

Classroom/Youth Organization Juvenile Justice Exercise— Middle School and High School

Hypothetical Juvenile Court Case Discussion and Mock Court Proceedings

Case Summary

AB is 15-years-old and has been arrested for robbing a 20-year-old by taking that person's phone. AB approached the 20-year-old who was walking home from work on a dark street at 10:00 pm. AB showed the 20-year-old a knife and threatened to use it if the 20-year-old did not give up the phone.

AB lives at home with a parent and an 8-year-old sibling. When AB was arrested, the parent was at work in a hospital that is approximately twenty miles away from the home and could not come to the police precinct.

AB has an open Robbery case involving the display of a knife. In that case, the 42-year-old victim had just left an ATM machine and was counting cash on the way out. AB displayed the knife, grabbed the cash, and ran. AB is being charged as an adult in that case. When AB went before the judge in that case, the judge released AB with the conditions that AB: (1) stay out of trouble; (2) go to school every day; and (3) call in every night at 8:00 pm to a court-run program that monitors AB's 7:30 pm curfew.

Discussion Questions

- What gender is AB? (Discuss what assumptions students may have made and why)
- What gender is the 20-year-old? (Discuss what assumptions students may have made and why)
- Why might AB be committing robberies?
- Is AB in compliance with the conditions of release in the other case?
- If not, should the court on the current case take that into consideration in deciding whether AB should be detained in a juvenile facility or be released? (Assume that the legal standard for detention is that a youth may be detained if it is reasonable to believe that the youth would not return to court or would violate the law before the next court date.)
- Which parent does AB live with? (Discuss what assumptions students may have made and why)
- What job does AB's parent do at the hospital? (Discuss what assumptions students may have made and why)
- Should AB be detained or released to a parent?
- Assume the court makes a finding that AB took the phone at knifepoint. What should happen to AB? (Go through options available in your jurisdiction including Probation, Probation with a program, Residential Placement, etc.)
- Assume that AB is also on Probation for breaking into a school and stealing laptops.

Mock Court Proceeding

The decision whether to hold AB in detention pending trial.

The prosecutor should interview the police officer in front of the class about the case to demonstrate a prosecutor's interview of a police officer.

Select students randomly to play the prosecutor, the defense attorney/attorney for the juvenile, and the judge. Have the students playing the prosecutor and defense attorney make arguments to the judge about whether to detain AB. The prosecutor should argue that AB should be detained and the attorney for AB should argue that AB should be released. The judge should decide whether AB should be detained and should explain his/her reason as part of the proceeding.

Mock Court Proceeding

The decision whether to put AB on Probation or to place AB in a Juvenile Facility.

Select students randomly to play the prosecutor, the defense attorney/attorney for the juvenile, and the judge. The prosecutor should make arguments that AB should be placed in a juvenile facility to receive rehabilitative services and the attorney for AB should argue that AB should be given another chance on Probation and should be given a higher level of Probation this time.

This project is supported by Grant #2019-MU-MU-K002 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.