

Adulthood

If we are to be successful in our work with young people, we have to tackle the pervasive existence of “adulthood.” Young people’s lives are controlled more than those of any other group in society. Children are, by and large, considered the possessions of parents. The adult world also does not consider this treatment of young people as oppressive because we are soaked with it ourselves. We were raised being treated the same way, and therefore we need to hold “adulthood” up to a strong light.

John Bell, Author

Definition

ADULTISM- all those behaviors and attitudes which flow from the assumption that adults are better than young people, and entitled to act upon young people in myriad ways without their agreement.

Common Statements of Adulthood

“When are you going to grow up?”

“Don’t touch that, you’ll break it?”

“... You’re being childish!”

“What do you know? You haven’t experienced anything!”

Effects

Physical and sexual abuse

Intimidation

Feelings- guilty, denied, rejected, unloved

Strategies to Combat Adulthood

- Listen to young people**
- Ask them questions**
- Support the initiatives of young people**
- Validate their thinking**
- Respect young people**
- Have high expectations of their potential**
- Be patient**