

in the mix

THE NEW NORMAL

thirteen
WNET NEW YORK



(check local listings)

Special three-part series

A production of Thirteen/WNET New York and IN THE MIX

On September 11, 2001, the world changed for all Americans. To address the effects of the tragedy on teens, Thirteen/WNET and IN THE MIX, the national Emmy-award winning weekly PBS series for young people, have developed **IN THE MIX: THE NEW NORMAL**, a special three-part series that explores the aftermath of September 11th. The result is a series of powerful half-hour documentaries (**Living with Change; Get the News?—Media Literacy; and Dealing with Differences**) from the perspective of teenagers throughout New York, across the country and around the world that show how teens view their changed world at a pivotal time in American history. The series, with its companion discussion guide and web site, has been developed with input from leading experts.

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

Studies conducted by RMC Research on previous *IN THE MIX* specials have shown that these programs engage the interest of teenagers, deliver information and catalyze discussion on critical issues, as well as promote analytical thinking and a greater sense of self-efficacy among teens. The aim is to encourage thought and allow teens to generate their own creative solutions.

In this guide, we have outlined specific questions, based on the program's content, with answers. These questions can be used to open up more analytical discussion about related concepts. Also included are in-class activities and longer-term projects that are presented in boxes. We suggest showing the entire program to the group and then running individual segments followed by discussion.

In The Mix AWARDS

- CINE Golden Eagle Awards for *Financial Literacy; On the Money!* and *9-11 Looking Back...Moving Forward*
- Partnership for Media Education Award for *Media Literacy: TV, What You Don't See*
- Entertainment Industries Council PRISM Awards for *Drug Abuse: Altered States; ECSTASY*
- Young Adult Library Services Association's "Notables" list for *School Violence: Answers From The Inside; Depression: On the Edge; ECSTASY; 9-11: Looking Back...Moving Forward*
- Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Honor Roll of Quality Youth Programming
- New York Emmy for Children's Programming
- National Emmy for Community Service Programming

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Please visit our website for descriptions, lesson plans, video clips, transcripts, guides, etc. for this and other *In the Mix* programs at: www.inthemix.org

THE NEW NORMAL

LIVING WITH CHANGE



The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 have changed the way we think of our world, our nation and ourselves. In this program, hosted by Eden Riegel, we hear from teenagers who experienced the disaster firsthand, as well as those who were separated from the tragedy by thousands of miles but were nonetheless deeply affected. The teens describe their feelings and experiences in the days immediately following the attacks, and the ways in which their lives and attitudes have changed in the succeeding months of uncertainty. Strategies are given for coping with tragedies, both personal and national in scope; finding ways to return to normalcy; and encouraging teens to take an active role in their future world.

This guide to **LIVING WITH CHANGE** contains four major sections which include questions, discussion topics, and activities. A list of resources is at the end of the booklet.

TEENS AT GROUND ZERO

Students from the H.S. of Economics & Finance, located less than a block away from the World Trade Center complex, describe what they saw, felt and experienced on the morning of September 11, 2001.

In a second segment, Phil, a 17-year-old senior at a Manhattan high school, who is also a certified Emergency Medical Technician, talks about volunteering at the World Trade Center site in the first hours and days after the attack.

1. The five students from high school—Mahdi, Denienne, Mirela, Austin, and Kristin—describe exiting the school building in a relatively orderly fashion after the second tower was hit. What changed as soon as they were outside? *they saw the towers on fire; were enveloped in clouds of smoke; ash and dust; did not know where they were supposed to go; did not know how much danger they were in; began panicking; became scattered; became separated from teachers*
2. Once the students reached the Staten Island Ferry and felt that they were out of immediate danger, they had time to think about the events taking place around them. How did they react? *some tried to help their friends; some were overcome with fear, sorrow and broke down in tears*

Further Discussion:

What were your thoughts and feelings when you first learned about the September 11th attacks? What or who helped you deal with your feelings? How did the attacks change your home or school life?

Have you ever been evacuated from your school because of an emergency, real or imagined? How did you and your classmates react? Did you feel only one emotion, or did you experience many different emotions? Did the event have any lasting effects on the students and teachers?

3. What did Phil, the 17-year old EMT, do when he first heard that the twin towers had collapsed? *he decided to go to the site to see if he could help; he left school, changed into his uniform and made his way to the site; he began helping injured people at a triage center and joined the bucket brigade*
4. In giving assistance, Phil knew he was putting himself in danger. What kind of hazards did he deal with at ground zero? *smoke and dust in his lungs made it difficult to breathe; his eyes became filled with dust and ash; he was standing on ground that might collapse; he often worked to the point of physical and mental exhaustion*
5. How did his experience affect his plans for the future? *he had been volunteering for 2 years with a neighborhood ambulance corps; his experience helped him to confirm his desire to become an EMT or a paramedic*

Further Discussion:

Because he had EMT training, Phil knew he might be able to help those at the Trade Center site. If you had his training and were in his position, would you have headed towards ground zero, or away from it? What if you had no specialized training? Discuss the concept of balancing your own personal safety and the responsibility to help others who are in need.

Phil describes his work at the site as emotionally taxing, but also feels that helping in the rescue and relief effort was an important part of being able to cope with the overwhelming events. Do you feel that taking action can help a person cope with loss or tragedy? Did the events of 9-11, or any other traumatic event, move you or your classmates to try to make a difference? If so, did your efforts help you deal with your own feelings and emotions about the attacks?

Related Activities:

For more information on Phil, visit his online scrapbook at pbs.org/mix/newnormal or for direct access to scrapbooks: pbs.org/mix/newnormal/scrapbk.html.

FACING LOSS: JAMIE'S STORY

Jamie's stepfather, a New York area firefighter, died in the line of duty on September 11th. She discusses the emotions she went through following the sudden loss and her struggle to rebuild her life.

1. Jamie lived with her stepfather Jeff since she was eight and they had a close relationship. Once she became convinced that he was not coming home, what did Jamie do?
she stopped going to school; she stopped answering the phone; she stopped interacting with family members and friends; she stayed by herself and wrote about her feelings
2. What made Jamie reluctant to return to school after her stepfather died?
she was unsure of how students and teachers would treat her; she didn't want special treatment or to be singled out; she was physically and emotionally drained; not yet ready to deal with the responsibilities of school
3. What did she want people to say to her?
that they knew and they were sorry for her loss

Further Discussion:

Why might someone who has experienced a profound loss resent or fear special treatment? How have you treated, or would you treat, a classmate or friend who has suffered a tragedy? How would you want people to treat you if you were in Jamie's situation? Have you been in a position where you were unsure of what to say to someone following a death?

4. What happened once Jamie started to return to her schedule and activities?
being with friends helped her cope with her loss; she was able to think of things besides just the loss of her stepfather; she felt like she was doing what her stepfather would have wanted her to do
5. What advice does Jamie give to teens who have lost someone they love?
write about your feelings and read your words aloud to the person who has died; get out of the house and do something besides just drowning in your own thoughts and feelings

Further Discussion:

Jamie explains that her stepfather's death has changed everything, right down to her dance recitals. Discuss how losing someone close to you might have an effect on every part of your life.

For Jamie, one of the hardest things about dealing with the sudden loss of her stepfather is that she has so many regrets about unkind things she said or did, and that she had no time to make it up to him. Do you know that regret and self-blame is a normal reaction after the death of a loved one? Can a feeling of guilt or regret make grief even harder to cope with? If you were in Jamie's position, how might you begin to move past feelings of regret and guilt?

Related Activities:

Jamie states that writing about her feelings really helped her deal with losing her stepfather. Ask students to write a journal page about the thought of losing someone close to them or about their own feelings about the events of 9-11. Possible themes to include are:

- How the world has changed
- What I miss from the time before this happened
- How my own life is different
- How I might deal with my feelings
- What I will do from now on

Despite her perfectly normal feelings of sadness and regret, Jamie can also look back on the many things she cherishes about her relationship with her stepfather, including their openness and honesty with each other. Ask students to write the name of a friend or family member on an index card, and have them list positive things about them. Encourage volunteers to share their thoughts.

FINDING WAYS TO COPE

Students at the H. S. of Economics & Finance discuss how they coped in the days and weeks following 9-11.

In a second segment, Michael, the son of a Long Island firefighter, talks about how his fears and feelings about the attacks and his father's work caused him to seek escape in drugs and alcohol.

1. How did most of the students feel about returning to their school near Ground Zero?
they were enthusiastic about being on their normal schedules in a familiar school; the wreckage was being cleared and it looked like a construction site; they felt that school helped them deal with the events of 9-11
2. How did the school administrators help them cope?
they were encouraged to talk about their feelings; they were close to their teachers; there were counselors; everyone's door was always open

Further Discussion:

Why do you think it was so important for the students to return to their high school building and normal schedules? Discuss people's desire for routine and normalcy in times of stress or trauma.

Related Activities:

Ask students to research and compile a list of local resources where teens can get help if they are having problems.

3. How did Michael, the son of a Long Island area firefighter, react to the attacks on the World Trade Center?
he started using cocaine; he began drinking more alcohol in an attempt to block out what was going on; skipped classes and stopped talking to friends

Further Discussion:

Michael states that several of his classmates and friends tried to talk to him about his drug problem, but he just ignored them. Later, he realized that he should have listened when they tried to offer help. If a friend of yours were using drugs and/or alcohol, what would you do? What sorts of things might you say to him or her? What if he or she brushed off your concerns?

4. What was the sudden realization that made Michael want to seek help for his drug and alcohol problem?

he began to understand the enormous stress and pressure his father was dealing with; he realized that his father might die at any time; he didn't want his father's final impression of him to be as a "loser" who would amount to nothing

5. How did Michael's life improve once he sought help and managed to get clean?

he feels in tune with what's going on around him; he feels less withdrawn and he's able to pay more attention to his life; he's found purpose and direction and he has a better relationship with his family

6. How did facing up to the reality of what happened on 9-11 help Michael turn his life around?

he understood that thousands of people died in a split second and came to value his own life and the lives of his mom and dad; he decided he wants to be a firefighter

Further Discussion:

Michael believes that if you use drugs as an escape, "whatever you're trying to escape from is going to get to you." Do you agree? What are some better ways for a person in Michael's situation to deal with overwhelming emotions? How did you attempt to deal with the emotions you felt following the 9-11 attacks and the ongoing threats?

The Students at the H.S. of Economics feel that the atmosphere of open communication between students, teachers and counselors helped a lot of them cope with their emotions about 9-11. Contrast this with Michael's initial attempts to deal with his own feelings by retreating into drugs.

LIVING IN THE POST-9-11 WORLD

High School students in California and Colorado discuss their reactions to the attacks in New York and Washington and how they affected their lives.

In a second segment, the teens from the H.S. of Economics & Finance discuss facing their futures in a world forever changed.

1. In what ways have the September 11th terrorist attacks changed how the Los Angeles and Colorado teens view their lives and the world?

they think more about danger and the threat of terrorism; they feel less sheltered and protected; they think about life's meaning and how they can help change the world; they are more interested in the events and conditions in foreign countries; they think more about issues like freedom, patriotism, justice and security

Further Discussion:

Do you look at your own life or future differently after 9-11? How have the attacks changed your attitudes and beliefs?

Nia, from California, says that the events of 9-11 have made her even more determined to travel and to try to understand people and cultures from other parts of the world. How important is international and cross-cultural understanding to you? To the nation as a whole? With regards to global understanding and cooperation, do you think post-9-11 awareness will ultimately have a positive or negative effect?

Related Activity:

Mike, one of the Colorado teens, suggests that our desires for freedom and security can sometimes be in conflict. To explore this issue, divide the blackboard into two vertical sections, writing "freedom" on the left and "security" on the right. Have the students brainstorm, coming up with freedoms that Americans are guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. List as many of these freedoms as you can on the left.

Next, have the students think of established, proposed or potential security measures that could make Americans less vulnerable to internal or external terrorism, and list these on the right. Have the students examine both lists to identify entries on the right side that could conflict with entries on the left. Draw lines connecting these conflicting concepts, and discuss. In each case, how would the students attempt to balance the expected freedom with the potential security measure?

2. With regards to 9-11, what have many of the students of H.S. of Economics & Finance resolved about their futures?
they won't let fear or sorrow hold them back; they won't use the attacks and displacement as an excuse to slack off; they have stronger personal goals and motivation; they value what's important in life

Further Discussion:

What do you think are the most important effects of the September 11th attacks? How do these affect your plans, goals or expectations for the future?

All of the teens in the episode stress the common theme that, while they may be concerned about future terrorist attacks, they will not let this fear determine how they live their lives. Discuss this in relation to the meaning of the word terrorism, and the objectives of those who spread terror. How can you keep alerts and threats in perspective?

Related Activities:

Many of the teens in the program say they have a new awareness that "life is fragile and every moment precious." Have students make their personal lists of what and who they value and appreciate in their own lives.

Make a list of themes and concepts that are important to society (positive or negative), and write each one at the top of a sheet of paper. Examples could include: Justice, Safety, Nationalism, Freedom, Patriotism, Peace, War, Fear, Trust, Equality, Terrorism, Fairness, Racism, Retribution, Guilt, Religion, etc.

Divide the class into small groups, and give each group one or more of the sheets, instructing the students to think about each word in terms of what it meant to them before the terrorist attacks, and after. Their feelings could be personal or general. Have them write their reactions in two columns, representing pre and post 9-11. Have a representative of each group present the ideas to the class and encourage discussion and debate.

THE NEW NORMAL

GET THE NEWS? (Media Literacy)



Teens are watching and reading more news now than they ever did before 9-11. This program explores how the news coverage on TV, on the Internet and in print has impacted the way they are coping with their changed world. It also helps them understand how to select, compare and interpret what they see and read in the news. *IN THE MIX* teen reporters Christina, Oliver and Carter interview FOX News' Bill O'Reilly; ABC's Peter Jennings; Barry Gross, the chief copy editor of the New York Post; CNN's young reporter, Serena Altchul; Janine Jackson, the program coordinator of FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting) and others who share their insights and opinions.

This guide to **GET THE NEWS?** contains five major sections that include questions, discussion topics and activities. A list of resources is at the end of the booklet.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- Six corporations control more than half of all communications enterprises (books, magazines, newspapers, music, movies, radio and television?)
- Four companies control broadcast TV networks and almost all cable networks?
- Some 77% of the nation's daily newspapers are part of chains?

THE BASICS:

This program concerns critical analysis of the news and comparing news presented in different sources. This type of critical analysis is part of what we call "media literacy"—being able to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce messages in a variety of forms. Media literacy can be applied to all kinds of media sources (like television, movies, newspapers, textbooks, the Internet) and different kinds of content (like news, editorials, advertising, photographs).

When you analyze any media message, consider the following questions:

1. Who is "speaking" and what is their purpose?
(Who produced or sponsored the message?)
2. Who is the target audience, and how is the message specifically tailored to them?
3. What techniques are used to attract attention?
4. What values and lifestyles are promoted?
(What is communicated as good to be, or have, or do?
What is not good to be, or have, or do?)
5. What is implied without being specifically stated
(especially about the credibility of the message)?
6. What is left out of this message that might be important to know?

WHAT'S THE HYPE?

Teens from New York City and Sleepy Hollow, NY give their views of "hype." Teen reporters ask Peter Jennings, Bill O'Reilly and Barry Gross some tough questions.

1. What are "tabloids," and how do they compare to other news sources?
tabloids are newspapers or television news programs that emphasize the most sensational news stories, and may engage in less careful fact-checking or balance in news reporting
2. What is meant by "hype" in news stories?
use of sensational headlines or images that will attract the most attention, especially emphasizing frightening or exciting aspects of a story
3. Why do news stories use "hype"?
because their income is usually based on how many people watch or read their news stories, so they need to attract the largest number of readers or viewers possible
4. How is cable news different from network news in their need to attract viewers?
cable news often appears during viewing times when they are competing with popular prime time programs, not just other news programs

Further Discussion:

Barry Gross said “The Post is a tabloid and we are kind of brassy. We entertain as well as inform.” Is this true only of tabloid news? What aspects of network news or more traditional newspapers and magazines are aimed at “entertaining” the audience?

Think back to the events of 9-11. What news images or stories do you remember most? How did they make you feel? Where did you go for your news at that time? Did you parents or teachers guide your media use at all (for example, suggest that you turn off the news, or watch/read certain sources of news)?

Related Activities:

In this segment, several journalists refer to the anthrax scares. Barry Gross said “People were getting anthrax. People were dying from it.” How many people did get anthrax in the U.S.? How many people died from it? Come up with an estimate based on what you’ve already heard in media reports, and then see if you can track down the answer to those questions by going to the Internet or contacting your local newspaper. How accurate were your estimates?

Bill O’Reilly said “70 percent of Americans watch TV with the remote control in their hand.” Do you think that’s true? Take a survey of your own class. Do you think the use of remote controls is different for people in different age groups? For men and women? Try to track down the real statistics on remote control use; where could you find out the answer?

For more from Oliver and Christina, visit their online scrapbooks at www.pbs.org/mix/newnormal or for direct access to scrapbooks: pbs.org/mix/newnormal/scrapbk.html.

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

The teen reporters explore how the various forms of media are different.

1. What is the “op-ed” section of a newspaper, and how does it differ from the news pages?
op-ed is short for opinion-editorial; opinions are usually expressed by individuals in letters to the editor or through commentaries by journalists and syndicated columnists; editorials are opinions expressed on behalf of the newspaper itself, reflecting the views of the editorial staff and publisher
2. What is the equivalent of “op-ed” in television news?
some TV “news” programs, like The O’Reilly Factor, are primarily opinion and commentary; sometimes news programs will have a special commentary section that is specifically identified as such
3. How are TV and radio different from print sources with respect to how they report the news?
usually TV and radio have less time to devote to individual stories, the print media can go into more depth
4. How do different media try to “personalize” stories?
by showing images of individual people or interviewing individuals who are affected by an event

Further Discussion:

What kinds of stories get reported in the news media the most, and what kinds of things don’t usually get reported?

Bill O’Reilly said “I look at a story and I try to tell people what really happened here. What it means to your life.” Do you think this kind of interpretation of the news is useful? How does he decide what “really happened”? Do you think he has an accurate sense of the meaning of different events for your life?

Related Activities:

On the same day, list the major news stories that were covered in different types of media (on the network news, a newspaper, on the radio, on an Internet news site). Were the same stories reported on each? Why were some stories reported in some media and not others?

Compare a U.S. newspaper with newspapers from other countries on the same day (from English-language versions—see resources below). What differences do you see with respect to *which* stories were given major coverage? For stories that were covered in both newspapers, how were they reported differently? Discuss how those differences might influence the readers’ perceptions of what happened and the importance of different events in their lives.

WHERE’S THE BIAS?

The teen reporters ask Peter Jennings, Janine Jackson, program coordinator of FAIR, and others how to recognize bias in the media.

1. What is FAIR?
a media watch group that analyzes the news media and encourages critical thinking and discussion about news reporting; FAIR stands for Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting
2. How can you identify biases in news reports?
compare different news reports on the same topic and look for differences; look for statements made as fact that might not be supportable; investigate the source of the message to find out more about them
3. What’s a “leading question”?
a question that is asked in such a way that it will probably get a certain type of answer

Further Discussion:

What types of bias do you think occurred in news reports about 9-11? Were there different kinds of biases shown in different types of media? Why?

Related Activities:

Working in pairs, pick an interview topic and write a series of questions to ask about it, including some “leading questions” and some more objective questions. Interview several people about the topic, using only leading questions for some and the more objective questions for others. Compare your results—what was the effect of the leading questions on their answers?

Analyze a current newsmagazine or tabloid newspaper—see if you can find examples of bias in the adjectives and verbs that were chosen to describe different people, or in the photographs that were chosen to accompany each story.

Visit one of the “urban legends” or hoax buster websites (www.urbanlegends.com or www.snopes2.com). Which urban legends had you heard before?

COMPARE AND ANALYZE

In this section, various experts and teens share ways to get the most accurate and unbiased news.

1. How can you tell what is fact and what is opinion in news reports?
compare the news presented in different media sources, follow up by trying to get information on that topic from other sources)
2. What is a primary source?
a first hand account, like original documents, photographs, speeches, personal commentary)
3. How is Internet news different from news reported on television or in print media?
there are many more Internet sites than other media sources so many more alternative sources of information, Internet sites may be less influenced by commercial interests, Internet sites can be updated very quickly, more space may be available for detailed information and analyses)

Further Discussion:

Do you think that Internet news is usually more credible than news presented on television? Why? What are some of the main problems in judging credibility of information presented on the Internet?

Do you get most of your news from primary sources or secondary sources? How might that affect your attitudes and knowledge about different issues?

Related Activities:

Pick a newspaper article, and list all of the actual facts that were given in the article. Then list the unsubstantiated conclusions or opinions that were included in the article.

Select a major news story and compare how it is reported in different news sources in the U.S. (several different newspapers, a tabloid, on different TV news programs, on the radio, on different Internet sites). What aspects of the story were included in all of the sources? What aspects were left out in some of the sources? How did the use of images (photos, video footage) influence the nature of the story?

GET INVOLVED

Teens are encouraged to have their own voice in the media and we see how teens from Clarkstown North H.S. report on a United Nations Children’s Conference.

Further Discussion:

What kinds of stories and graphics capture your attention when they are reported in the news? What kinds of issues should get more coverage in the news? How do you think the news media could make news more appealing to teens?

Were there any statements made in this program that you think might be questionable, or not supported by the facts?

Related Activities:

Keep a journal for a day (or a week) about where you get your news. Be sure to include personal (primary) sources, like friends, parents, teachers, as well as mass media sources (television, radio, newspapers, magazines, Internet). Discuss those sources, or summarize as a class—where are most teens in the class getting their news?

Create your own news report about an event occurring in your school or community. How will you decide what is “newsworthy” to report? How will you collect facts and information about your story? Who will you interview, and what types of questions will you ask them? How will you edit your story so it will fit in a given space or time period? How did that editing change the overall story that you are presenting?



Despite centuries of social advancement, people everywhere still struggle to move beyond racial prejudice, cultural stereotypes and religious intolerance. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, acts of hatred and bias against Muslim-Americans, Arab-Americans and even those judged Middle Eastern in appearance rose dramatically, pointing out a vast gulf of mistrust and misunderstanding. Through the voices of Muslim and non-Muslim American teenagers, this program seeks to help viewers bridge cultural gaps by understanding the truth about Islamic teachings and exploring ways to overcome intolerance towards those seen as “different.” Also featured is Seeds of Peace, a program that brings Israeli and Palestinian teens together to overcome their mutual mistrust and work towards peaceful co-existence; and Global Kids, a program that trains diverse groups of teens to become peer educators on various issues.

This guide to **DEALING WITH DIFFERENCES** contains three major sections that include questions, discussion topics, and activities. A list of resources is at the end of the booklet.

WHAT IS ISLAM?

Selima, Ali, Hagar and Roksana, Muslim-Americans teens with varied cultural roots, join Shawn, an American of the Sikh faith, to discuss prejudice and misconceptions in the wake of the September 11th attacks. The teens explain the true tenets and teachings of Islam, as well as discuss what it means to be American and ways to foster understanding.

1. According to the teens, what are some misconceptions that non-Muslim Americans have about Muslims?
that all Muslims are evil, that they have twisted minds, that they are all terrorists and bombers; that they believe violence is the path to heaven; that they all want to destroy America
2. Do the terms Muslim and Arab mean the same thing?
no; a Muslim is any follower of the Islamic faith, which is the 2nd largest religion in the world; “Arab” is a cultural and geographic term referring to people from certain nations in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa; of the estimated 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide, only about 15% are Arab; 20% of Muslims live in Sub-Saharan Africa; 17% live in Southeast Asia and 30% live in the Indian subcontinent

Further Discussion:

Ali, a New York teen of Iranian descent, states that on September 11th Osama Bin Laden and his followers “hijacked the whole Islamic religion.” What do you think he means by this? Discuss the concept of judging a diverse group of over a billion people by the actions of a few extremists.

Selima says “He’s using it because they are miserable and he knows they are miserable and he can make them believe certain things.” Why are extremists often able to influence people who are discontented?

3. Are Islam and Sikhism the same religion?
no; while Islam began roughly 1,500 years ago with the writings of the prophet Muhammad, the Sikh religion was started about 500 years ago by Guru Nanak Ji, who created the faith to be separate and distinct from both Islam and Hinduism; while some of the ideas behind Sikhism overlap with those of many of the world’s major faiths, they consider their belief system to be independent of all other religions, including Islam

Further Discussion:

Shawn, a Sikh, wears a turban despite the fact that other Sikhs have been attacked for simply appearing Muslim. Roksana, who is Muslim, refused to stop wearing her hijab, a hair covering, even though she might be safer without it. Why do you think they didn’t change their appearance? If you were in their position, would you discard these items of clothing, or continue to wear them? Faced with prejudice, would you feel comfortable removing or hiding a symbol of your faith or heritage?

4. What are some of the similarities and connections between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity?
all three faiths worship a single God; all three stress the importance of leading a moral life of hard work, charity and respect for others; Islam teaches from the Jewish Torah (Old Testament) and Christian Bible (New Testament), as well as the Muslim Koran (Quran); Islam accepts the importance of Jewish and Christian figures like Moses and Jesus as well as Muhammad, the prophet of Islam.
5. The media often uses the Islamic term “jihad” as a synonym for “holy war.” How do the Muslim teens in the show define jihad?
they define it as the struggle within themselves to reach truth and enlightenment, and to lead a holier life;

Further Discussion:

By holding a workshop on Islam, Roksana and Selima were able to easily dispel a lot of misconceptions held by non-Muslim teens. Do you think that open communication is an effective tool against prejudice? Is it harder to hate or mistrust someone if you understand their culture and beliefs?

Contrasting views describe America as a “melting pot” where different groups dissolve into a single culture, and a “salad bowl” where diverse cultures exist together but retain many of their own characteristics. Which metaphor is closer to your own view of America? Do you think there is such a thing as a “typical American?” If so, what does he or she look and act like?

Related Activities:

Have students list negative stereotypes that they have heard about Muslims and/or Arabs in the wake of the September 11th attacks, and write these on one side of the blackboard. On the other side, list negative stereotypes and perceptions about Americans that some foreign Muslims or Arabs have expressed in the media. Compare and contrast these generalizations and lead a discussion aimed at finding the possible roots of the stereotypes.

Ask students to write a report tracing their own family's roots back to the land of their ancestors' birth, with special emphasis on religious or ethnic persecution they may have faced either before they left or once they arrived. How did those already living here treat their particular immigrant group or religion? Did they arrive by choice, or as slaves? How hard was it for them to be accepted as Americans? What were the ethnic stereotypes that persisted? Do they still persist?

For more information on Roksana, visit her online scrapbook at www.pbs.org/mix/newnormal or for direct access to scrapbooks: pbs.org/mix/newnormal/scrapbk.html.

WHAT IS...?

Allah— The Arabic word for God. Muslims believe in one God, Allah, the basis and foundation of the religion. Muslims reject the worship of idols or statues, because God is so transcendent that he cannot be represented by any image.

Koran (Quran)— The Islamic holy book is called the Koran or Quran. Muslims believe it was inspired by revelations from God through the angel Gabriel to Muhammad.

Muhammad— The last in the line of prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus—that Muslims revere.

Hijab— A scarf that Muslim women wear to cover their head and hair in public. It is believed that modesty brings one closer to God; therefore by covering their beauty they will become more modest. Others believe that their modesty is not offended by showing their hair.

Jihad— Signifies a striving for self-improvement or social reform. “Holy war” has never been considered an accurate or acceptable translation of jihad.

Sikhism— Sikhism is not a branch of Islam or Hinduism. It is its own religion with several similarities and differences from Islam. For example, they believe in one God, but they don't believe Muhammad was the last prophet, they do not have the same dietary restrictions, and Sikh women do not wear hijabs.

GLOBAL KIDS

In this segment, Lovely, a peer educator with Global Kids, an organization that brings diverse groups of teens together, conducts a workshop consisting of two activities that help students become aware of and break down stereotypes.

1. What is the purpose and goals of the Global Kids stereotype workshop?

to make students more aware of their subconscious and automatic stereotyping of others; to help students shed these stereotypes and understand that no culture or group has a “typical” representative; to encourage teens to look beyond easy assumptions when trying to understand another person's life

2. Why was it so important for Global Kids to hold stereotype workshops in the wake of the September 11th attacks?

the tragedies brought about an increase in bias incidents against Muslims

3. According to Lovely, why are the Global Kids workshops so successful in changing teenagers' attitudes?

they are led by fellow teens; they encourage discussion and participation rather than just lecturing; the activities are eye-opening and fun

Further Discussion:

Has anyone ever judged you by applying a cultural stereotype based on your appearance, skin color, age, ethnicity or any other easily recognized trait? What were the circumstances, and how did it make you feel? Did you think it was fair to be judged by things you have no control over, like someone else's assumptions?

Have you ever made assumptions about other people before even meeting them or learning about their lives or attitudes? If you got to know the person better, did these first assumptions prove true or false?

Many people hold cultural stereotypes that they see as positive, rather than negative. Examples of this are: “all Asians are good at math,” “black people are great at sports,” and “Jews and Arabs are good in business.” Do you see these assumptions as being positive, or can they have negative effects too? Can any stereotypes, regardless of being positive or negative, be harmful to an individual or group?

Related Activity: (from Global Kids workshop)

(This activity works best in groups of students who do not yet know each other well.)

Test students' assumptions of others by dividing them into groups of two and handing each student a sheet with the following six questions. Each student should write answers based only on assumptions, without talking to his or her partner.

1. What kind of music do you think your partner likes?
2. What is his or her favorite school subject?
3. What does he or she do for fun?
4. What is his or her cultural or ethnic background?
5. What other impressions do you have about your partner?

When both partners have answered the questions, tell them to switch papers and discuss the answers. Which were correct and which off-base? Why did the students make the assumptions that they made?

Related Activity:

(similar to Global Kids workshop)

Divide the class into small groups and explain to the students that each group has been stranded on a deserted island. Ask them to select 3 people, out of a list of 6, to help them form a new community and stay alive. The other 3 will be set adrift at sea. The 6 candidates are: a doctor; an elderly disabled woman; an Asian teen; a 22-year old Muslim from Iraq; a white American woman; and an African American teen who dropped out of high school.

Have the leader of each group reveal their list and defend their choices. Then reveal this additional information:

- The doctor belongs to a group that supports sterilization of non-whites.
- The disabled woman is a biologist who knows which plants and animals are safe to eat and which are harmful.
- The Asian teen doesn't speak English.
- The Muslim man is a pro-democracy activist who was sentenced to death by the Taliban.
- The American mother killed her own children on the orders of demonic voices in her head.
- The African-American teen is a genius who dropped out of high school to attend college and now has a Ph.D. in physics.

Given this new information, would the groups change their choices? How did stereotypes influence their original list? Ask them to describe each candidate as they imagined him or her before getting the new information. Does the new information help them see beyond the stereotypes?

and opinions, they came to understand each other's fears and formed friendships

3. Bashir, the Palestinian-Israeli, describes himself as being "caught in the middle" of the ongoing conflict. What does he mean by this?

he is a Palestinian who was born in Israel, he has Israeli citizenship, and lives in Israel (within the green line); Palestinians who live in areas of Gaza or the West Bank live outside the "green line"; Jewish Israelis don't trust him because he is Palestinian, while many Palestinians are angry that he has Israeli friends; he has suffered discrimination and anger from both groups; he is also in constant danger from bombings

Further Discussion:

One of the teens describes the Seeds of Peace program as "neutral ground." How important is the concept of neutral ground to finding solutions to conflicts like the one between Palestinians and Israelis? Do you act differently on neutral ground than on your home turf? Is neutral ground just about a physical place, or is there a psychological part to it?

In this program, teens on different sides of the political conflict find themselves on the same side of a soccer match. How does that change how they see each other? Do you think bonds of friendship and understanding among a few can ultimately help resolve the conflict? How difficult is it to be in the Army if you have a friend on the other side?

Do you think the Seeds of Peace participants will keep their new attitudes, even after they return to their communities, families, and friends? How do you think they will react to hearing their friends use stereotypes and words of bigotry and hatred towards people on the other side of the conflict? How do you think their experiences in Maine can help them work to change the attitudes and actions of other teens on both sides? Do you think the friendships they made will stay strong?

Do you have a friendship that crosses a traditional/historical line of conflict, antagonism, or prejudice? How does getting to know a person as a friend affect the stereotypes and misunderstandings that lead to hatred and conflict? Do you think your grandparents and your friend's grandparents could have been friends? If not, what has changed since your grandparents' generation to allow friendships to cross the lines of mistrust?

Related Activities:

Ask students to research on the Internet and in history books, and create a timeline of events starting with Israeli independence in 1948. Discuss how those events have led to distrust and misunderstanding on both sides. Discuss some possible solutions.

Draw or copy a map of Israel and the "green line" areas of Gaza and the West Bank. Keep track of current events as they relate to those areas.

Pick a recent incident of violence from the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, and research news accounts from both pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian sources (newspapers, magazines, journals, websites). Discuss how the two accounts of the incident differ. What is the role of bias and "spin" in these accounts? Ask students to combine the two accounts and attempt to come up with a possible unbiased version of the incident.

SEEDS OF PEACE

This segment is a powerful discussion among Israeli and Palestinian teens who are participants in the Seeds of Peace program. Over the past several years, it has brought together hundreds of Israeli and Palestinian teens at a camp in Maine where they get to know each other as people and participate in "co-existence" workshops. They continue to stay in contact and work to dispel stereotypes when they return to their communities. The focus of this solution-oriented segment is to show what these teens are going through and what can be accomplished on an individual level.

1. Why do many of the teens find the Seeds of Peace program difficult at first?

they are mistrustful of each other; they are shocked by the attitudes of teens on the other side of the conflict; they are frustrated that they cannot each other that their views are 100% right; they are not used to living with or even speaking to teens from the other side of the conflict

2. In what ways did the camp experience gradually change how the Palestinian and Israeli teens viewed and treated each other?

they got to know each other through sports and fun social situations, realizing how much they have in common; they came to respect each other as human beings; they began to see things from other points of view, agreeing to disagree in order to move on; they learned more about the other side's culture, religion

RESOURCES

LIVING WITH CHANGE

American Psychiatric Association
1-888-357-7924
www.psych.org

American School Counselor Association
www.schoolcounselor.org

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
202-966-7300
www.aacap.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
301-443-1124
www.drugabuse.gov

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
802-296-6300
www.ncptsd.org

National Mental Health Association: Helping Children Cope with Loss
www.nmha.org/reassurance/childcoping.cfm

Helping Children Understand the Terrorist Attacks
www.ed.gov/inits/september11

It's My Life
www.pbskids.org/itsmylife
It's My Life, by the producers of IN THE MIX, provides a resource of information, community and interactivity for tweens ages 9-13 related to the social, emotional, and physical issues that most affect them.

RELATED IN THE MIX PROGRAMS

- #429 **Depression – On the Edge**
www.pbs.org/mix/depression_index.html
- #439 **Dealing with Death**
www.pbs.org/mix/death_index.html
- #445 **9-11 Looking Back...Moving Forward**
www.pbs.org/mix/9-11_index.html

GET THE NEWS? (Media Literacy)

Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA)
www.AMLAinfo.org
AMLA is the first membership-based media literacy organization in the United States, bringing together students, teachers, parents, health care providers, and others interested in helping all people become media literate.

Fairness and Accuracy in News Reporting (FAIR)
www.fair.org
FAIR is a news watchdog organization, publishing a bi-monthly magazine (EXTRA!) and sponsoring a radio program (Counterspin) dedicated to critical analysis and commentary on the news.

Media Awareness Network
www.media-awareness.ca/eng
This Canadian based Web site is an extensive resource

for educators, parents, and community leaders, including “web awareness,” an extensive section on Internet issues.

Project Look Sharp
www.ithaca.edu/looksharp
The project offers support and training for K-12 teachers and teacher education students to integrate media literacy into the school curriculum in all curricular areas. The Web site includes curriculum ideas, resources for analyzing news, links to English language versions of foreign newspapers, and activities related to judging credibility on the Internet.

Center for Media Literacy
www.medialit.org
The Center is the major clearinghouse for media literacy materials and also conducts ongoing media literacy workshops and other activities; catalogues available by calling

Media Literacy Review
interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/mlr/home/index.html

RELATED IN THE MIX PROGRAMS

- #422: **Media Literacy: TV—What You Don't See**
www.pbs.org/inthemix/shows
- #424: **Self Image- The Fantasy, The Reality**
www.pbs.org/mix/selfimage_index.html
- #426: **Smoking: The Truth Unfiltered**
www.pbs.org/mix/smoking_index.html

DEALING WITH DIFFERENCES

Global Kids, Inc.
www.globalkids.org
Global Kids works to ensure that young people of diverse backgrounds have the knowledge, skills, and experiences they need to succeed in the workplace and participate in the shaping of public policy and international relations.

Seeds of Peace
www.seedsofpeace.org
This program brings together teens from areas of violence, especially the Middle East, to promote understanding and work toward solutions.

Voices of Youth
www.unicef.org/voy
This is an idea-sharing Web site where youth can learn about the difference and similarities between their lives and those of young people around the world.

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
www.adc.org
This Web site invites teens to learn more about American-Arabs and how to avoid common stereotypes of their culture.

Islam In The United States
usinfo.state.gov/usa/islam

RESOURCES continued...

The Southern Poverty Law Center
www.tolerance.org/index.jsp

Education For Social Responsibility
www.esrnational.org

PBS: America Responds
www.pbs.org/americaresponds/educators.html

P.O.V.: Promises
www.pbs.org/pov/pov2001/promises/index.html

Youth Action Net
www.youthactionnet.org

RELATED IN THE MIX PROGRAMS

- #401 **Teen Solutions To Racism**
www.pbs.org/inthemix/shows
- #430 **Teens Around the World**
www.pbs.org/mix/immigrants_index.html
- #431 **Teen Immigrants – 5 American Stories**
www.pbs.org/mix/immigrants_index.html
- #436 **Cliques: Behind The Labels**
www.pbs.org/inthemix/shows/show_aaa2.html
- #442 **What's Normal: Overcoming Obstacles And Stereotypes**
www.pbs.org/inthemix/shows/show_whatsnormal.html

THE NEW NORMAL WEBSITE

(www.pbs.org/mix/newnormal)

Visit this program's companion Web site to find out more about the teens and issues featured. Have students take a perception quiz and view the teens' personal scrapbooks. Watch video clips, and review transcripts, discussion questions, and additional resources.

ADVISORS:

LIVING WITH CHANGE: Lois Flaherty, M.D., American Psychiatric Association

GET THE NEWS?: Cynthia Scheibe, Ph.D., Alliance for a Media Literate America

DEALING WITH DIFFERENCES: Laila Al-Qatami, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

HOW TO REACH IN THE MIX:

The NEW NORMAL videos carry one-year off-air taping rights and performance rights. Check your local PBS listings for airtimes.

For information about the IN THE MIX series, including program descriptions and schedules, visit us at www.inthemix.org or email us at inthemix@pbs.org. You will also find discussion guides, transcripts, video clips, resources and more.

Other IN THE MIX programs of interest to grades 6-12 are available on topics including: ECSTASY; Dealing with Death; Teen Immigrants; Depression and Suicide; Smoking; Sex and Abstinence; School Violence; Financial Literacy; Volunteering; Cliques; Drug Abuse; Gun Violence; Computer Literacy; Dating Violence; Getting Into College; School to Work Transition; Self Image; Careers; Relationships; AIDS; and others.

For a complete catalog and ordering information, visit www.inthemix.org (Educators Section); www.castleworks.com; call (212) 684-3940 or (800) 597-9448; or fax us at (212) 684-4015.

For more information about Thirteen, including Ed Online, visit www.thirteen.org



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