

VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN DIGNITY OUTSIDE SCHOOL DISCUSSION GUIDE

If time permits, choose from the following questions and lead the class in discussion. Use the answer key below each question.

» Are persons sometimes treated as objects in romantic relationships?

Answer key:

Persons are treated as objects in romantic relationships whenever someone uses the other person for their own pleasure or enjoyment, and doesn't respect their dignity. In these situations, the one who treats the other as an object, always cares more for what he can get from the other person, rather than respecting the other and what's good for them. It can happen that two people mutually treat each other as objects for their pleasure or enjoyment. This can seem like a happy relationship but it is still treating a person as an object, which goes against their dignity, even if it's mutual.

» Do employers sometimes treat workers as objects?

Answer key:

In the workplace, it is necessary that both employers and workers agree on the common goal they are pursuing, such as producing better quality food, providing better education, offering a restful experience to the hotel guests, etc. This can apply to companies, to the military, or almost any other organization. To more efficiently achieve goals of the organization, often in the organization some people with more knowledge, skills or experience are in charge, and some others follow them. Nevertheless, it sometimes does happen that persons in charge: leaders, owners, presidents or CEOs, do treat their subordinates as objects. This happens whenever they want to achieve the goal of the company at the expense of the individuals: e.g. asking them to work overtime and not paying the extra hours, exposing their workers to harm (safety or health hazards employees are not informed about), lying about company goals or activities, asking them to do something that goes against their values, etc.

» Do we sometimes treat persons as objects in the family?

Answer key:

This unfortunately sometimes also happens. Even though the family is the best place to learn to treat others as subjects, this does not always happen. Sometimes parents treat children as objects: e.g. when excessively punishing them even though this will not help children improve themselves, or when parents of older children want to impose their wishes on them (e.g. with regard to deciding which career to pick). Sometimes children treat parents as objects: e.g. when they are being careless if they are hurting their parents with their words, if they are lying to their parents to get something from them (such as a new gadget or money), or if they expect their parents to do all of the housework or clean up after them.

» Is there objectification in the media and culture?

Answer key:

Yes, unfortunately there is objectification in the media and culture. We can see that in TV or online commercials where women or men are shown simply for their physical looks or what they can offer to someone else (pleasure, money, access, fame, etc.) Some movies and books also promote achieving success by using other persons for personal advantage. On the other hand, objects are sometimes treated almost like persons (e.g. we are suggested that they can bring happiness, that we can build relationships with them or love them). One person said that the problem with the world today is that we treat persons as objects, and objects as persons.