EDUCATOR GUIDE

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ABOUT THE FILM

TRIGGERING WOUNDS tells the moving real-life story of a man from Harlem coming to terms with the impact of gun violence on his life and his community. Scenes with families, emergency responders, community leaders, and law enforcement interweave in this documentary film to provide an intimate portrait of a community struggling to understand, heal, and transform in the face of this devastating violence.

The film was directed and produced by students in The Maysles Documentary Center's Teen Producers Academy, and their production company No Straight Media, in partnership with Harlem Hospital Center and The New York County District Attorney's Office. *TRIGGERING WOUNDS* received "Best Documentary Award" at the 2013 Tribeca Film Festival's Our City, My Story Youth Showcase, and has screened at festivals, school, hospitals, prisons and community spaces across the globe.

THE FILMMAKERS

Keionn Ausby, L'Eunice Faust, Nataja Flood, Tatiyana Jenkins, Josue Loayza, Brittney Lopez, Roxanne Mauras, Vivian Morales, Aisha Ndiaye, Samantha Ramos, Hatuey Rodriguez, Alejandro Rosario, Langston Sanchez, Jasmine Velez

THE PROCESS OF MAKING *TRIGGERING WOUNDS*

The Teen Producers Academy at the Maysles Documentary Center was first launched in 2006 with the intention of bringing youth in the Harlem community access to the tools and confidence they need to become creative participants in digital media rather than passive consumers of it. Students are taught filmmaking techniques using a simple approach that emphasizes direct observation and personal experience.

Due to the strong work of our 2011 summer program, Harlem Hospital Center and The New York County District Attorney's Office asked our students to produce a short film that could be screened to victims in Harlem Hospital Center's trauma center upon receiving treatment for gun and puncture wounds. Over the next year and a half, the students worked alongside families, community advocates, law enforcement officials, medical professionals, and others affected by gun violence to produce this film.

The film is an integral part of Harlem Hospital Center's rehabilitation program where it is shown to victims of gun and knife violence as part of their efforts to reduce deaths and repeat incidences of violence. The film is also screening in the waiting rooms of the NYC Department of Probation, and many schools, hospitals, prisons, and community spaces across the globe.

GOALS OF THIS EDUCATOR GUIDE

To engage students and community in an open discussion about the root causes and impacts of violence; to envision solutions to gun violence; and to share resources.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Discuss and evaluate the definition of violence
- Analyze and reflect upon national statistics about gun violence
- Consider the role violence has in their lives
- Identify how and why violence occurs, as well as generate ideas of how violence can be prevented using the film as a springboard for discussion and examples
- Contemplate the way in which violence particularly affects community and ways in which students can be a positive force in their own communities to bring about an end to violence

HOW TO USE THIS EDUCATOR GUIDE

This educator guide is structured into pre-screening and post-screening activities around the film *TRIGGERING WOUNDS*. It is meant to be a menu for educators to pick and choose lessons customized according to student learning and workshop time.

The topic of violence can bring up a lot of emotions and experiences for educators, students and community members. It is important for educators to reflect about the goals and responsibilities of discussing violence, and to not make any assumptions about participating students and community members.

We recommend all workshops being with the pre-screening activity CREATING A SAFE SPACE [p.5]

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Creating a Safe Space [*RECOMMENDED FOR ALL WORKSHOPS*]

Time: 10 minutes
Supplies: Whiteboard/ Butcher Paper, Markers, Tape
Goal: To create a safe space for students to feel comfortable listening, feeling and sharing

Educator should inform students that before they proceed with the workshop, it is important to establish a safe space so everyone can feel comfortable participating.

On whiteboard or butcher paper, draw a large circle and inside it write "Safe Space." Ask students to call out what they need to ensure a safe space. Examples you can add if they aren't mentioned:

- ONE MIC meaning one person speaks at a time
- STEP UP, STEP BACK meaning if you like to talk a lot challenge yourself to move up your listening, if you don't share often move up your speaking
- RESPECT each other and each other's ideas
- ADDRESS THE COMMENT, NOT THE PERSON
- CONFIDENTIALITY what is said in this space needs to stay in this space, for respect, safety and protection
- DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS you don't know what anyone else has been through

When finished, have students name things that don't contribute to a safe space, and write those outside the "Safe Space" circle. Examples include:

- NO NAME CALLING
- NO LAUGHING AT SOMEONE'S EXPERIENCES
- NO DISSING SOMEONE'S NEIGHBORHOOD

Have students agree on the definition of safe space. Keep this up for the workshop in case you need to remind students about respecting each other and the space.

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Defining Violence

Time: 20 minutes
Supplies: Whiteboard/ Butcher Paper, Markers, Tape
Goal: To introduce the topic of violence

Write the word VIOLENCE on the whiteboard/paper and ask the students to brainstorm other words associations.

Highlight common points and help students make connections between different types of violence; where people experience violence (i.e. in media, personal experience, war, etc.); and emotions that are brought up by violence.

Once there is a sufficient list, ask for a volunteer to create a definition of violence, using the brainstorming session for inspiration.

Share some national statistics from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Stat #1
For the 2011 year, 16,238 people were killed in homicides by firearms. Of this number, 4,554 were young people, ages 15-24. This averages to about 13 young people killed per day.

- Ask students how they feel about hearing this.

Stat #2
According to the CDC, violence is "a serious health problem in the United States" and is listed as the 2nd leading cause of death (after motor vehicle crashes) for young people, ages 15-24.

- Ask the students what they make of the fact that violence is categorized as a "health problem."
- Ask students to reflect on how thinking about gun violence as a health issue would affect how we deal with it as an issue.

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Violence Barometer

Time: 20 minutes
Supplies: Tape, a piece of paper labeled "Agree," a piece of paper labeled "Disagree"
Goal: To get students moving and thinking about where they stand on the issue of violence
Prep: Hang "Agree" paper on one end of room and "Disagree" paper on opposite end of room

Ask students if they know what a barometer is – *a tool to measure*. Explain that they are going to participant in an activity to measure how they feel about violence. Let them know there is no wrong or right answer to a barometer question, but that it is about what they feel and believe.

At one end of the room direct students to the "Agree" paper posted on a wall, and on another end of the room, the "Disagree" sign. Explain that you are going to read a series of statements, and they are to stand along the spectrum of Agree/Disagree according to how they feel about the statement. They are allowed to stand in the middle or anywhere along the barometer spectrum.

Read one statement at a time. After students have placed themselves along barometer, ask for people to share why they are standing where they are. Other students are allowed to change their minds and move along the spectrum upon hearing other people's comments. Make sure to hear from people standing in the Agree, Disagree and also the Middle of the barometer.

Statements:

- The media (i.e. newspapers, books, music, video games) causes violence
- Young people are more violent than adults
- Physical violence is worse than verbal or emotional violence
- Violence is justified in certain situations

Process:

- Was there anything that surprised you by this activity?
- Were there any stories that came up for people that they would like to share?

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Hands in the Air (or Stomp your Feet)

Time: 5 minutes
Goal: To get a quick sense of how participants are connected to the issue of gun violence

If participants are sitting down, ask them to put their hands in the air after every statement you read that's true. If participants are standing, ask them to stomp their feet after every statement that's true.

Hands in the Air (or Stomp Your Feet) if:

- Gun violence impacts your community
- You or someone you know has lost someone to gun violence
- You have ever tried to do something to help stop gun violence

Introduce *TRIGGERING WOUNDS*

Time: 5 minutes
Goal: To introduce the film, youth filmmakers, and participating partners

Share a brief summary of what the film is about [see About the Film, p. 3] and for what purpose it was made [see The Filmmakers and The Process of Making *TRIGGERING WOUNDS*, p. 3].

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Small Group Discussions

Time: 30 minutes
Goal: To allow students an intimate space to process their feelings and thoughts from the film

Have the students break up into smaller groups and discuss the following questions. Remind folks of the safe space agreements.

- *In the film, you see that Beloved had a transformation. What do you think he needed to be able to make that transformation?*
- *Why do you think violence is such an issue in our society? Why do you think it is so prevalent especially among young people?*
- *Why do you think guns are so often used as homicide weapons? What is your opinion of young people in possession of firearms? What are some other attitudes towards guns that you have witnessed in other young people?*
- *Have you ever personally been involved in a fight or other violent activity? Have you ever been witness to such activity, or personally affected by others carrying out violent acts around you?*

After the small group discussion, go through the questions one by one as an entire group and ask for volunteers from the small groups to summarize their group discussions.

For the more personal questions ask if anyone would be willing to share anything about their own experiences within the safe space of the group—assure them that it is alright if they do not feel comfortable doing so.

If this is the last activity, close out the workshop by asking students to name one thing they want to do help address the issue of gun violence.

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Co-Centric Circles

Time: 30 minutes
Goal: To help students develop their communication and listening skills while giving everyone a chance to talk with each other

Divide students evenly into Group A and Group B. Have Group A stand in a circle with their backs to each other, facing outward. Have Group B stand in a larger circle, outside the first circle, facing inward so that the two circles are facing each other.

Explain that this activity is a listening and talking activity. Let them know that you will read a statement by which Group A will have 1 minute to respond to the statement. While Group A is responding, Group B cannot talk – they can only listen. After one minute, you will ask the pairs to switch, and Group B will have a minute to talk while their partner in Group A listens.

After each person has had their chance to respond to the statement, Group A will shift one person over so they are facing a new partner from Group B. You will read out another statement, and repeat the same listening/talking process.

Sample Statements:

- Please talk about your community and the strengths and challenges of it.
- What did you think of the community depicted in the film *TRIGGERING WOUNDS*? What were their strengths and challenges?
- Who were the major players in the film, and how did they each relate to their community?
- Who are the major players in your community, and how do they relate?
- Is your community image positive or negative? If it is negative, how can it be changed? If it is positive, how can it be promoted?
- Does your community have a voice? What does that voice stand for? If not, how do think your community can achieve a voice?
- What role does violence play in your community? Who is mainly affected by this violence? Are there people trying to stop the violence or are they perpetuating it?

Process:

- What did you learn about each other?
- Were there any stories that people want to share?
- What did students think of the activity structure of listening and responded? Was it hard to practice? Emphasize how important attentive listening is to conflict-resolution situations

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Tree of Violence and Solutions Tree

Time: 45 minutes
Supplies: Two butcher papers, each with a large, blank tree; post-it notes; pens/ sharpies; tape
Goal: To explore the outward manifestations and root causes of violence; to generate a vision of what a peaceful society can look like
Prep: Hang up one butcher paper for "Tree of Violence" Part A activity. When complete, hang up butcher paper "Solutions Tree" for Part B activity.

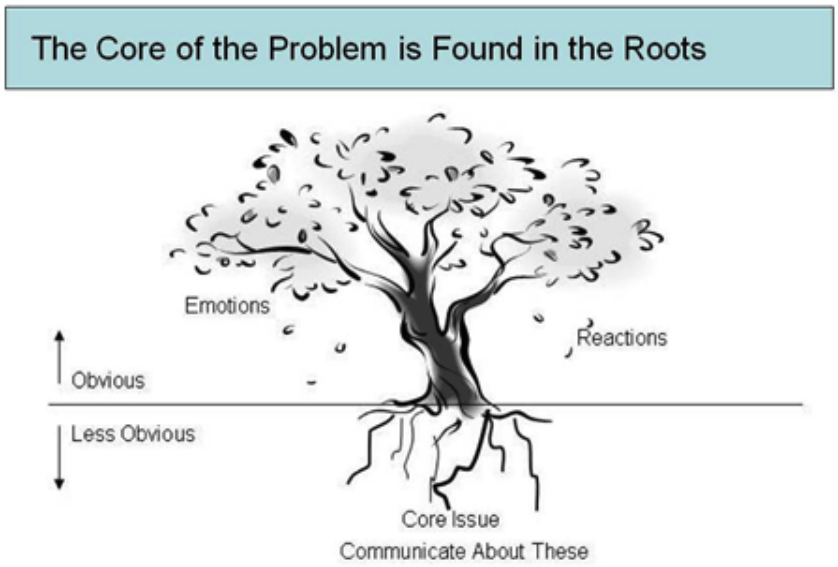
Part A "Tree of Violence"

Write VIOLENCE in the center of one of the blank trees. Explain to students that we are going to explore violence through our "Tree of Violence."

Hand out post-it notes and pens/sharpies to students. Ask students to write one idea or manifestation of violence on each post-it note and place it on the branches of the tree. They can use *TRIGGERING WOUNDS* as a springboard for ideas.

When finished, discuss as a group what was placed on the branches.

- What commonalities do we see?
- Are there any statements we need clarification on?



http://freebooks.uvu.edu/SOC1200/index.php/ch06-communication-and-connections.html

Explain to students that while we often notice what is on the branches of a tree, we rarely see the roots of the tree and where it gains nourishment. The next step of the activity is to have students try to identify the "Root Causes" of the violence they described earlier. *From where does the violence originate and grow from? Society often sees and experiences the violence, but what is CAUSING it?*

It may be helpful to guide them through some examples.

- i.e. "Bullying others" (outward manifestation) might be caused by "low-self esteem from parents putting student down"(root issue)
- Shooting people for jackets (outward manifestation), might be caused by poverty (root cause)
- Name calling that erupts into fighting (outward manifestation), might be caused by racism, prejudice, or xenophobia (root cause)

Have students write the unseen, underlying causes of violence and place their post-it's on the roots of the tree.

When finished, ask everyone to take a look at the root causes. Read through the statements, being sure to affirm everyone's contributions, and ask for clarification if needed. If some of the statements are not fully fleshed out, don't hesitate to facilitate the conversation to dig deeper to the root causes of violence. If someone says "Low Self-Esteem," ask WHY someone would have low self–esteem (i.e. bad body images from media, racism, sexism).

Process:

- How does identifying the root causes of violence affect the way you think about violence?

Part B "Solutions Tree"

Once the "Tree of Violence" has been thoroughly discussed, draw a new tree on another sheet of paper and label it SOLUTIONS. Ask the students to write down and post their possible solutions to violence on the branches of the tree. Discuss the ideas generated.

Ask the students to now think of the conditions that would necessary in order to achieve these solutions. In other words, what underlying or hidden social, political, economic factors would need would be present in order to these solutions to work? Ask them to use examples from the film as inspiration. If it helps the discussion, focus in on the conditions that one solution would need in order to become a reality i.e. "Conflict-Resolution Groups" (outward solution) require "strong community bonds" or "willingness to forgive" (hidden conditions). Ask the students to post their ideas on the roots of the tree and discus them, asking them cite examples from film if possible.

End the discussion by asking the students what they think are the best solutions to violence they came up with, and how they as individuals can help bring about the conditions necessary to achieve these kinds of solutions.

RESOURCES

Cure Violence New York (SNUG)
("Guns" spelled backwards) works directly with those with those who are most at risk for shooting others or being shot themselves and persuades them to find peaceful solutions to conflict. Includes Operation Harlem SNUG, Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) South Bronx, S.O.S Crown Heights, and East New York.

Street Corner Resources
Offers education, training, and employment opportunities to residents of a Harlem. Anti gun and gang violence is at the core of the street work as well as advocacy and intervention.

Harlem Mothers SAVE
Seeks to prolong the lives of Harlem's youth by preventing gun violence and its social causes and costs.

Brotherhood Sister Sol
Harlem-based organization that provides comprehensive, holistic and long-term support services to youth who range in age from eight to twenty-two.

Center for Court Innovation
Seeks to aid victims, reduce crime, strengthen neighborhoods, reduce incarceration, and improve public trust in justice. The Center combines action and reflection to spark justice reform locally, nationally, and internationally.

El Barrio Youth Task Force
A diverse collaborative of youth and community organizations which aims to directly involve young people in the development of positive alternatives that will counter violence by engaging and empowering local youth.

The Interrupters
A feature documentary following three Cure Violence workers who try to protect their Chicago communities from the violence they once employed.

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Langston Sanchez
Sasha Alexander

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