Chapter 5

Role Play: Equitable Policies

To promote a discussion about equality vs equity (related to policies that promote both public and private good, you might have readers engage in the following role playing activity followed by considerable dialogue about whether the same rules should apply to everyone.

Group 1: You are an immigrant family from Mexico. The father is working (when possible) as a construction laborer, the Mother works evenings as a waitress. Although they care about each other, the family’s normal interaction pattern involves a lot of yelling at one another, punctuated by a great deal of swearing (in almost every sentence). Ricardo has come home from school dishevelled and with a black eye and the parents are trying to determine what has happened. The other children look on, some adding comments and others fearful and silent.

Group 2: You are a middle-class conservative, fundamentalist Christian family who attend church Wednesday and Sunday evenings as well as Sunday morning. Adrian has just come home from his children’s group on Wednesday night and is upset because another child called him a “fagot.” He is not sure what the word means.

Group 3: You are a middle class family. The father works as an accountant in a local bank; the mother is a secretary who has had to resign her job to take care of her son who has recently been diagnosed with Tourette’s syndrome.¹ Because the son has been experiencing teasing at school, the family is trying to decide what to do.

Note

1 Tourette’s syndrome is named after French neurologist Georges Gilles de la Tourette who first described this disorder in 1885. The main symptom associated with Tourette’s syndrome is the presence of tics. Tics are sudden, brief, involuntary or semi-voluntary movements or sounds. Simple motor tics involve only a single muscle or group of muscles and can be brief (eye-blinking or nose twitching), prolonged (shoulder turning or mouth opening) or sustained for a long period of time (extending or flexing a limb).

Complex motor tics are more involved and often resemble normal movement such as jumping, hitting, throwing or touching; however, they often occur in inappropriate settings or include inappropriate or obscene gestures. These complex motor tics can cause considerable embarrassment for affected person.

Simple phonic tics are usually meaningless noises or utterances. Common examples include blowing, coughing, throat clearing, grunting, sniffing or hiccupping.

Complex phonic tics comprise words or phrases that include obscenities, echoing what others say and repeating one’s own statements.

Tics can be suppressed and usually improve when the child is distracted; however, they can reappear anytime. Suppressing tics for a long period of time can actually lead to a dramatic increase in tics later on.

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