

# Reacting to *Who Cares About Kelsey?*

## ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1. What scenes or moments in the movie had the biggest impact on you?
2. How are kids like Kelsey perceived in your school or community?
3. What might have happened to Kelsey if she lived in your town?
4. What are Kelsey's greatest strengths? What are her greatest challenges?
5. How is this film about more than just Kelsey and Somersworth High School?

## EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL DISABILITIES

1. At one point, Kelsey comments that she's "not normal." Where do you think her idea of what is "normal" comes from?
2. Do you think Kelsey has a disability? Do you think she believes she has a disability?
3. What's the difference between an emotional/behavioral disability and just "acting out"?
4. Would Kelsey have been accepted more easily by her peers and teachers if she had a physical disability rather than an emotional/behavioral disability?
6. How have your feelings changed about youth with emotional/behavioral challenges after seeing this film?



Kelsey Carroll vents her frustration with her mentor, Somersworth High School Crisis Intervention Coordinator Kathy Francoeur, after learning she was failing math class.

## KELSEY'S PERSONAL AND FAMILY HISTORY

1. Why is it important to understand Kelsey's family and personal history?
2. How did your reaction to Kelsey's challenging behavior change once you knew about the difficult parts of her life?
3. How did Kelsey demonstrate the impact of some of the traumatic events of her childhood?
4. How did your view of the family change from the beginning of the movie to the end of the movie?
5. Were you surprised that Shawn and Kelsey got engaged? Why or why not?

## COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOR

1. What do you think Kelsey is trying to communicate when she gets upset or starts cursing?
2. What was the root cause of the iPod blow up? Why is it important to know?
3. How would you or your school have reacted to the iPod blowup or some of Kelsey's more colorful language?

4. How do you respond to a young person's anger?  
How do you get at the source of it?
5. Was Kelsey's self-mutilation a form of communication?
6. Is it important for peers to understand the source of Kelsey's challenging behavior? Why or why not?

RENEW meetings, how could the school have engaged her family?

6. What is the school's role in the discussion around the use of medication for students? Should the RENEW team have urged Kelsey to continue taking her medicine?
7. What should students expect of educators? What should educators expect of students?

### STUDENT OUTCOMES/STUDENT SUCCESS

1. When did you think Kelsey would be successful?
2. Why was it important for the RENEW team to understand what motivated Kelsey?
3. Why is it important for the RENEW process to start from the youth's culture, strengths, goals, dreams and their vision for their future?
4. What kept Kelsey in school? What motivated her to keep working towards graduation?
5. What incentives were in place for Kelsey to achieve her goals?
6. What resources/strategies did you see in the film that resulted in positive outcomes for Kelsey?
7. How can the messages in this film be used to keep kids in school?

### DISCIPLINE

1. Was Somersworth High School staff too lenient with Kelsey? Why do you think she was not disciplined for cursing in Kathy Francoeur's office?
2. Somersworth doesn't use strict "zero tolerance" policies, yet the administrator told Kelsey that if she keeps misbehaving she might not graduate or her diploma might be mailed to her. Do you think those consequences motivated Kelsey?
3. How do you balance the need for consequences with the need to understand individual student behavior?
4. What is the purpose of a disciplinary consequence? Is it to punish or to change behavior?

### THE SCHOOL'S ROLE

1. What did school staff need to know about Kelsey's life in order to understand how she might react in certain situations?
2. Where is the line between an educator and a counselor or therapist?
3. What characteristics of Kathy made her a supportive person for Kelsey?
4. Would your school support a teacher playing the "mentor" role like Kathy Francoeur did for Kelsey?
5. Even though Kelsey did not want her parents at

### WHO CARES ABOUT ME?

1. Who did you most relate to in the film?
2. What characteristics would you bring if you were on Kelsey's RENEW team?
3. Think about a time that it was hard to ask for help. What were the circumstances? What were the characteristics of the person that you went to that made you feel comfortable?
4. Who was your mentor growing up? How did that help you find success in school and life?
5. What are your qualities that help you to be resilient?

These reaction questions were developed through a group discussion amongst a cross section of educators, professionals, youth and family members. Many of the questions in the *Education Revolution at SHS* Discussion Guide are also relevant for *Who Cares About Kelsey?*