



NCCPP REDUCING REEL TO REAL VIOLENCE DEFINITION OF MEDIA VIOLENCE

Young Media Australia (YMA), for the purpose of the National Community Crime Prevention project, *Reducing Reel to Real Violence* uses the following definition of media violence:

“Media depictions of aggressive interpersonal acts, which are deliberate, that is, intended to harm”

Media in the above context includes TV programs, movies and series available on DVD or video, computer games and internet games.

The above definition will include (but is not limited to):

- Cartoon violence
- Verbal aggression, including both tone and content
- Aggressive acts that are implied, although not actually shown
- Depictions of the result of an aggressive act, e.g. shown that the victim has been hurt
- Simulated acts of aggression in computer games.

YMA has identified that it would be helpful to highlight for parents some other media depictions, that could be of concern, even though they do *not* fall within YMA’s definition of media violence. Many, but not all, of the following depictions are intended for comic effect, and will attract cautionary notes when they occur within the context of the non-violent media list for under sevens. Such depictions include:

- Accidents or mishaps
- Slapstick comedy
- Predatory animal behaviour
- Behaviours that could be dangerous if imitated
- Harm that could occur through contact sports.

Sources used to arrive at this definition

OFLC

The OFLC Glossary (OFLC, 1999, p21) describes the entry *Violence* as follows: “Includes not only acts of violence, but also the obvious threat of violence or its results.” The OFLC Guidelines (OFLC, 2005, pp9–10) list what may be considered by the Classification Board when classifying Unrestricted content, that is material that is classified as G, PG or M, determined in relation to the level of impact of the material.

Media violence researchers

Tannis Mc Beth Williams (Canada) (cited in Biggins (1989, p28)) defines an “aggressive act” as “one which is intentional, interpersonal and visually portrayed, and is against humans, humanoid objects, animals or any representations of humans or animals (e.g. in cartoons). “Violence” is defined as “extreme physical aggression that is intended to be potentially fatal. For this reason the Reducing Reel to Real project definition uses the term “aggressive act”.

Anderson and Bushman (2002, p28) define violence as “aggression that has extreme harm as its goal, (e.g. death). They define aggression as “any behaviour directed toward another individual that is carried out with the immediate intent to cause harm.”

Further, Anderson et al (2003, p82) outline many forms of aggression: verbal (saying hurtful things), relational or indirect (out of the person’s view) and physical (ranging in severity from pushing and shoving to more serious physical assaults and fighting.

Ostrov et al (2006) report that all subtypes of aggression, that is physical, relational and verbal are harmful, and observe that even educational and prosocial shows designed for young children often contain high levels of relational aggression.

Sources

Anderson and Bushman (2002) “Human Aggression” *Annual Reviews of Psychology*, 2002, 53:27–51)

Anderson, Berkowitz et al (2003) “The Influence of Media Violence on Youth” *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, American Psychological Society Vol 4, No. 3, Dec. 2003)

Biggins, B (1989) *Production and Regulation of Children’s Television in North America* (Winston Churchill Memorial Trust: Adelaide)

OFLC(2005) *Guidelines for the classification of films and computer games* Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra

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Ostrov J et al (2006) Media exposure, aggression and prosocial behaviour during early childhood: a longitudinal study *Social Development* Vol. 15. No. 4 2006 pp612–627