



Substance Abuse Awareness Activity: *Fourth of July Story*

• **Length:** 30 minutes

• **Set-up:** Any set-up will work

• **Type:** 6 to 30 adults

Trainer Script:

I'm going to read you a short story. Just listen the first time. Then I will reread the story and ask you to take notes.

Instructions:

1. Hand out pencils or pens and paper for all participants.
2. Ask participants to put the pencils, pens and paper on the floor beside or under their chairs.

3. Read story:

Cheryl and Brent held a Fourth of July party for many of their close friends and co-workers. It is around 1:30 a.m. on the Fifth, all fireworks have been shot off, and the party is nearly over. Phil, one of Brent's co-workers, is the last remaining guest, and the host and hostess are ready to call it a night. The problem is that Phil is obviously drunk, and Cheryl is afraid that it would not be safe for him to drive home. She takes her husband, Brent, aside and suggests that he ask Phil to spend the night in their guest room. Brent, however, also having had a bit too much to drink and just wanting some quiet time, convinces Cheryl that mentioning Phil's condition would simply be embarrassing. So, with no mention of concern, Brent helps Phil to his car and returns to the house to spend a few moments with his wife before retiring.

Meanwhile, Jeremy, a local 17-year-old youth, has stolen a motorcycle from a nearby convenience store at gun point. He is speeding through the night with his friend, Travis, who Jeremy has just picked up. Travis is unaware of the theft and is enjoying the ride. Jeremy told Travis that his uncle had loaned him the motorcycle for the week.

At a poorly lit corner in a residential district of the city, Jeremy loses control of the motorcycle, is unable to stop for a stop sign, and skids into the intersection.

Materials needed:

- Large tablet on easel
- Markers
- Pencils or pens and paper for all participants
- Read story while participants only listen.

Meanwhile, Phil, who has just left the Fourth of July party, is also entering the intersection and by the time he notices the motorcycle sliding into his path, he is unable to avoid a collision. Jeremy is badly injured and unconscious. Phil gets out of his car, and begins to stagger to where Jeremy lies on the pavement in front of his car. Travis had been thrown off the motorcycle as it began to skid. He is able to get to his feet and runs toward where his friend Jeremy is lying. He quickly becomes enraged by Phil's obviously drunken state, pulls a knife and attacks Phil. When Travis realizes that he has slashed Phil seriously, he panics and flees, leaving Jeremy and Phil lying bleeding in the middle of the intersection.

Trainer Script:

Here is the cast of characters:

Cheryl

Brent

Phil

Jeremy

Travis

Write down the names on your paper and then you can take a few notes to help you remember who each character is as I read the story again.

Reread the story out loud.

Trainer Script:

Now, I want you to rank the characters, with #1 being the person you like most, and #5 being the person you like least. In doing this, I want you to remember that we are all a product of our environment. Everything that has happened to us will influence the way we think. There are no right or wrong answers.

Now let's go around the room and read off just the number ranking of each person in order. At this time we will not discuss the reasons for our ranking.



- Write names of characters on tablet: Cheryl, Brent, Phil, Jeremy, Travis.
- Reread story while participants take notes.
- Allow the participants 1 to 2 minutes to complete their ranking.



Instructions:

Read the name of each person in the story and, going around the room, mark down how each participant ranked that person.

- Tabulate on tablet.



Cheryl _____

Brent _____

Phil _____

Jeremy _____

Travis _____

Trainer Script:

Here is an interesting observation: All of you work in the same field, have some of the same educational background, deal with the same resources, yet there is a wide variety of opinions. Think about how diverse the opinions would be of people whom you have little in common.

Trainer Script:

Let's finish this activity with some sharing from those that are comfortable doing so.

- Would someone who gave Cheryl a #1 like to comment?
- How about someone who gave Cheryl a #5?
- Would someone who gave Brent a #1 like to comment?
- How about someone who gave Brent a #5?
- Would someone who gave Phil a #1 like to comment?
- How about someone who gave Phil a #5?
- Would someone who gave Jeremy a #1 like to comment?
- How about someone who gave Jeremy a #5?
- Would someone who gave Travis a #1 like to comment?
- How about someone who gave Travis a #5?

Questions for Further Discussion:

- *Who was doing what they thought was a kind or loving thing?*
- *According to the courts, who would be “wrong” . . . who is to blame?*
- *Whose lives have been affected by this incident?*
- *Who could have benefited by education about alcohol and drug abuse?*
- *What are some of the costs of society as a result of this incident?*
- *What could society have done so that this wouldn't have happened?*

Trainer Script:

Are there any other comments about this activity?

Thank you for participating and for being willing to share some of your personal thoughts and feelings.

- Closure.