stereo is concrete proof of just how good the group is, and the kids treat it lovingly. Jim, of course, has a big role in seeing that everyone does their part.

It's not really fair, but everyone can't help comparing the new kid, Dave, with Gary. Dave is a mess. Though he rarely breaks rules, he seems to enjoy telling on others. In the presence of staff Dave boasts and threatens. When one of the other residents looks at him twice, he runs for adult protection.

TURN TO B FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

---

*B.*

Dave's gross personal habits are a constant source of friction with other kids. His grooming and dress have to be constantly supervised – otherwise, he starts smelling.

Resident meetings and staff meetings have turned into confrontation and discussions, seemingly always involving Dave, or "Pigpen," as the kids openly and the staff secretly call him.

You have just arrived on shift. Jim approaches you.

"The group has to have a meeting," he says. "Dave broke the stereo – on purpose."

TURN TO C FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

---

## C.

Jim tells you that the incident occurred when several kids were teasing Dave about changing his socks.

"I know they should have confronted him in a better way," he says, "But they weren't really threatening him. I was just about to stop it, but it just happened too fast. Barry said something like we would start washing his socks with him in them if he didn't take care of business himself. He just got mad and tore the arm off the stereo and threw it on the floor."

"We decided that we need a meeting," Jim continues, "And we want to handle it ourselves."

TURN TO D FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

D.

"Look," Jim says, "It's our stereo and it's our problem. It's going to be really bad for the group if we can't handle it appropriately ourselves. We want to hold our meeting without staff."

"I can understand that," you reply. "But I'm afraid that someone may lose their temper. I know how you guys feel about that stereo."

"It won't happen," Jim says. "They could have killed him when he did it, but they decided on a meeting instead. That shows real progress. I can promise you that they won't touch him. We'll tell you what we intend to do about it before we do anything. It won't be anything to hurt Dave."

*IF YOU DECIDE TO GO ALONG WITH JIM, PROCEED TO H.*  
*IF YOU DECIDE TO ATTEND THE MEETING, TURN TO E.*  
*IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO ALLOW THE MEETING TO OCCUR, TURN TO K.*

---

---

*E.*

You decide to stay in the background of the meeting, only intervening if you have to .

The meeting is very disorderly. Various residents compete to make the most damning statements about Dave. Dave responds with threats and obscenities. Jim does a good job of restraining the others, Barry in particular, from physical violence.

The group decides that repairing the stereo isn't the real issue. The issue is what consequences the group is going to make Dave face for what he has done.

Barry's suggestions are typical. Most of the kids get into fantasizing about physical punishments, but you can tell that they aren't serious.

Jim suggests the final compromise – and certainly the least damaging alternative discussed. The group will recognize Dave's attitude – his refusal to be a group member – by not talking to him for two weeks. Everyone agrees. Jim points out that staff must talk to Dave and that the consequence involves only residents.

*IF YOU DECIDE TO GO ALONG WITH THE GROUP'S DECISION, PROCEED TO F.*  
*IF YOU DECIDE TO CHALLENGE THE GROUP'S DECISION, PROCEED TO G.*

---

---

*F.*

Later that day Dave steals a comb out of one kid's pockets to provoke a verbal response. The kid gets angry and lunges at Dave. You intervene. Over the next few days you find yourself constantly intervening to keep Dave in line, or to keep the other kids from going after him.

Dave keeps saying to you, "You're not supposed to do this to me!" As far as he's concerned, you're the bad guy.

Dave gets increasingly frustrated and hysterical. He starts wetting his bed and has crying spells. Nothing very dramatic happens to him, but you become aware that Dave is a lonely child, however unloveable he may be. You are hurting him, and you don't know how to stop.

## G.

Barry challenges you right back.

“You can’t make us talk to him,” he says. “And we won’t.” The other kids nod in agreement, Jim a little reluctantly.

When you object again, Barry points out that the rules don’t forbid this course of action – and, of course, you can’t prevent it anyway.

Jim tries to regain his leadership by pointing out that they want Dave to learn his lesson and be part of the group. The others nod, Barry a little reluctantly.

Over the next few days, you are really in the doghouse with the group. It seems that Dave and Jim are the only persons speaking to you – Jim, a little reluctantly.

You also find yourself having to make a lot more control statements than usual. The kids do make an attempt to stop speaking to Dave, but it’s generally unsuccessful. On the whole, the good group isn’t so good anymore – maybe, in a way, it never was.

At the next group meeting you say, “Okay, Gary is gone and we miss him, but Dave is here. We have to deal with him.”

---

H.

You sweat it out for an hour. You can hear the raised voices of the kids. Finally they break up the meeting. Jim approaches as the group's spokesman. The rest of the group stands in the background.

"We've decided that none of us will talk to Dave for two weeks," Jim says. "We'll make him a part of the group if he acts like one. We realize that staff have to talk to him, but we don't."

"They're threatening me," Dave says. "They can't do that. You're supposed to stop them."

"We are not threatening you. Nobody is going to touch you," Jim responds. Other group members voice their agreement.

You really believe that they aren't threatening him.

*IF YOU DECIDE TO GO ALONG WITH THE GROUP'S DECISION. PROCEED TO I.  
IF YOU DECIDE TO INTERVENE AND NOT ALLOW THE GROUP TO CARRY OUT ITS  
DECISION, PROCEED TO J.*

I.

Dave obviously feels unsafe and rejected. His personal habits and manners become even worse. At first he tries to force the others to take notice of him. You become aware that the group has decided to enforce their decision through physical threats. Dave keeps coming to you saying things like, "I just tried to talk to him and Barry made a fist at me."

Eventually Dave runs away. You discover that he has made sure that every member of the group knows that he intends to do so. He is apprehended and placed in a more restrictive environment.

The new kid, Jerry, steals Barry's watch. Without consulting you, the group excludes him and threatens him with physical violence if he "hassles anyone."

*J.*

“You can’t make us talk to him,” Barry says. “And we won’t.” The other kids nod in agreement – Jim, a little reluctantly.

When you object, Barry points out to you that nothing in the rules forbids this course of action – and, of course, you can’t really stop it from happening anyway.

Jim tries to regain his leadership by suggesting that the group’s consequence is, in fact, a caring message. They want Dave to make it. The others nod, Barry a little reluctantly.

PROCEED TO I.

---

---

K.

Jim is obviously hurt by your refusal to trust the group. The other kids are angry. Barry, the most aggressive kid in the group, is openly hostile.

“He broke our stereo and you aren’t going to do anything about it. Well, we will.”

Your attempts to confront Barry are met with grim silence.

That night Dave’s room is trashed. Virtually everything in it is destroyed or mutilated – except Dave. A series of meetings fail to discover how it happened or who did it. Facing constant threats, Dave eventually runs away and is placed in a more restrictive setting.

Someone tears up Fred’s picture of his mother. Barry’s DOORS album is thrown out the window.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When Jim comes to you to propose the meeting, are there options available which are not included in the incident? What are they?
2. Are there points where you should have exerted more control and leadership? Where? What should you have done?

Does this incident point up problems in the facility? What are they? What should be done about them?

4. What could or should have been done to reduce the impact of Gary's departure and Dave's arrival?
5. Is the group's method for dealing with Dave reasonable? If not, what other solutions to the problem might have been presented? Who could/should have presented them? How?

## SATURDAY NIGHT

For once, you're looking forward to working on a Saturday night. You know that most of the kids will be home on weekend privileges, and you are expecting some peace and quiet, basketball on TV, and a little paperwork.

So you are particularly surprised to find Sam sitting alone in the TV/Common Room, sort of watching TV. "What's up?" you ask. "Nothing," he answers.

"Didn't want to go home?"

"What a dumb question," Sam replies. "I wanted to go home. I always want to go home."

You watch TV for a couple more minutes. "So what happened?"

"My mom, she didn't want me. She wanted me, but she didn't want me, so she didn't want me, so I'm here." Sam flips to another channel.

By now, you're hopelessly confused. "What?" you ask.

"What a dumb question. The Social Worker, what's her name, Burke, she don't want me to go home. She told my mother it was bad for my, you know, therapy. She talks to me a lot about my mother, but I don't talk about my mother to her. So my mother wanted me, but she didn't want me, so I'm here. Burke don't think I should go home for a month, until I'll talk to her about my mother. But I won't, so I'm here. I'm sure here!"

Sam turns up the sound as loud as it will go, and lies down on the floor. It looks like there won't be much opportunity for basketball, or paperwork.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What options do you have for dealing with the situation?
2. What do you do now?
3. What happens if you don't do anything?
4. What is your responsibility to Sam? To his therapeutic program?
5. What is the facility's responsibility?
6. Do you discuss this with your Supervisor? If so, what do you say? What, if anything, should your Supervisor do?

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

You are a young, white worker in a secure facility. Mr. Gates is your boss on the shift and he's been around longer than God. As he has sometimes pointed out in a more or less joking fashion, he's changed shift more times than you've changed your socks.

You like him. For one thing, he makes life very easy. He has the kind of authority that people seem rarely to question. The kids seem to like him, too. His manner with them is firm, but usually joking.

It's early morning and you speak to Mr. Gates in the staff office.

"What's with Ruiz, the new kid?" you ask.

"Ruiz," he says, "Just another unwashed little Hispanic Citizen. Christ-Niggers and P.R.'s – why do we get all the human garbage?"

He looks at you expectantly.

## QUESTIONS

1. How would you react at this point?
2. Should you report Mr. Gates for this? What would happen to him if you did? To you?
3. If you were a Black or Hispanic worker who overheard this comment, what would your reaction be? What would you do?