

Many if not all of these students at the Ocean Tides program have come from challenging backgrounds. Most of them have broken homes and families, been involved in gang related violence, and completely dismiss school and authority. What their goal is at the Ocean Tides program is to provide an environment that emphasizes correction and wants to meet the needs of each individual kid. In being involved in this particular environment for the past couple months, I learned that this population needs a strong, consistent atmosphere for them to thrive and learn to behave.

Inappropriate behavior can be a daily struggle during and after school hours. Specifically speaking, being the only female intern at an all boys program, I had to regularly be on guard for inappropriate behavior and comments towards myself. I did have to be aware before entering my internship that these types of occurrences were going to happen. In understanding some of the student's backgrounds, the way some of them speak and treat women with disrespect can be overwhelming. However, this is the only way the boys know how to treat women. For example, one specific student shows regular disrespect for staff and his studies. He would take part in inappropriate topics such as guns, drugs, and violence during class time and make crude comments about girls. He currently had a girlfriend who was pregnant, but made it known that he cheats on her with other girls often. His comments and actions to his girlfriend were so hostile and crude that she had a restraining order signed against him. In dealing with that type of student, the best thing to do is to not let any of his comments slide in classes. It is important to show him authority but at the same time let him find his strengths at school so he can thrive in something positive.

Other instances that can be challenging is what little time it takes for the kids to become angry. There were many occasions of arguments between students, yelling at teachers during class, and instances of students punching walls, doors, etc... Things that can cause them to become so angry can be late vans, catching time outside of school, and sanctions. Also, outside issues can really affect their behavior as well such as family problems, girlfriend issues, or other personal issues. In many cases, letting the student talk to someone or allowing them to hit the punching bag

can help release their anger. I had one personal encounter when I found a student, who happened to receive a few late vans, who was hysterically crying and upset in a hallway. I spoke to him and tried to calm him down and walked him to the gym to hit the punching bag while trying to offer him some words of encouragement. It is important to remind the students that they can control their anger and many times allowing them to be upset and angry while talking to someone is all they need to calm down.

A final suggestion when dealing with this population is helping them succeed in school. It is something most of them have shown little concern for beforehand, and more than ever it is important to be available to help them with whatever they need. Many times, I felt how important it was to be a positive role model for these kids in encouraging the idea of graduating and going to college. Some of these boys hope to be the first ones in their families to receive a high school diploma, so it is especially important to give them positive feedback and written compliments when they do succeed. It is also beneficial to persuade and talk with them to pursue areas in which they're good at. For instance, many of the boys excel in more hands on classes such as woodshop, woodturning, car detailing, landscaping, or gym classes. These classes seem to keep them going throughout their day since it is something they can easily do well in.

These boys do have potential to thrive. Even though they weren't born into the best homes or life, they can go farther in their lives and choose to overcome their anger and difficult behaviors. I think consistency is the key element in dealing with these boys. They need stability and individual attention, which sets up a successful environment for them to be their best in.