



## PEACE IN THE HOUSE

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*"I see a lot of stuff, like fist fights, and I'm going to help my friends get out of trouble." Fourteen-year-old Darvis (a PEACE IN THE HOUSE participant) doesn't get into much trouble, but he often faces situations that have potentially violent consequences. While navigating a myriad of choices, his decisions are likely influenced by how he will be viewed by his peers. Whether motivated by duty or a sense of belonging, he feels compelled to engage in inappropriate behavior. When Blues City Cultural Center created PEACE IN THE HOUSE, it had young people like Darvis in mind.*

PEACE IN THE HOUSE is a four-day conflict management, peace promotion workshop that integrates theatre, music, dance, and visual arts to educate and empower youth who may be susceptible to negative influences or high-risk behaviors. BCCC has found that the opportune period to implement preventive/intervention programs is during the elementary and middle school years before adverse behaviors become entrenched in young people's lives. Therefore, PEACE IN THE HOUSE is ideal for students in grades 4–9 (ages 9-14). By working collaboratively with practicing artists and other trained professionals, students learn how decision-making, impulse control, and conflict resolution skills can be used to avoid or diffuse confrontations. They come to understand the value of peace and how it can reside in their lives, homes, schools and communities. The workshop is presented on-site in a nurturing, safe environment where creativity and learning go hand-in-hand.

A National Endowment for the Arts longitudinal study found that at-risk youth who have access to the arts have better academic outcomes, higher career goals and are more civically engaged. Similar research indicates increases in self-esteem, improved emotional intelligence, and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Youth engaged in the arts are less likely to drop out of school, use drugs and alcohol, or display negative behavior. By using multiple skills and talents, arts promote the development of cognitive, social, and personal competencies that impact various domains of life.

Since its inception in 1993, PEACE IN THE HOUSE has engaged thousands of young people throughout Memphis and the Mid-South in a process that transforms the manner in which they view violence and other socially-inappropriate behaviors. Through the use of performing and visual arts, PEACE IN THE HOUSE demonstrates that young people can become the primary agents for promoting peace within their own lives and communities.

As with all its youth programming, BCCC employs nationally-recognized best practices. First, program delivery is a collaborative partnership among BCCC, agency staff, youth participants, families and other stakeholders. Second, it provides dynamic hands-on learning whereby youth are provided opportunities to succeed. Third, it recognizes and involves the communities in which youth live. Lastly the program culminates in a public performance or exhibition in an effort to build participants' self-esteem and sense of accomplishment through public recognition.

### **Workshop Goal**

Use the creative arts as a platform to engage students in activities that promote peace as a process for managing conflict, reducing incidences of violence, and promoting socially-appropriate behaviors.

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

BCCC anticipates the following outcomes:

- improved artistic knowledge and skills
- enhanced communication skills
- increased awareness of conflict-resolution techniques
- enhanced ability to choose peaceable solutions for conflicts
- increased resistance to peer pressure
- improved self-esteem and self-efficacy

## **Tennessee Education Standards**

### **DANCE**

- ***Elements and Skills***

Identify and demonstrate movement elements and skills in performing dance.

- ***3.0 Creativity and Communication***

Understand dance as a way to create and communicate meaning.

- ***4.0 Criticism and Analysis***

Apply and demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills in dance.

- ***7.0 Interdisciplinary Connections***

Make connections between dance and other disciplines.

### **GENERAL MUSIC**

- ***Singing***

Sing alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

- ***3.0 Improvising***

Improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

- ***8.0 Interdisciplinary Connections***

Understand relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.

## **THEATRE**

- ***Script Writing***

Write scripts through improvising, drafting, and refining scripts based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history.

- ***2.0 Character Acting***

Develop basic acting skills by portraying characters in improvised and scripted scenes.

- ***3.0 Scene Design***

Design by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes.

- ***5.0 Research***

Research by using cultural and historical information to support improvised and scripted scenes.

- ***6.0 Theatrical Presentation***

Compare and incorporate art forms by analyzing methods of presentation and audience response for theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms.

- ***8.0 Context***

Understand context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the community and in other cultures

## **VISUAL ART**

- ***Media, Techniques and Processes***

Understand and apply media, techniques, and processes.

- ***2.0 Structures and Functions***

Use knowledge of both structures and functions.

- ***5.0 Reflecting and Assessing***

Reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

- ***6.0 Interdisciplinary Connections***

Make connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

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## PEACE IN THE HOUSE COMPONENTS

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### ***Pre-Workshop Planning***

A BCCC coordinator will meet with school faculty to discuss the workshop and implementation. At that time, student participants and the optimum days/time for the workshop will be determined. The workshop will be implemented over a four-day period. Teaching artists and facilitators with expertise in working with at-risk youth will guide dialogues and hands-on exploratory arts

### **Day 1: Theatre Performance**

*Ritual Murder*, a play by Tom Dent that focuses on the aftermath of a murder and the rippling effect of one violent act will be presented. Other members of the student body, parents and other stakeholders can be invited to attend this performance. A talk-back session following the performance allows students, audience members, and actors to engage in a discussion regarding the production and its primary message.

Recognizing that communication is key to managing and resolving conflict, open dialogue will be integrated throughout the workshop. Students will be encouraged to speak freely and creatively while exploring issues that jeopardize or hinder peace as a process. Trained professionals will address and resolve sensitive/emotional issues that may arise from discussions and group interactions. Supported by a nurturing, non-threatening environment, youth will be encouraged to talk about their own experiences, ultimately finding a common ground that can serve as their foundation for promoting peace.

### **Day 2 – 3: Exploratory Arts and Creative Expression**

Students will collaborate with teaching artists to create artworks related to violence prevention and peace promotion. Represented among the artists will be dancers, musicians, poets and spoken word artists, actors and visual artists.

### **Day 4: Finale**

On the final day of the workshop, students—who have discovered their individual and collective artistic voices—stage a public presentation that incorporates their work, personal experiences, and commitment to promote peace as a sustainable way of living.

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## WORKSHOP SESSIONS

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### Defining Violence & Peace

**Overview.** There are multiple definitions of violence and peace. The dictionary defines violence as physical force exerted for the purpose of injuring, damaging, or abusing people or property and the unjust or abusive use of power. Peace is defined as a state of tranquility and freedom from quarrels and disagreement. In many instances, the ways in which individuals define peace and violence is relative to their own experiences, the environments in which they live, and their socio-economic status. Both peace and violence are learned behaviors.

### Objectives

- To allow students to explore personal meanings of violence
- To identify and discuss types of violence in society
- To discuss the level of exposure students have had with violence

### Activities

1. Students will discuss ideas about the nature of violence. What is their definition of violence and why does it occur? Ask students how their definitions of violence are similar/different to the dictionary definition? What strategies can be used to prevent violence among young people and in communities?
2. Students will discuss ideas about peace. What is their definition of peace and how does it occur? Ask students how their definitions of peace are similar/different to the dictionary definition? What strategies can be used to prevent violence among young people and in communities?
3. Violence doesn't always have to be physical. Individuals with power or perceived power often use non-physical violence that results in psychological harm. Examples of non-physical violence include bullying, threats, and intimidation. Students will discuss incidences of non-physical violence they have witnessed in popular culture (media, film/television) or draw upon their own experiences.
4. Many acts of violence can be eliminated or reduce if individuals understand that they have options. Students will be presented with several scenarios depicting conflict situations. Using the ABC method conflict resolution, they will determine an option an options that is nonviolent, meets the needs of people involved, and improves relationships. The ABC method includes ASK what is the problem, BRAINSTORM solutions, and CHOOSE the best option.

5. Using the Many Names of Violence chart, students will discuss incidences of violence with an emphasis on community and interpersonal violence. Students may draw upon popular culture or their own experiences. Continue by saying, violence is widespread in society. We see it all over-Nationally, internationally, community wide, interpersonally, institutionally (See "The Many Names of Violence" Information Sheet).

<b>The Many Names of Violence</b> Developed by Deborah Prothrow-Stith, MD		
<b>INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE</b>	Violence between nations or that takes place across national boundaries	war and terrorism
<b>NATIONAL VIOLENCE</b>	Violence that takes place on a large scale within a nation	civil war, mass rioting, and civil unrest
<b>COMMUNITY VIOLENCE</b>	Violence that takes place on a large scale within a particular community	police violence and gang warfare
<b>INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE</b>	Violence sponsored or supported by institutions such as national or local governments as a way of maintaining power	Army activity in Egypt related to Mubarak's presidency
<b>INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE</b>	Violence that occurs between two or more persons	Intimate partner violence, bullying, and teen dating violence

6. Now that students have a general understanding of the differences between peace and violence, they will write a personal pledge describing what they will do to promote peace in their lives and communities.