



TOUGH LOVE

SOCIAL WORK DISCUSSION GUIDE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In this section you will find a range of topics and questions to guide and facilitate conversations after screenings of **Tough Love**. As you can see, there are many different topics and issues covered. You can follow this guide's general line of questioning or you can choose one section and focus your discussion on this area.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR:



This guide is an invitation to dialogue. It is based on a belief in the power of human connection, designed for people who want to use **Tough Love** to engage family, friends, classmates, colleagues and communities. In contrast to initiatives that foster debates in which participants try to convince others that they are right, this document envisions conversations undertaken in a spirit of openness in which people try to understand one another and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening actively.

The discussion prompts are intentionally crafted to help a wide range of audiences think more deeply about the issues in the film. Rather than attempting to address them all, choose one or two that best meet your needs and interests. And be sure to leave time to consider taking action. Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even in instances when conversations have been difficult. For more detailed event planning and facilitation tips, visit www.pbs.org/pov/engage.



ROLE OF CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY SOCIAL WORKERS

Some jurisdictions have adopted a team approach in the child welfare arena. Rather than an individual caseworker being responsible for a case, responsibilities are disseminated among a group. A primary caseworker and secondary caseworker might be charged with accomplishing case tasks. These caseworkers receive input and advice, as needed, from a wider team. Caseworkers receive guidance from one another, from their supervisors, and from the parents they are serving. In theory, families are served better, since multiple people have collaborated to come up with solutions to obstacles they are facing.

1. In the above-described approach, the family knows they are supported by a team, not just one individual caseworker. Does your organization practice a team approach? What are the pros and cons of such a model? Has it worked and how has it helped parents?
2. Do child welfare caseworkers have enough support? Do they need more or different training?
3. Can child welfare social workers be both supportive while also having an authoritative monitoring function? Or are these dual roles incompatible?
4. **Tough Love** reveals that parents often blame themselves for their predicament and this self blame is one of the biggest obstacles for them to overcome in order to parent again. What could social workers and child welfare players do to help parents overcome this self-depreciation and doubt?
5. Some child welfare agencies have begun to adopt Practice Models that emphasize parent empowerment and partnership and use evidenced-based practices like solution-based case-work to structure case plans collaboratively with parents. Do you agree with this? Has your agency adopted a Practice Model that supports greater parent engagement?

NOTES:

SUBSTANCE ABUSE IS
A FACTOR IN NEARLY



60%

of all placements in out-of-home care.

THE ROLE OF PARENT ADVOCATE

- 1.** In **Tough Love**, Hannah visits the Child Welfare Organizing Project, a parent advocate program and support group. There she is able to receive guidance on her case. Why do you think these programs exist? Do you have a peer support program in your jurisdiction? If so, do you think it changes a parent's experience with the system?
 - 2.** If you work with parent advocates in your state, how would you describe your relationship with them? Their relationship with parents? Their relationship with the foster parents?
 - 3.** In the NYC jurisdiction some public defender agencies have adopted the new social work, parent advocate and lawyer model. If you are familiar with this model, how has it changed or affected your practice? What are the pros and cons of this model?
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NOTES:



**30% OF
CHILDREN**

in foster care could be reunited with their parents if they had access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

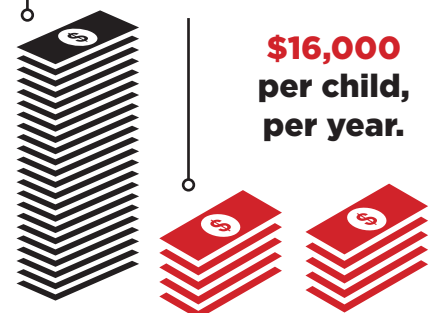
THE FUTURE FOR PATRICK, HANNAH, PHILLY & THEIR CHILDREN

1. How did you feel about the outcome of Patrick's case? What about Hannah and Philly? Were you surprised? Would you have done anything differently?
2. How do you think this experience has affected the children? How do you think they're faring now? What outcomes do you envision for their children? What does a successful outcome look like to you?
3. How do you think this experience has affected Patrick and Hannah? How will it affect their parenting abilities now?

NOTES:

FOSTER CARE COSTS,
on average, **\$25,000**
per child per year...

PREVENTIVE SERVICES
could save approximately



INTERGENERATIONAL TREATMENT

- 1.** Both Patrick and Hannah came from broken homes. What's the best way to curb the cycle of intergenerational child maltreatment? How can we avoid child maltreatment and avoid family involvement in an adversarial court process?
 - 2.** What child abuse prevention programs have you found to be effective? Does your community offer empirically proven prevention and intervention programs?
 - Examples include: early home visitation (e.g., Nurse-Family Partnership, Healthy Families America, Child First); universal access to high quality early education for children; parenting programs (e.g., The Incredible Years, Parents Anonymous, Parents as Teachers, Family Check-Up); intensive wrap-around services for drug addicted parents; programs coordinated with pediatric offices (e.g., Healthy Steps, Safe Environment for Every Kid).
 - 3.** If you have effective programs in your community, how difficult is it for your families to access these programs? Are there regular waiting lists? Other barriers to entry?
 - 4.** Based on your work in the field, what programs would you like to see get better funding or support from your local child protection agency? OR What programs would you like to see implemented into your community that currently don't exist?
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NOTES:



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The overlap between child maltreatment and domestic violence is commonplace. ACS opened a case on Hannah's children because of her husband's acts of domestic violence.

1. What services could prevent mothers like Hannah from having CPS take her kids away?
2. Based on your work in the field, what programs would you like to see get better funding or support from your local child protection agency? And what programs would you like to see implemented into your community that currently don't exist?
3. What role does substance use play in your daily work? What about domestic violence? Do you know of programs that effectively help educate parents on how to deal with either issue?

NOTES:



OUR PARTNERS



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