

ROLE PLAY

POLITICALLY INCORRECT: LEGALIZING DRUGS

Issue and Objective

The focus is to consider all sides of the concept of legalizing drugs. The idea is to simulate the format of the TV show Politically Incorrect, thus providing a forum for the students to discuss the arguments for and against the legalization of drugs and which drugs should or should not be legalized.

Activity Procedure

In the class before the activity, either assign or take four volunteers who will prepare to be “guests” on Politically Incorrect, to speak in favor of legalizing drugs and two to speak against it. Ideally, assign one student who is for legalization to take the stance of legalizing all drugs and one for legalizing only marijuana. The two students should read pages 86-89 in the text (or provide copies) and think through their arguments. The student should also decide who they are (i.e., member or Students Against Drugs or a celebrity who has a strong stance for legalization).

Note: It may be best for you, as the teacher, to mediate the show; however, you may choose to have a student as a mediator. If so, provide a list of questions to help the student guide the discussion.

On the day of the show, arrange chairs in front for the mediator and guests (with the mediator facing the audience and the students on the two sides of the issue on either side), with the rest of the class as the audience. Open discussion by announcing the topic and putting the question forward for discussion.

For example: Today we will be discussing the prospect of legalizing drugs in America. Some people believe the “war on drugs” is failing and that legalization and removal of the black market for drugs is the only way to curb the problem. Others believe that the only hope is for the government to continue to crack down on drug abuse.

Introduce the “guests” and ask for their opinions. Encourage discussion amongst the guests by posing questions to them. To encourage participation from the rest of the class, allow questions from the “audience.” After the show is over, open the discussion completely to the class to add any thoughts or observations.