

Guide for Showing and Processing the IIRP Documentary *Burning Bridges*

INTRODUCE THE VIDEO

It is usually helpful to give some basic background information before showing this documentary:

- As an introduction, read aloud the synopsis on the back of the video box.
- Briefly explain to students or other viewers why they are being asked to watch the video. If showing this video is one part of your school or organization's ongoing restorative practices implementation process, you might discuss that briefly at this point.
- Tell the group there will be time afterward to discuss the film.

SHOW THE VIDEO

PROCESS THE VIDEO

Questions

These questions can help students or other groups process the documentary. These are certainly not the only questions you could ask, but can help get the process started.

- What role did peer pressure play in the incident?
- What do you think made it so difficult for any one of these men to say, "Stop. Don't do this."?
- What part of the conference do you think had the greatest impact on the offenders?
- The judge shortened the jail sentence of the six men based on the full-length video of the conference that he saw prior to sentencing. Do you think this was fair? Why or why not?
- In what ways might participating in a conference like this be harder emotionally than going to jail?
- What do you think the young men got from the conference?
- What do you think the community members got from the conference?
- What do you think the young men's family members got from the conference?
- What lessons can you take from this documentary?

Processing Approaches

If processing the video in small groups of 10 and under, you can use questions as go-around material for a circle. How to run a circle discussion:

- Ask the class or group to form a circle of chairs.
- Pose the processing question to the group.
- Ask for a volunteer to begin the go-around. Before this person responds to the question, he or she should indicate which direction around the circle the answering should continue.
- Proceed around the circle until everyone has had an opportunity to contribute.
- Ask a new question and repeat the process. Begin the responses with a new volunteer each time.

If there isn't enough time or the group is too large for this process, the questions can simply be posed to the group, giving those who volunteer a chance to share their thoughts. If this is done in an auditorium with a large group, you might want to consider using microphones so that people can hear each other express themselves in their own words.

Students could also respond to these questions in writing during class or as a homework assignment and share their thoughts with each other the next day. Generally, however, the sooner the film is processed, the more people seem to get out of it.

Some viewers might be curious about what happened to the young men beyond what is described in the documentary. All six of them completed the minimum time (18 days) in jail, entered their period of probation and began work on their court-ordered community service and payment of restitution.

Some might ask if the bridge has been rebuilt and if the young men participated in its reconstruction. As of this writing, the rebuilding is still in the planning stages.