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**TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION**  
**BENEFITS OF GROUP ASSOCIATION****G Gives self-esteem.**

Knowing there is a social "place" where one "fits in" is enough to raise self-esteem. Friends are supportive and will take sides with one another.

**R Reduces Stress**

Being part of a social order allows us to talk to peers and friends and unload frustrations. We can also let down inhibitions and enjoy healthy, "playful" behavior with our friends, and in doing so, we unwind and relax.

**O Offers opportunities for social and leadership skills.**

Skills such as communication, interaction between genders, dating, controlling emotions, etc., are learned through group activities and associations.

**U Understands social expectations.**

One thing teenagers do well is to criticize and make fun of people. This is a way to learn about what is and what is not acceptable within society. Friends pattern positive behavior and give advice.

**P Provides identity and emotional security.**

In any school, it is easy to spot different groups. Dress, hair styles, activities, etc., are all factors in determining group identities. "Grouping" occurs during adolescence and helps those less secure to feel important and secure in their social standing.

**S Satisfies a sense of belonging and unity.**

One of the basic human needs is to belong. It is important not only to feel belonging at home, but there is also a need to belong socially, and to "fit in".

**BENEFITS OF GROUP ASSOCIATION**

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**BENEFITS OF GROUP ASSOCIATION**

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## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE GROUP FUNCTIONS

**Directions:** Answer the following questions as the class discussion progresses.

1. **What purposes do groups serve?**  
Groups help to determine who you are and how you feel about yourself.
2. **What functions do groups fulfill?**  
Groups are organized to perform the function of accomplishing a specific task or as a means of socializing. Often groups serve both of these functions at the same time.
3. **Why do we usually see a shift in one's group identity during adolescence?**  
As a person leaves childhood and enters adolescence, his/her craving for independence increases. He/she seeks to identify with groups who share this feeling and can better understand his/her anxieties.
4. **What are some ways in which peer groups help to bridge the gap between childhood and adulthood?**  
Peer groups can help to bridge the gap between childhood and adulthood by providing companionship, emotional security, and an environment in which an individual can test his/her ability to relate to others, assess his/her skills, and define his/her own personal identity.
5. **Are leaders born or made?**  
Most psychologists feel that leaders are not born, but emerge in situations where they answer a need, be it as a calming influence or by providing a specific skill.
6. **Why do some groups seek to be exclusive?**  
Some groups seek to be exclusive because members derive status and security by not letting others in their circle.
7. **What is considered a healthy response to being excluded from a group?**  
When a person finds and joins another group that is right for him/her, he/she is responding in a healthy manner to the pain of being excluded.
8. **What do the following have in common: A student council, a gang, and a friendship between two people?**  
These groups all have rules and standards of behavior that bind people together into functioning units.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### GROUP FUNCTIONS

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2. What functions do groups fulfill? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why do we usually see a shift in one's group identity during adolescence?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What are some ways in which peer groups help to bridge the gap between childhood and adulthood? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

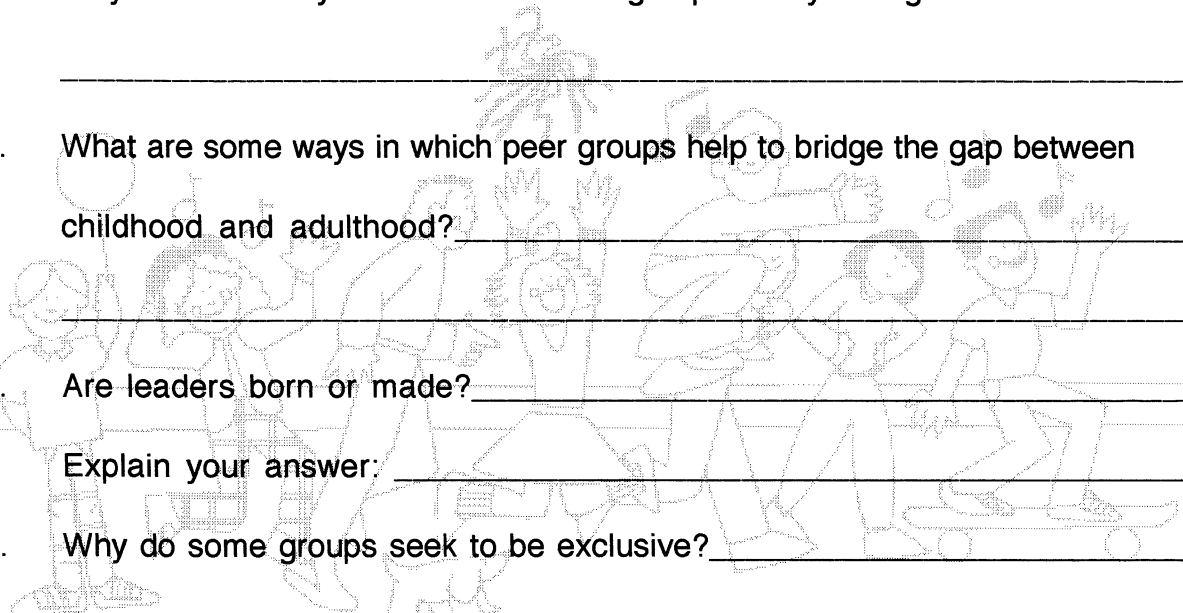
5. Are leaders born or made? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Why do some groups seek to be exclusive? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is considered a healthy response to being excluded from a group?  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What do the following have in common: A student council, a gang, and a friendship between two people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### WHO INFLUENCES YOU?

**Directions:** You have recognized that you need friends, that you want to belong to groups, and you want people to accept you for who you are. These questions will let you know how much you understand about yourself and how groups affect your actions. FILL IN THE CHART BY PUTTING A CHECK IN THE COLUMN THAT SHOWS WHAT INFLUENCES YOU THE MOST IN EACH OF THE AREAS.

	INHERITED	FAMILY	FRIENDS
1. Your food habits			
2. Your conscience			
3. Skill in a team sport			
4. The way you dress			
5. One's vocabulary			
6. One's physical habits (neatness, cleanliness)			
7. One's goals for life			
8. To cheat or not on a test			
9. One's religious belief			
10. Prejudices			
11. Your attitudes about money			
12. Your manners			
13. Your hair style			
14. Your height			
15. Holiday traditions			

Add up the number of checks you have in each column, then answer the following questions:

16. In what areas of your life do your friends have the most influence? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Why do you think that is so? \_\_\_\_\_
17. In what areas does your family have the most influence? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Why do you think that is so? \_\_\_\_\_
18. What areas are inherited and give you no control? \_\_\_\_\_



**PEER  
PRESSURE**  
**Pressure or stress  
upon an individual  
to conform**



### **TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION PEER PRESSURE**

Friends have a strong influence on each other. Almost everyone needs to be accepted and to feel a part of a group. Consequently, having friends means you are subject to peer pressure. Peers exert both positive and negative pressure on each other.

For example: When a friend urges you to study for a test, work on a good cause, or maintain personal standards and values, that is positive pressure. On the contrary, when a friend urges you to sluff class, waste time, or drop your personal standards and values, that is negative pressure.

Negative peer pressure may keep you from reaching your goals or meeting your potential. Positive peer pressure may help you reach your goals and even exceed your expectations.

Psychologist Solomon Asch conducted an experiment on lines and their length and discovered that a person will often conform to a group even when conformity goes against his/her own common sense.

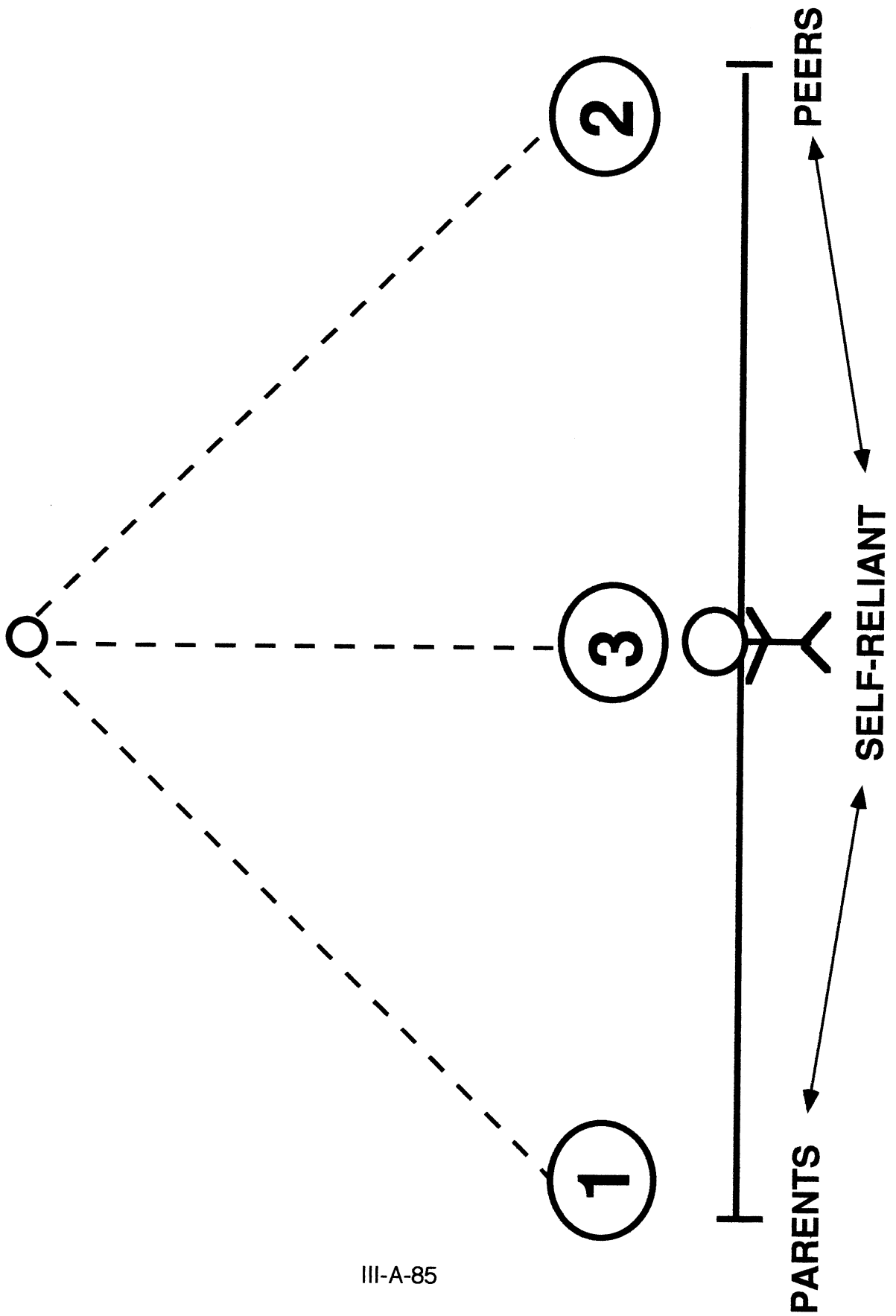
People conform out a fear of being ridiculed or rejected and because they have a need to belong and be liked by others. A person who has not firmly established his/her self-identity and who has no alternate groups to associate with is most easily influenced or controlled by a particular group.

JFK's advisers were wrong in their plans for the Bay of Pigs invasion because they were victims of "group think", a condition in which members of a highly cohesive group stifle their own doubts about a decision for the sake of maintaining group unity.

A person seeking a sense of personal identity must recognize that he/she has to be less dependent on the approval of others. He/she must be able to make his/her own decisions based on his/her own values, even if it means not conforming to a group to which he/she belongs.



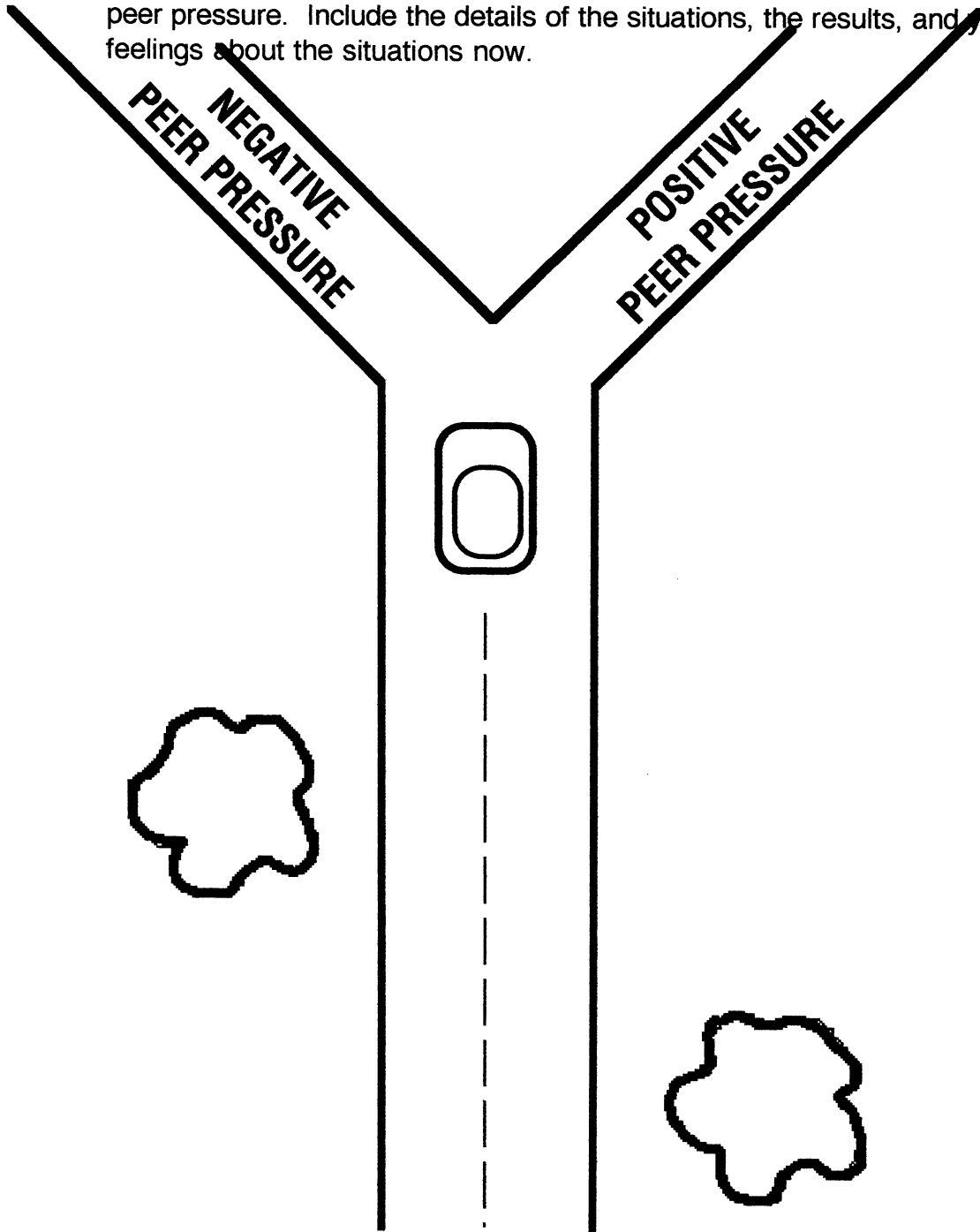
# PEER PENDULUM



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### A FORK IN THE ROAD

**Directions:** On the left side of the fork in the road, write a brief summary about a time when you had to make a choice and succumbed to negative peer pressure. On the right side of the fork in the road, write a brief summary about a time when you had to make a choice and responded to positive peer pressure. Include the details of the situations, the results, and your feelings about the situations now.



**THE BIRD**  
by Chris Moore

*I once had a friend whose brother belonged to a group which could be considered a club. In order to belong to this club, the members had to kill a bird or a person. Of course no one killed a person. Most of the offerings brought to the group were sparrows, robin red breasts, etc.*

*One day the brother was bringing a new recruit to the club. As they were on their way to the meeting, the new member said, "I haven't been able to kill a bird so I am going to kill you!" The new member then took the life of my friend's brother. The boy was arrested and is now serving time in prison.*

The need to belong to the group was so strong that this young boy gave no thought to killing someone in order to belong. This power can cause people to lose their ability to think for themselves and use good judgment. When the group controls your thoughts, this is called GROUP THINK. For most individuals who think rationally, the thought of killing someone would not even be considered. There are some individuals who have a difficult time thinking rationally and when that is combined with group think, it can lead to a dangerous situation. Certainly the act of killing *anything* to belong to any group should be questioned and re-evaluated before joining.

Consider the following points before agreeing to belong to any club or group:

1. Does the group threaten me if I don't do what they say?
2. Does the group engage in any illegal activity? ( stealing, killing, spray painting, vandalizing, cheating, lying, sluffing, smoking, drug use, drinking, using weapons, etc.)
3. Does the group demean others? ( put people down, hit, use abusive language, threaten others, etc.)
4. Does the group promote prejudice? (put other races, religions, sexes, etc., down)
5. Does the group engage in secret behavior they don't want others to know about?

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes", you should take a serious look at the group that you belong to or are about to join. As the story above illustrates, you may be able to safely predict your behavior in a group and know what you will do, but you can't predict what others will do and how others will react in any given situation. Few people realize the impact that a group can have on an individual until that power destroys someone's life.

# **WARNING!!**

- 1. Does the group threaten me if I don't do what they say?**
- 2. Does the group engage in any illegal activity?**
- 3. Does the group demean others?**
- 4. Does the group promote prejudice?**
- 5. Does the group engage in secret behavior they don't want others to know about?**

## THE MARTYRDOM OF ANDY DRAKE

by Ben Burton

Andy Drake was a sweet, innocent and amusing little guy whom everyone liked. They also heckled him. During these many years, I've asked myself why we did it. Was it because it is easier to be mean than to be kind? Were we just being selfish and thinking it was okay to get a good laugh at someone else's expense?

Andy took the kidding well and always smiled back with those great big eyes which seemed to say, "Thank you, thank you" with each sweeping blink. Perhaps he was saying, "I'm happy to have even the crumbs from the table." When any of us fifth graders needed to vent our frustrations, he was grateful to pay this price for membership in our group. We had a saying that went:

Andy Drake don't eat no cake,  
And his mom don't eat no pie.  
If it weren't for their welfare checks,  
All the Drakes would surely die.

As I said, I don't know why Andy had to pay this special fee for membership in our group. I don't recall that any of us ever mentioned Andy's father was in prison, or that his mother took in washing, or that any of us noticed the sadness and embarrassment in her eyes when she looked at you.

Snobbery blossoms very young. I say this because it's plain now that our attitude was that it was all right for the rest of us to belong to the group, but that Andy was there just by our tolerance.

But we all really liked Andy...liked him, that is, until one day...until that moment. Our rationale in making the decision the way we did was that "He is sooo different. We don't want him in our group, do we?" someone said. Which one of us said it? At first I wanted to blame Jeff. But I can't honestly say that I remember who said it--who spoke those words that brought out the savagery lying dormant in all of us. It doesn't matter because the fervor with which we all joined in revealed our inner selves--everyone.

As I reflect now from feelings of sorrow and pain, I remember I used to tell myself I really didn't want to do what I did. All through the years I'd console myself with that. Then one day I stumbled on those unwelcome, but never the less true, thoughts: Some of the very worst deeds done are the result of those who during a moment of crisis, refuse to take a stand.

This weekend was to be like so many others the group had enjoyed together. After school on Friday, we would meet at one of our homes--this time mine--for a campout in

## THE MARTYRDOM OF ANDY DRAKE - Page 2

the nearby woods. Our mothers, who did most of the preparations, always fixed an extra sack lunch for Andy, who joined us after chores. By the time we made camp, we felt like men of the mountains. The others told me that since it was my party, I should be the one to let Andy know that he wasn't invited. I, who had long believed that Andy secretly thought a little more of me than the others because when he looked at me he was very much like a puppy trying to reveal all his loyalty with his eyes. I enjoyed that.

I can still see Andy as he came toward us down the long, dark tunnel of trees which let in only enough of the late evening light to see the faded design of his old sweat shirt. He was on his rusty bike--a girl's model with tires made of garden hose wired to the rims. He appeared happier than I had ever seen him, this little guy who had been an adult all of his life and who was now finding in the group his first chance to relax and have a little fun.

He waved to me as I stood in the camp clearing. I ignored his greeting. He climbed off his bike and trotted over to me, full of conversation. The others, well concealed inside the tent, were completely quiet, but I could almost hear them listening and breathing.

Suddenly, he did notice my cold greeting. His innocent expression opened even more, leaving him totally vulnerable. His whole demeanor said, "It's going to be very bad, isn't it? But let's have it." Undoubtedly well practiced in being disappointed, he didn't even brace for the blow.

Incredibly, I heard myself saying, "Andy, we don't want you."

Still hauntingly vivid is the stunning quickness with which two huge tears sprung to his eyes and just stayed there. The way he looked at me then still haunts me--like it is frozen in my memory. What was it? It wasn't hate. Was it shock? disbelief? or was it pity for me?

Finally, a fleeting little tremor broke across his lips and he turned away without protest. He stumbled at first, half stunned. Then he ran to his bike and rode quickly away.

As I entered the tent, someone--the last one of us to feel the full charge of the moment--started the old rhyme:

Andy Drake can't eat no cake,  
And his mom...

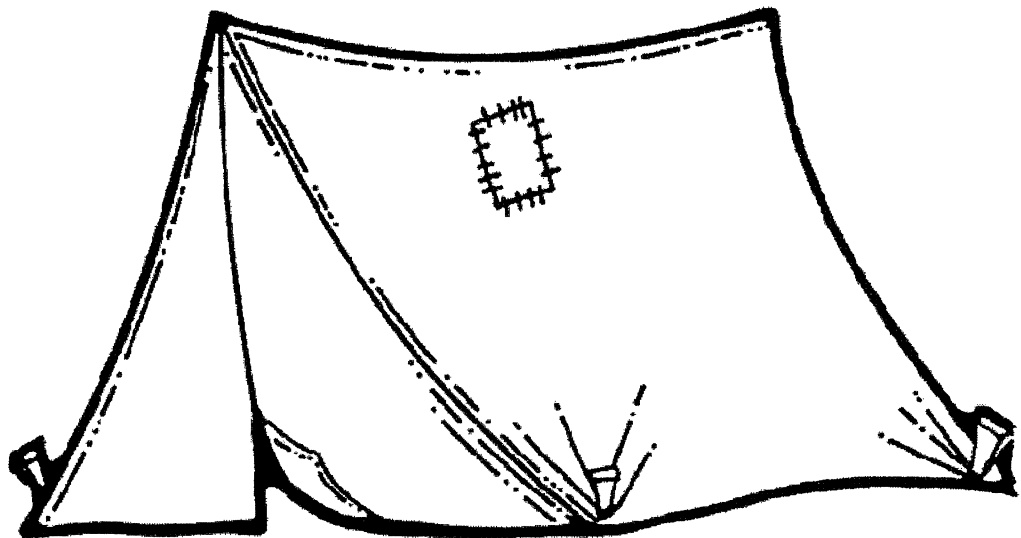
And then we all stopped. It was unanimous. No vote was taken, no word was spoken, but we all knew. We knew we had done something horrible and cruelly wrong. In that

### THE MARTYRDOM OF ANDY DRAKE - Page 3

moment, we felt an understanding new to us. It hit us all like a ton of bricks--we had destroyed, martyred if you will, an individual who was just as important as the rest of us. We cut him to the ground by cutting him out of our group.

Andy's poor attendance at school made it difficult to tell when he actually withdrew, but the fact remains that he was no longer there. He was gone, forever. The fact that he was gone magnified the incident. Whenever I'd see him, I managed to avoid him.

Now I realize that I had been struggling with myself to develop the proper way of telling him how totally wrong we had been, and hoped for a chance to make it right to him. Unfortunately, I never found the right time, or the right place and so I live with what I did and learned an important lesson.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### THE MARTYRDOM OF ANDY DRAKE

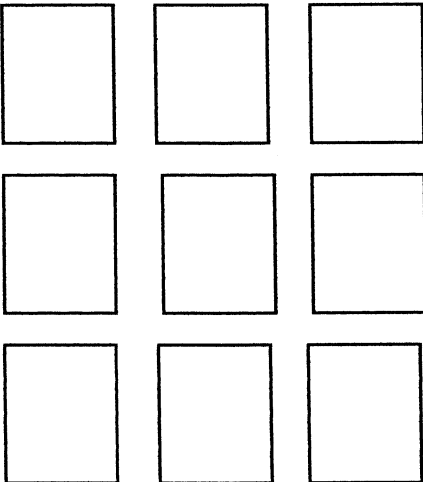
1. What was the criteria for membership in the "group"?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What is the criteria for membership in your social group, or other social groups in this school?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What should acceptance be based on?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. The author of the story says he felt pain for the next twenty years whenever he thought of the situation. Why do you think this is true?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Have you ever been in Andy Drake's shoes? \_\_\_\_\_  
...or known of a similar situation? \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Why are there "Andy Drakes" in our lives?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Is it ever possible to make up for the wrong that has been done? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. If you had been in this situation, what could you do to try to repair the damage?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



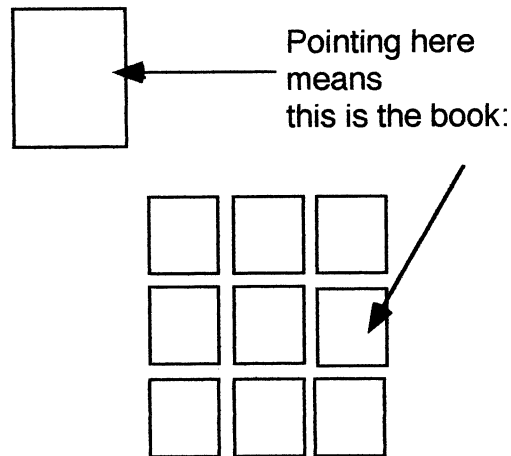
## THE NEED TO BELONG

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Position nine (9) books or magazines on the floor in this configuration:



2. Have a student who knows how to play the game leave the room. Have the group choose a book and then have the person return to the room. Point to one of the books and ask the person if it's the right book. Continue pointing to different books and asking until the correct book is picked. The trick is when you point to a book, you touch the spot on that book that shows the correct position of the chosen book in the configuration. For example:



Have different people who think they know how to do this leave the room. Continue the activity for a period and then have the following discussion:

- How does it make you feel when you don't know how to do this?  
(angry, stupid, frustrated, like you don't belong, an outsider, etc.)
- Did you feel pressure to "figure it out"? Why?  
(We all need to belong and feel a part of a group.  
Acceptance is very important to adolescents.)





**TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE  
DYNAMICS OF GANG MEMBERSHIP**

**POINTS TO KNOW ABOUT GANGS:**

**1. WHAT IS A GANG?**

"A gang is a group of people who form an allegiance to the exclusion of others, for a common purpose, and who engage in violent, unlawful, or criminal behavior. " (Governor's Task Force on Gangs, State of Utah, 1994)

**2. HOW DO GANGS START?**

There are several stages of gang development and they are described here briefly.

**1. Primary stage:** The gang is newly formed and its members may be involved with occasional misdemeanor crimes such as graffiti. It begins primarily as a social club with most members admiring established gangs. That admiration is often done by imitating dress style and demeanor of established gangs.

Although there may be some usage of drugs and or alcohol, there is no use of weapons, organized drug sales or other gang motivated crimes. As a youth becomes further involved, their school and family life suffer. They begin to skip school, behave rebelliously, may display tattoos, and family ties become less important as their gang becomes their focal point.

**2. Secondary stage:** The gang becomes established and their graffiti begins to appear with regularity in their neighborhood. A major portion of their activity becomes anti-social and they engage in the cross-outs of other gang graffiti which results in confrontations with other gangs.

Contact with law enforcement and probation becomes more frequent as they drop out of school and have more opportunity to engage in criminal and delinquent behavior. Many carry weapons, and they no longer develop new social relationships outside of the gang, and contact with the family becomes less frequent.

**3. Advanced stage:** The majority of the members have participated in gang motivated crimes and many have arrest records and have spent time incarcerated. Their dedication to their gang supersedes all other attachments. Many also become chemically dependent and are involved in illegal activities. The values of the gang become more important than family or community values or possible consequences. There is loss of hope, no job or educational aspirations, nor skills developed.

**TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE  
DYNAMICS OF GANG MEMBERSHIP - Page 2**

**3. WHY DO TEENS JOIN GANGS?**

Gangs seem to fulfill the following to its members:

- a. Friendship.
- b. A sense of belonging. (A gang name and dress, even a new alphabet for secret messages make members part of an important group.)
- c. Identity. (The gang member is immediately identified as a part of the group through use of hand gestures or wearing specific clothing.)
- d. Something to do. (After dropping out of school, the gang members are free to spend their time engaging in gang activity.)
- e. Feeling of power.
- f. Excitement.
- g. Money. (Most of the money is from drug deals or thefts. However, few gang members ever become financially well-off as a result of gang activity.)
- h. Protection. (From other gangs usually.)
- i. Pressure to join is so strong, teens feel they have no choice.

Some teenagers join gangs because of isolation by society due to poverty, minority status, ethnic discrimination, lack of job opportunities, and economic frustration. They want to take revenge on society for its rejection, prejudice, and forced poverty. They stay in gangs because they provide the teenagers with a sense of self-worth where society seems to only provide a sense of failure and rejection.

NOTE: Everyone needs to be involved with other people. Groups fulfill many basic human needs. Gang membership, unlike other organized groups and clubs, can have serious consequences.

**4. WHAT ARE SOME PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES ASSOCIATED WITH GANG MEMBERSHIP?**

1. Almost guaranteed incarceration. Gang activity is mostly illegal and will eventually result in jail or prison time.
2. Become wounded or killed.
3. Hurt or kill others.
4. Probably make little money.
5. Cause great family trauma, or lose family ties altogether.
6. Drop out of school, jeopardizing future.
7. Close off other opportunities for future options (especially as the member gets older).

## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE DYNAMICS OF GANG MEMBERSHIP - Page 3

Overall, the negative consequences outweigh any gains. Given the goals and emphasis of gang activity, the future paints a grim picture for its members.

### 5. WHAT TYPE OF YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RECRUITED FOR MEMBERSHIP?

Kids that are recruited for membership generally have little adult participation in their lives. They consequently have a poor self-image, low self-esteem, misdirected racial pride and may do poorly in school. In many cases, young people are not actively discouraged from joining gangs and often parents do not even realize their children are involved in gang activity because there is so little parental involvement with the child.

### 6. WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT FOR GANG MEMBERS?

The basis of gang power is its ability to control the group through the use of violence, intimidation, and the control of resources. There are generally three levels of membership:

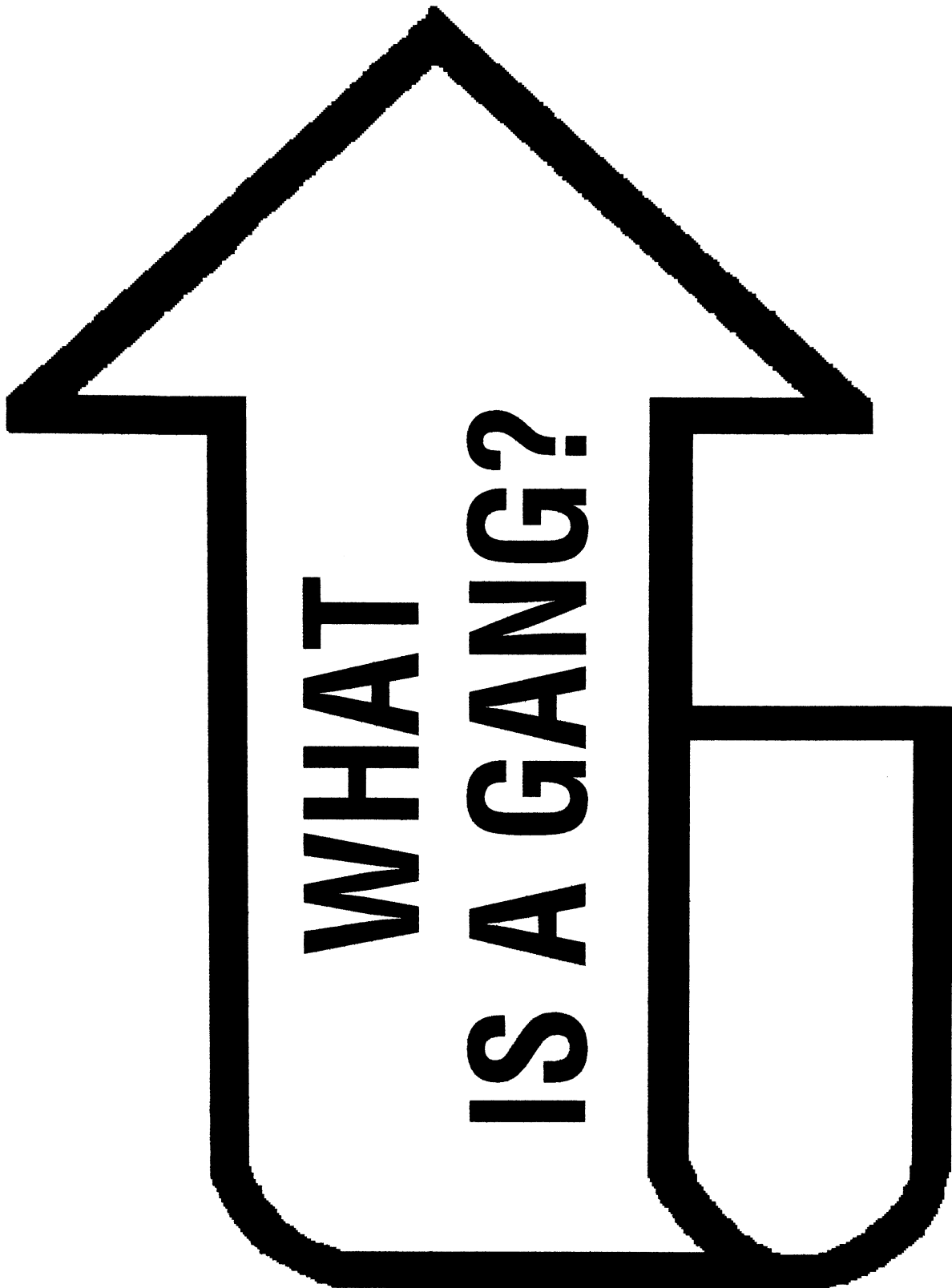
1. **Peripheral:** Sometimes called "wanna-be's." The peripheral gang members wear the gang clothing, use the language, and flash the hand signs in an attempt to gain the status of gang members.

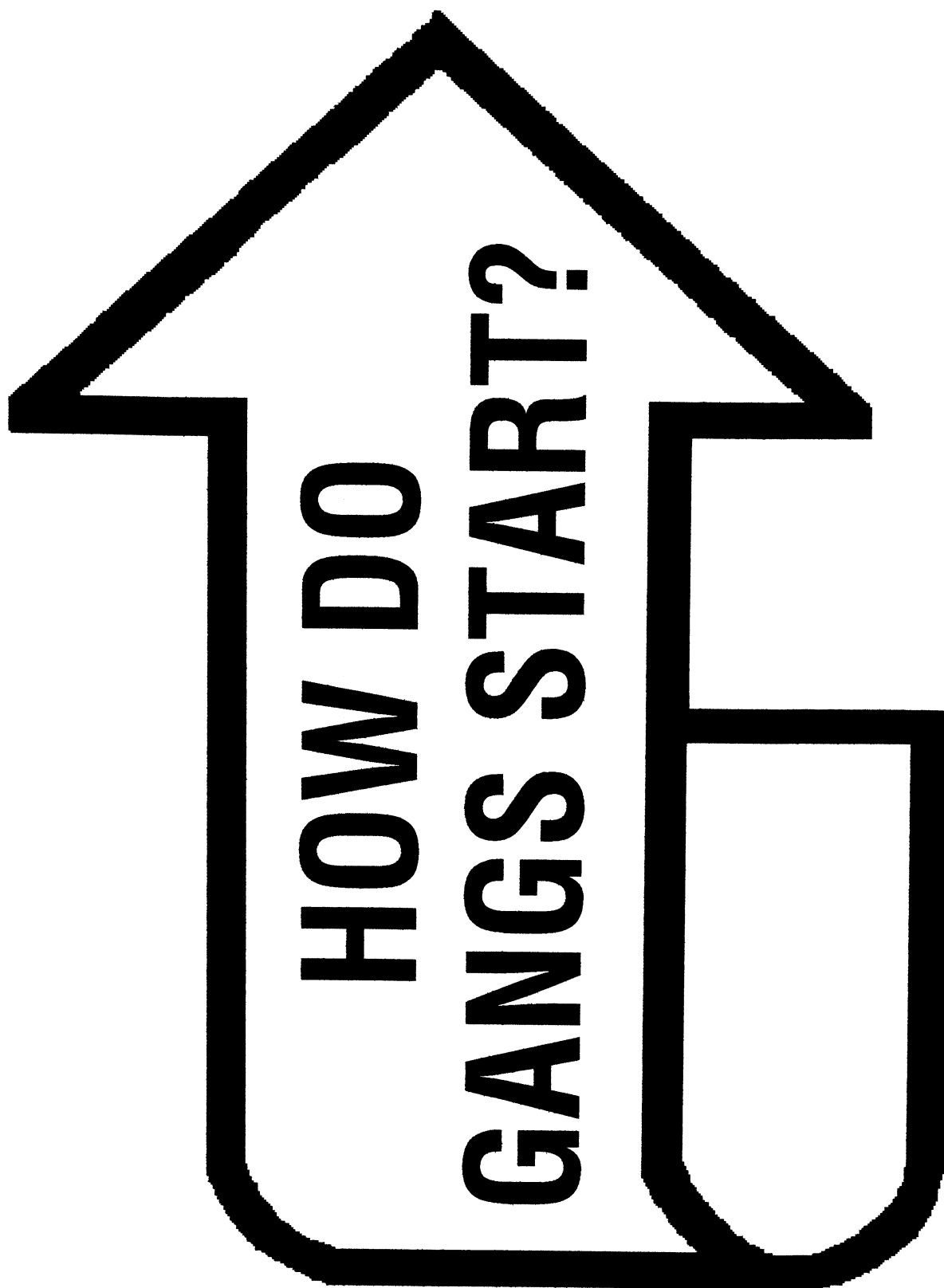
2. **Associates:** Associates wear the gang clothing, attend gang-related functions, and often bear tattoos of the gang. They are often the most active, visible, and violent members as they strive to build a reputation among hardcore members.

3. **Hardcore:** These individuals need and thrive on gang activity. The hardcore are the leaders. They are the most violent, streetwise, and knowledgeable in legal matters. Although they may engage in violent or illegal activities, they generally focus on getting others to commit the criminal acts.

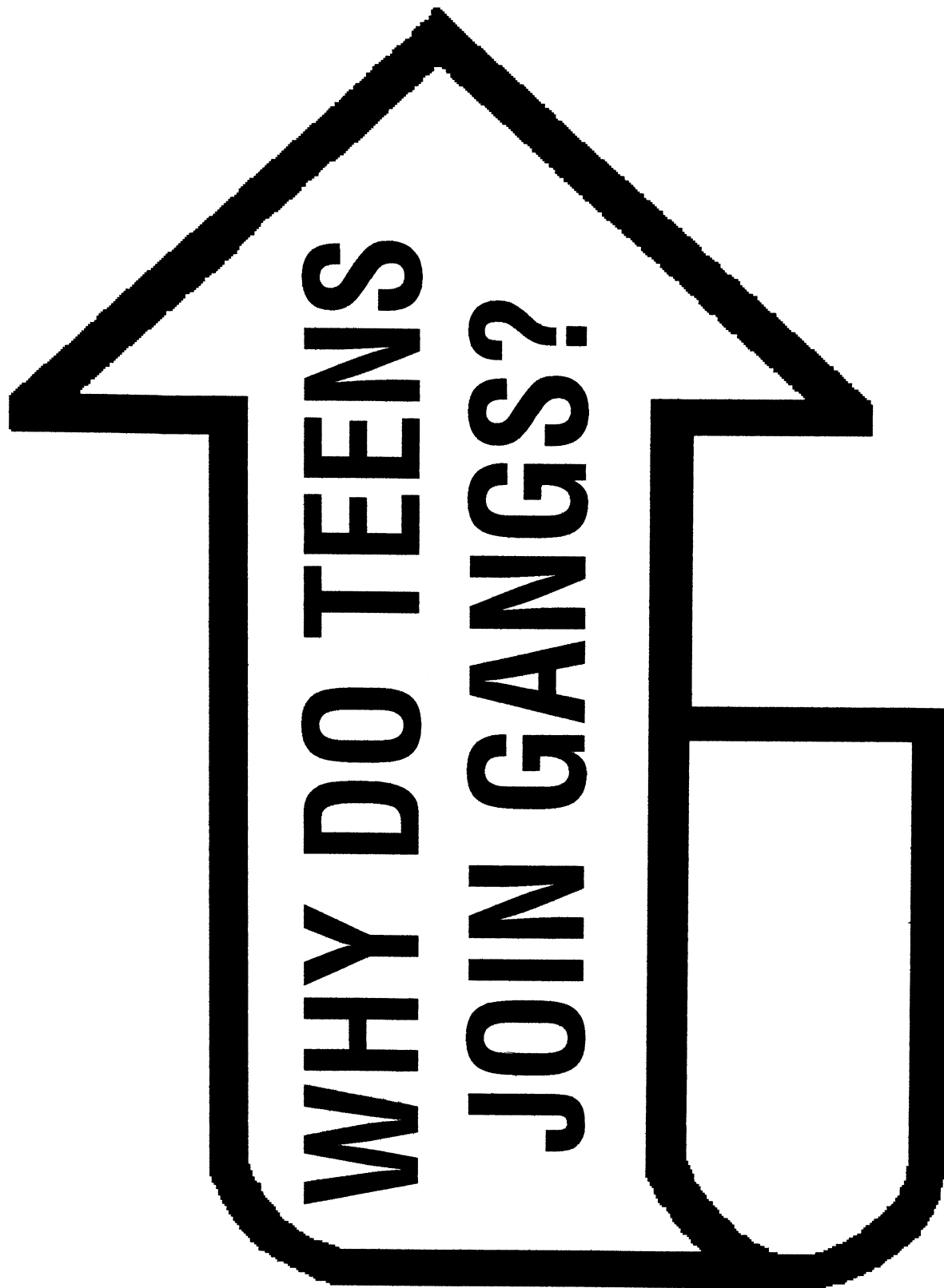
### 7. WHAT CHARACTERIZES A MOB?

The next step for gang members may be mob involvement. Mobs are disorderly, lawless, and have total disregard for life. Money is the ultimate and the only thing that counts. Mobs take greater risks and take less personal responsibility for their actions. Many members spend lots of years incarcerated.

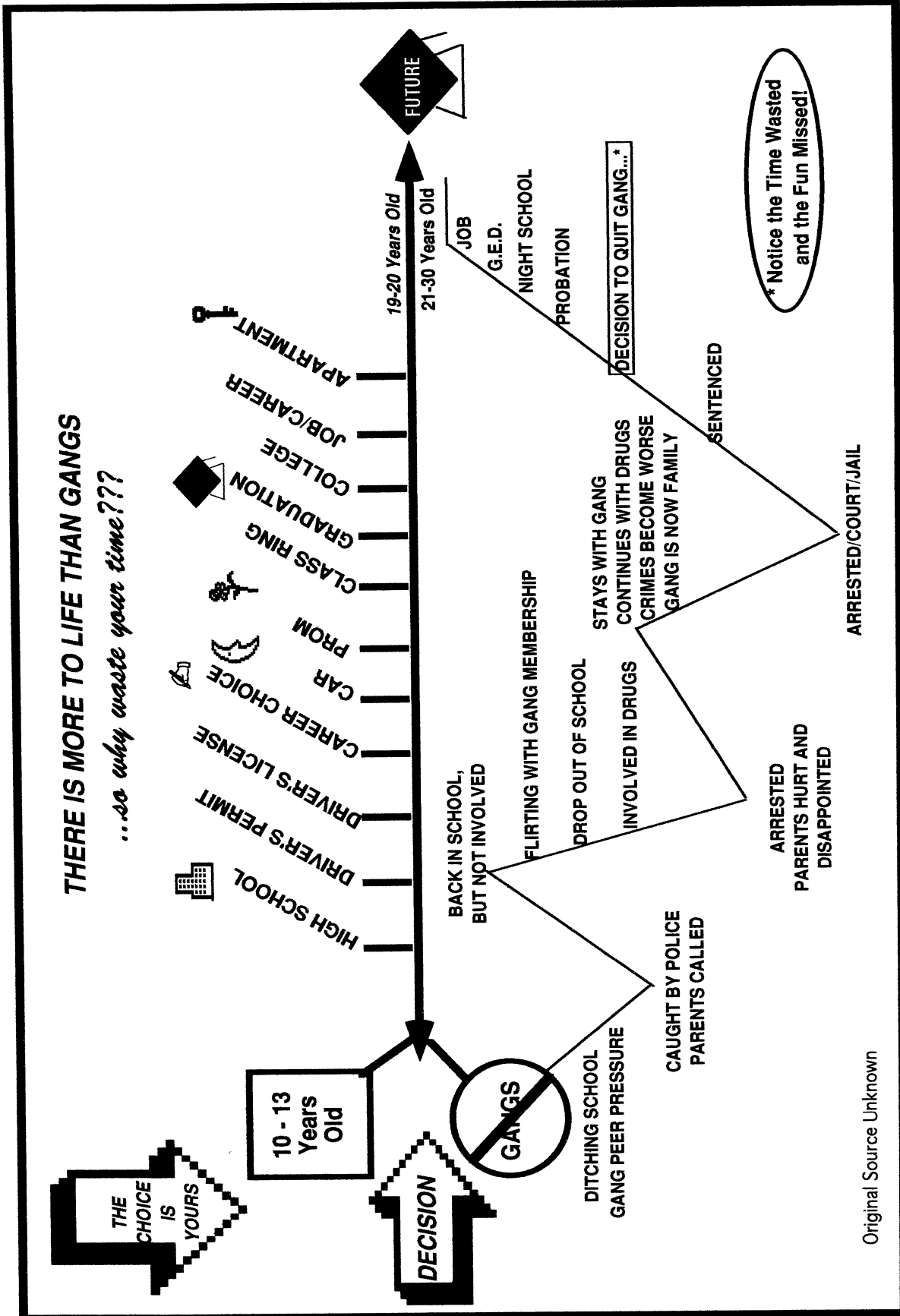












**CLUES TO THE PRESENCE OF GANGS  
IN COMMUNITIES OR NEIGHBORHOODS**

Do you have graffiti on or near your neighborhood or school?

Do you have crossed out graffiti on or near your neighborhood or school?

Do the youth in your community wear colors, clothing, flash hand signs, or display other behavior which may be gang related?

Are drugs available in or near your community or school?

Has there been a significant increase in the number of physical confrontations/ stare downs within the past twelve months in or near your community or school?

Is there an increasing presence of weapons in your community?

Has there been an increase in home or car burglaries in your neighborhood within the past six months?

Have you had a drive-by shooting in or around your neighborhood?

Have you had a "show-by" display of weapons in or around your community or school?

Is the truancy rate in your community increasing?

Is there an increasing number of racial incidents in your community or school?

Is there an increasing presence of "Informal Social Groups" with unusual names such as Gangster, Crew, Posse, etc.?

If the answer to several of these is "yes", there is a need for a community gang prevention and intervention program in your community or neighborhood.

Source: Governor's Task Force on Gangs, State of Utah, 1994

**G O I N G**

**A G A I N S T**

**N I C E**

**G U Y S A N D G A L S**

**S O C I A L L Y**

