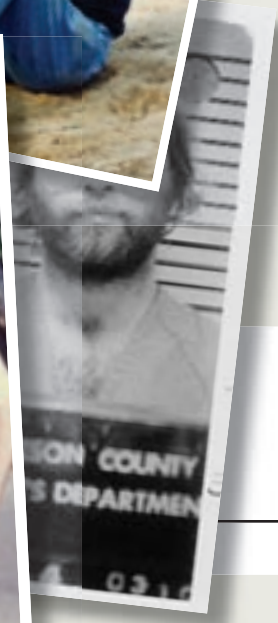




KARTEMQUIN



stevie

RESOURCE GUIDE

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A NOTE FROM FILMMAKER STEVE JAMES



I was attending Southern Illinois University in 1982 when, at the urging of my wife, Judy, I became Stevie Fielding's Advocate Big Brother. Stevie was born illegitimately to a father he has never known and a mother who never wanted him and beat him "black and blue" as an infant. When Stevie was just a toddler, his mother married and handed the responsibility of raising Stevie over to her new mother-in-law. Consequently, Stevie grew up in his step-grandmother's home — right next door to his own mother.

Being a Big Brother proved to be one of the most challenging experiences of my life. Eleven-year-old Stevie was a difficult, hyperactive kid, living a sad and troubled life in Pomona, a rural hamlet set in the bucolic rolling hills and rocky bluffs of southern Illinois. I ended my formal duties to him in 1985 when I moved to Chicago to begin my film career.

Despite my promises to myself to keep in touch with him, it wasn't until 1995 that I reconnected with Stevie and, with his permission, began making a film about his life with the support of Kartemquin Films and most of the *HOOP DREAMS* crew. My goal initially was not only to discover what had happened to Stevie over the past ten years, but also to understand the forces that had shaped his entire life.

The film took a profoundly different direction when I returned to see Stevie in 1997 and received the disturbing news that he had been arrested and charged with molesting his eight-year-old cousin. My hope is that *STEVIE* will force viewers — as being a Big Brother and making this film did for me — to come to grips with the multi-faceted circumstances that can shape a "victim" — a life-long victim — whose life has now taken a scary and deeply troubling turn.

ABOUT THE FILM

From the award-winning director of HOOP DREAMS, the acclaimed feature documentary STEVIE takes a compelling look at how years of poverty, neglect and abuse have affected the development of a troubled young man from the Midwest.

When Steve James began filming Stevie Fielding's life, neither man knew that the film would evolve into a four-and-a-half-year odyssey following the unfolding drama of Stevie's legal situation and its profound impact on his family.

Over the course of the filming, Bernice, Stevie's estranged mother, comes back on the scene, appearing to feel extreme guilt over the crime her son has committed. The growing relationship between Stevie and Bernice threatens Verna, Stevie's step-grandmother, who raised him before he was put in foster homes. Tonya, Stevie's fiancée, stands by him over five years of filming, despite her promise to her mother that she would leave him in the wake of his arrest. Tonya passionately believes that people can change and turn their lives around if they want.

Stevie's half-sister, Brenda, who is like a surrogate mother to him, also emerges as a central character in the film. She handles his monthly SSDI check and pressures him to control his drinking, dope smoking and hygiene. The film follows Brenda's Sisyphean attempts to get pregnant. When her efforts are finally successful and she gives birth to a healthy baby girl, it becomes one of the few positive milestones experienced by this family in years.

Through the intertwining lives of all of these characters, *STEVIE* speaks about the complex realities of growing up, family dynamics and how the system has — despite sometimes good intentions — failed to rescue kids like Stevie.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The *STEVIE* Resource Guide considers the film through the lens of child welfare and advocacy. In addition to general facts, statistics and resources, three sections in the Guide provide information on specific ways that the following groups might use *STEVIE*:

- **Individuals and Families:** Where to seek support or how to get more involved, if you have a Stevie in your life or want to help young people like Stevie.
- **Advocates and Organizations:** Strategies to help organizations or agencies plan and facilitate strategic screenings to reach out to the community, policy makers and funders.
- **Professionals and Students:** Guidelines for using *STEVIE* for professional and educational enhancement.

Kartemquin Films and Active Voice recognize that the complex issues and themes depicted in *STEVIE* provide substance for much wider-ranging conversations about family, poverty, community and rural life, to name just a few topics. We hope that this guide can spark conversations that will grow deeper over time and inspire new ways to learn from this powerful, provocative film.

To purchase a copy of *STEVIE*, please visit www.amazon.com.



STEVIE IN CONTEXT

STEVIE explores the complex forces that have an impact on a young man who was abused as a child. Many of the circumstances in Stevie's childhood and adolescence appear to have influenced several outcomes in his adult life, including drug and alcohol abuse, involvement in petty crime and, most seriously, a criminal sexual abuse charge. It is important to remember that Stevie's life is uniquely his own and that not everyone who experiences child abuse or the foster care system has the same problems and challenges as Stevie. In order to put the film in a broader context, here are some national facts and figures that relate to themes raised in the film, most particularly child abuse and foster care.

CHILD ABUSE

National Statistics

An estimated 903,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in 2001.

Neglected	57%
Physically abused	19%
Sexually abused	10%
Psychological or other forms of maltreatment	27% ¹

How does child abuse impact the victims?

The effects of child abuse can vary greatly depending on the individual, as well as other factors, such as age of the victim, the relationship with the perpetrator and whether the abuse was an isolated occurrence or multiple occurrences. Some outcomes of child abuse include:

- Impaired brain development
- Poor physical health
- Poor mental and emotional health
- Cognitive difficulties
- Social difficulties
- Juvenile delinquency and adult criminality
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Abusive behavior²

What should one do if child abuse is suspected?

All states have Child Protective Services (CPS) and may vary slightly in their process of investigating child abuse or neglect. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, or if you are a child who is being maltreated, contact your local CPS office or law enforcement agency, so professionals can assess the situation.

What happens after the suspected child abuse has been reported?

In most cases, CPS follows these steps:

1. An investigation begins within 24 hours after CPS receives an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect.
2. If a child is determined to be at immediate risk of harm, temporary custody is taken. Court is scheduled to determine whether the state should take full custody.
3. CPS works with the family to resolve the problems which brought the child into custody, except in extreme cases (e.g., child murder or some kinds of sexual assault).
4. In less serious cases, services will be put in place to address the problems without taking the child out of the family (intact family services).³

CHILD ABUSE NATIONAL HOTLINE provides resources for those currently facing situations of abuse and neglect.

**1-800-252-2873 OR
1-800-25ABUSE**

Prevent Child Abuse America estimates that the United States spends \$258 million a day as a result of child abuse and neglect. The estimate includes direct costs associated with intervention and the treatment of medical and emotional problems suffered by abused children, as well as indirect costs, such as juvenile delinquency, adult criminal behavior and lost productivity.⁴

FOSTER CARE

Number of Children in Foster Care	542,000 ⁵
Average Age (years)	10.6 ⁶
Male	52%
Female	48%
Black/Non-Hispanic	38%
White/Non-Hispanic	37%
Hispanic	17%
Other races/ethnicities	8% ⁷

Placements

Non-relative foster homes	48%
Relative foster homes	24%
Group homes/institutions	18%
Pre-adoptive homes	4%
Other placements	6% ⁸

What happens to kids who “age out” of foster care?

When young adults in foster care turn 18, the state releases them from its custody, leaving many of them to fend for themselves with little support. Approximately 20,000 youth age out of foster care each year.⁹ A 1998 study revealed how many of these young adults struggle to support themselves during the first 12 to 18 months after their release:

Unemployed	49%
Incarcerated at least once	18%
Homeless at least once	12%
Dropped out of high school (90% were attending prior to discharge)	37%
Received public assistance (food stamps & AFDC)	32% ¹⁰





“Unfortunately, there are too many young people like Stevie who leave foster care without hope and without the tools to build a better future. The work before each of us, as individuals, family members and community leaders, is to find ways to give these youth brighter futures than Stevie has. To do so, we must vastly improve community and parent supports and break the multigenerational cycle of poverty, crime and abuse that many youth like Stevie find themselves in.”

Ruth Massinga, President and CEO, Casey Family Programs

STEVIE AS A CATALYST FOR DIALOGUE AND CHANGE

While the section divisions in the next pages propose a roadmap for exploring particular issues raised in *STEVIE* and generating interest in using the film in a variety of ways, many individuals and groups will benefit from the entire resource guide.

***STEVIE* will undoubtedly elicit a wide variety of reactions and emotions. Immediately after the screening, allow viewers a few moments to sort through their feelings, then ask them to share their responses. The facilitator can introduce the guided discussion after the initial reporting of reactions.**

FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

Many people who view this film may find that the issues affecting Stevie and his family—such as foster care, family turmoil, substance abuse, mental illness and sexual abuse—have touched their lives as well. Others, whose lives have not been personally touched by these issues, might find that watching *STEVIE* inspires them to become involved. Suggested group settings for showing *STEVIE* include:

- Bringing together friends and local community members to a *STEVIE* screening to help increase awareness about issues facing individuals involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Plan to have trained professionals present.
- Inviting a book group to screen *STEVIE* and discuss the film.
- Arranging a screening for local family or youth support groups addressing issues of abuse and/or neglect.
- Holding screening and discussion events at a library or bookstore to reach out to members of the community and the general public.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did you see Stevie's family — as the cause of his problems or as trying to love and support him as best they could?
- How do you feel about Stevie? Is he a victim, a perpetrator, or both? Did your view change as the film progressed?
- Should Stevie's grandmother have been allowed to adopt Stevie? How far should families go to support their children? Is there a middle ground between unconditional acceptance and tough love?
- What were the societal or environmental issues contributing to Stevie's circumstance? What might have been done to mitigate situation? Did the system fail Stevie? If so, when?
- *STEVIE* brings up a feeling of hopelessness for many people. Do you see any way that we, as members of society, might be able to reach out to help those who seem to be beyond hope? Do we have a responsibility to try?

GETTING INVOLVED

- Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America
www.bbbsa.org
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
www.nationalcasa.org
- Family Violence Prevention Fund
www.endabuse.org
- Friends of the Children
www.friendsofthechildren.org
- National Foster Parent Association
www.nfpainc.org
- The National Mentoring Partnership
www.mentoring.org
- Network for Good
www.networkforgood.org

RESOURCES

- **American Humane Association, Children's Division**
www.amerhumane.org
Provides professional and concerned citizens with the facts, resources and referrals they need to make informed decisions to help children and families in crisis.
- **Casey Family Programs**
www.casey.org
National foundation that promotes advancements in child welfare policy and practice.
- **Child Abuse National Hotline**
1-800-252-2873 or 1-800-25ABUSE
Provides resources for those currently facing situations of abuse and neglect.
- **Family Violence Prevention Fund**
www.endabuse.org
Has a variety of information resource linkage, as well as some political action facilitation.
- **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill**
1-800-950-6264
Helpline provides information and referral services to local and regional service providers.
- **National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice**
www.edjj.org
Collaborative research, training, technical assistance and dissemination program designed to develop more effective responses to the needs of youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system or those at-risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system.
- **National Center for Juvenile Justice**
www.ncjj.org
National resource for independent and original research on topics related directly or indirectly to the field of juvenile justice.
- **National Sexual Violence Resource Center**
www.nsvrc.org
Website offers information and connections to local sexual assault resource centers, as well as information, statistics and resources related to sexual violence.
- **Parents Anonymous**
www.parentsanonymous.org
Child abuse prevention organization offering parents a place to learn parenting skills that strengthen families and build caring communities that support safe and nurturing homes for all children.
- **The Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (RAINN)**
1-800-656-HOPE
Automatically transfers callers to the nearest rape crisis center anywhere in the nation.
- **Voices for America's Children**
www.childadvocacy.org
Enhances the effectiveness of state and local child advocacy organizations.

MENTORSHIP

While *STEVIE* is an example of a challenging mentorship, this doesn't mean that these kinds of relationships are not successful. In many cases, just the presence of a mentor in a mentee's life makes a difference and is an accomplishment in itself.

Overwhelming evidence reveals the benefits of mentoring for participants on both sides. Mentors report rewarding experiences that have had a positive impact on their mentees' lives.¹ Mentees demonstrate measurable improvements as well. A study conducted by Public/Private Ventures for Big Brothers Big Sisters showed that Little Brothers and Little Sisters are 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 52% less likely to skip school, and able to get along better with their families.²

ADVOCATES AND ORGANIZATIONS



This section provides guidelines for using *STEVIE* with organizations (public and private) and individuals involved with child welfare, juvenile justice and other arenas which touch these systems, to bring about policy change and encourage more funding for these issues.

Viewing Stevie's story gives one a sense of how the multitude of policies affecting the child welfare and juvenile justice systems converge to have an impact on a single individual. As Stevie's life brought him into contact with the foster care and juvenile justice systems, he became personally affected by policy decisions in each area. His story dramatically manifests how policies are succeeding or failing the individuals that they are meant to protect. The following suggests activities for advocates and organizations:

“Our Children’s Advocacy Center had the opportunity to screen *STEVIE* for an audience of public officials, policy makers, professionals and community members. The event provided an opportunity for us to increase awareness of the complexity of child abuse and to reaffirm our collective commitment to improving safety and outcomes for child abuse victims. Conversations continued for days following the film as we sorted out our responses to Stevie’s life and his experience with multiple systems. Equally important, the screening inspired the gift of a new facility to house our child abuse program.”

Susan Goldfarb, Executive Director,
Children’s Advocacy Center of Suffolk County

- Host a screening of *STEVIE* with organizations representing the various issues raised by the film and identify specific issues to learn more about on a policy level.
- Use *STEVIE* to highlight issues which are relevant to current legislation and to encourage people and organizations to educate their elected and appointed officials about the importance of providing supports and services for youths like Stevie.
- Organize a screening of *STEVIE* followed by an expert discussion (including families, young people and field professionals) for foundations and other funders focused on youth, mental illness, abuse, foster care or juvenile justice to give them a first hand look at an area that needs more financial support.
- Bring together partners and influential individuals that the organization already works with (including board members) to view the film and discuss how juvenile justice and child welfare policies affect individuals as well as the work the organization does.
- Educate the public and interested parties on the contradictions that frontline workers confront in the real world. Lead into a discussion of how workable solutions have to deal with an imperfect world, often involving choices that are not ideal.

“On a given day, we have 25 boys in our care—and any one of them could have been the subject of *STEVIE*. Nobody wants to talk about these children, and that makes *STEVIE* a rare and critical film. In its unflinching documentation of the children and issues that are often hidden in our culture, this film has the power to change the minds and hearts of policy makers to improve services and outcomes for hundreds and thousands of Stevies in America today. The premiere of *STEVIE* in Seattle did just that—it brought together legislators, families, and social service agencies to discuss these critical issues of abuse, neglect, domestic violence and sexual molestation that are so devastating for children and families.”

Scott Hanauer, Executive Director, Children’s Home Society of Washington

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

STEVIE will undoubtedly elicit a variety of viewer responses. After the screening, ask audience members to share their first reactions and feelings. Note that many of their observations will be relevant to the issues raised by the film and can be used by the facilitator to introduce the guided discussion.

- How well does our current justice system handle sex abuse cases? Is there a fair balance between the rights of victims and the rights of the accused? Are there alternatives to our adversarial justice system?
- Should sexual offenses be seen as a social problem that can be treated or as a criminal behavior that should be punished? Are these incompatible concepts? What is to be done when there is no viable option to prison that will insure the safety of the community, such as the case in Southern Illinois where resources are insufficient?
- Even as a youth, Stevie was difficult at school and exhibited inappropriate behavior with his half-sister. Do education and special education systems have the resources to deal effectively with the multiple problems of someone like

Stevie? Educators are mandated reporters, but should there be more training on how to recognize and deal with abuse and neglect?

- The community around Stevie suffers from unemployment. Do our policy makers put too much emphasis on individual crime and punishment and not enough on poverty, joblessness and health care?
- Where are the gaps in this community and what key policy changes would result in addressing these gaps? Is there collaboration across systems locally or statewide?
- What future do you see for Stevie? What would be an optimum scenario, given his history? What would it take to make the best possible future happen for him? From what systems? From his family? From himself?



FOLLOWING UP, TAKING ACTION

Recent polls show that over 50% of people admit to knowing very little about the foster care system and the children and families it touches.

- The first step to creating policies that address the underlying issues that affect people like Stevie and his family is to increase the level of awareness about what has the greatest impact on these families.
- Advocates and advocacy organizations can start by learning more about the issues that have an impact on the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, identifying and articulating where the gaps and policy deficits are, and then helping to educate their local, state and national elected officials as well as funders.

RESOURCES

- **American Public Human Services Association**
www.aphsa.org
Nonprofit, bipartisan organization dedicated to educating members of Congress, the media and the broader public on what is happening in the states around welfare, child welfare, health care reform and other issues involving families.
- **Annie E. Casey Foundation Aging Out National Media Campaign**
www.aecf.org/initiatives/mc/communications/mcmoi/ao_outcomes.htm
Includes the documentary, *AGING OUT*, directed by Roger Weisburg.
- **Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count**
www.aecf.org/kidscount
National and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the U.S.
- **Casey Family Programs’ “Assessing the Effects of Foster Care: Early Results from the Casey National Alumni Study”**
www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/NationalAlumniStudy.htm
Survey of over 1,000 Casey foster-care alumni. The report recommends that more human services organizations focus on life skills preparation among youth age 8 & older.
- **Children’s Bureau, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services**
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb
Federal agency for children responsible for assisting the states, tribes and communities in the delivery of child welfare services.
- **Child Welfare League of America**
www.cwla.org
Organization committed to engaging people everywhere in promoting the well-being of children, youth and their families, and protecting every child from harm.
- **Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth**
www.ccfy.org
National resource on community foundations currently focusing on youth.
- **Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher M.D., Ph.D**
www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/home.html
- **The Foundation Center**
www.fdncenter.org
National resource on effective, informed philanthropy that can support efforts to engage individual foundations as well as regional associations of grantmakers.
- **The National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice**
www.edjj.org
Collaborative research, training, technical assistance and dissemination program designed to develop more effective responses to the needs of youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system or those at-risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system.
- **U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention**
www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org
Agency dedicated to fostering collaborations with professionals from diverse disciplines to improve juvenile justice policies and practices.
- **Youth Transition Funders Group**
www.youthtransitions.org
Grantmakers who are coordinating funding and program strategies focused on disconnected youth ages 18-23.

“I have used *STEVIE* to introduce staff working in a group home for sexually aggressive adolescents to the complexity of issues in sexual abuse cases. In discussing reactions to the film, staff have universally stated that they gained a much better understanding of the impact of abuse on the whole family system, and better understood the background experiences of someone who does the abusing. Steve’s struggle to reach out to Stevie in spite of the frustrations, provided opportunities to discuss personal reactions to working with such troubled youth.”

Jerry Lowell, LCSW,
Clinical Director, Aunt Martha’s Youth Services

PROFESSIONALS AND STUDENTS



Much of *STEVIE*'s power lies in its complexity and gritty authenticity. The issues leading up to Stevie’s arrest for child molestation are deep and convoluted, and no clear solution is revealed, making it a rich resource for professionals who work with people like Stevie and his family. This section is designed to help service providers, trainers, teachers and others participating in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems use *STEVIE* to spark productive conversations, enhance their professional expertise and develop a multidisciplinary perspective. Suggested audiences and applications for the film include:

STAFF AND CASEWORKERS AT CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES

- Include in orientation of new staff or interns.
- Present at a professional development session.
- Use with a multidisciplinary audience to provide new perspectives about what departments are responsible for, what they face in their daily work, etc.
- Show to staff already working with sexual abuse victims or children with sexual behavior problems in order to broaden their awareness.

THERAPISTS FOR SEXUAL OFFENDERS AND/OR SEXUALLY REACTIVE YOUTH

- Screen at a training session along with a presentation of new research and best practices.
- Present at a staff retreat for reflection on the challenges of this work.

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALS

- Show to members of the juvenile justice system to give them a complete look at some of the issues and policies affecting the youth they see in court daily.
- Use with law enforcement professionals to spark conversation about how early brushes with the juvenile justice system can be used as opportunities to identify and break patterns of behavior.
- Present to “containment teams” (which consist of probation officers, polygraph examiners, and treatment providers) to emphasize the importance of teamwork in handling sexual offender cases.

STUDENTS PREPARING TO WORK IN FOSTER CARE, CHILD WELFARE, JUVENILE JUSTICE OR MENTAL HEALTH

- Incorporate into course curricula to give students a “lay of the land” of the child welfare field and where social workers fit in.
- Present as a case study for students.
- Show to psychology students to introduce forensic issues and practice.
- Present to students in pediatrics or a unit on child abuse practice to demonstrate the array of challenges they will face.

VOLUNTEERS (E.G., MENTORS & COURT ADVOCATES)

- Screen and discuss at volunteer recruitment or orientation sessions.
- Use to train new mentors about boundary setting, roles and responsibilities and procedures for contacting program staff when a problem occurs.
- Show to current mentors and engage them in a discussion about “success,” reminding them that just being present in a mentee’s life is enough.
See “Mentorship” box on page 7.

GUIDELINES FOR TRAINERS, FACILITATORS AND INSTRUCTORS

The following guidelines will help you use *STEVIE* as an effective tool for initiating conversation and problem solving on difficult topics.

PREPARING FOR THE SCREENING

Identify your goals for the screening. Is there a particular aspect of the film that you hope will help unearth ideas, solutions, etc., among your staff or students? What do you hope people will get out of the screening? Share these objectives with your audience so that they know you are interested in using their time well, and so that they can view the film with the objectives in mind.

Note: One approach for screening *STEVIE* and leading a discussion is to show the film a section at a time. This allows for discussion at significant junctures and gives viewers a chance to address issues raised at different points in the film in detail. Audience members might be asked to speculate on where Stevie and the story is headed, which can spark productive conversations about cause, effect and responsibility.

RIGHT AFTER THE FILM

Immediately after the screening, allow viewers a few moments to sort through their feelings, then ask them to share their responses. Take note of observations that may be relevant to the discussion of professional issues raised in the film.

After the initial reporting of reactions, you might introduce the guided discussion by saying: "Stevie has contact with a variety of professionals throughout his life — teachers, foster parents, states' attorneys, defense attorneys, psychologists, therapists and church leaders. We're going to talk about the interface of professionals with someone like Stevie and his family, and how we can best understand how these opportunities could be helpful."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GENERAL

STEVIE explores the impact of one person on a whole family and community. (Wendy, the victim's mother, for example, moved her family out of the area.)

- What help should be available to a family like Stevie's?
- How can a community best support victims of sexual abuse?
- Do professionals have any obligation to the interests of anyone beyond their client?

"Wherever I go . . . there's nothing but trouble." – Stevie

"What if we could have stuck it out for twenty years with these kids?" – Hal, Stevie's foster parent at the Huber Home

- Is there an answer for someone like Stevie?
- How would you treat Stevie if he was in your professional setting?
- What can professionals do to counteract the problems faced by an individual such as Stevie, who has spent his entire life in a dysfunctional family environment?

"He makes me feel special." –Tonya, Stevie's fiancée

"[Stevie is] like a dog that's had a taste of blood... are they all so naïve that he won't do it again?" – Wendy, victim's mother

"I have to be there to put [my daughter's] pieces together. Who's going to be in prison with [Stevie] to pick up his pieces?" – Wendy

- How do you feel about Stevie? Is he a victim or a perpetrator? Did your view change as the film progressed?
- How do you explain Wendy's contradictory feelings about Stevie? Identify contradictory feelings you might have.
- How does confronting these contradictions help you address similar feelings that you might have with regard to a client?

SOCIAL WORKERS, CASEWORKERS, AND THERAPISTS

Victims and those in protective roles don't always behave as one might expect or hope. Stevie's step-grandmother, Vera, responds to hearing Brenda talk about being sexually abused by Stevie when they were children by commenting, "That was when he was just a kid." Brenda says, "He needs to be in some place where they'll help him with his problems instead of making them worse."

- What should have happened when Stevie molested his sister?
- Should sexual abuse committed by a juvenile be handled the same way as adult sexual abuse?

Social workers or caseworkers are often responsible for recommending and finding services to address the client's problems.

- If you were the young Stevie's caseworker, what services would you look for?

Hal, Stevie's foster parent at Huber, believes that even caring people sometimes have to let go but realizes that "when you let go . . . there might be a train wreck at the end." The field of child welfare identifies safety, permanency and well-being as core values.

- What could have been done to better insure Stevie's safety, permanency and well-being when he was a child and adolescent?

In reflecting on Stevie's life, Judy, Steve James's wife, says, "The system always fails in that kind of situation; they can't begin to do enough for a child like Stevie."

- What resources and changes in the system would give caseworkers a better chance of making decisions that support these values?
- Should social workers be involved in efforts to rehabilitate sex offenders? Is this a conflict of interest with protecting and advocating for victim rights?

Stevie's initial reaction to the charges of sexual abuse is that "this is one thing that I never would have thought of that would have happened to me — never. It blows my mind." Stevie's denial of the sexual abuse allegations remains firm throughout the film.

- How would you address this denial in your professional role?
- How well do you think Judy handles this during the pizza dinner with Steve and Tonya in Chicago?

ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING: PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Steve James is not a therapist and does not have a formal professional relationship with Stevie.

- Does this mean no boundaries apply?
- Are mentors or Big Brothers/Sisters obligated to maintain the "rules" after their official volunteer time has ended?
- How did you feel about Steve and his interactions with Stevie? Did he cross professional or personal boundaries in making the film? Did he violate professional boundaries? Is there a difference between boundary crossings and boundary violations?
- Steve makes a distinction between giving Stevie money for cigarettes while he's in jail and giving him bail money. Is there a difference?

Steve comments several times through the movie that he wants to "be there" for Stevie.

- How has Steve made a difference—positive or otherwise—in Stevie's life?
- Keeping in mind that Judy is a trained professional, contrast Steve's and Judy's approaches to Stevie.

Stevie frustrates many of the professionals he encounters in his life.

- As professionals, how do you deal with the challenges and disappointments that come from working with someone like Stevie?

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND THE LAW

The State's Attorney points out the difficulty of looking at the needs of the offender, saying, "If you start looking at the human individuals, and while, yeah, he's not really that bad of a guy . . . well, the victim wasn't that bad of a person either."

- What role should legal professionals (i.e., defense counsels) play when they have a client like Stevie? Should it include advocating to the client that they take responsibility for their offense?

Restorative justice is a concept that includes possible direct contact between offenders and victims to help the offender understand the impact of their crime and the victim gain restitution.

- Is this a realistic concept for sex offenders? Would someone like Stevie be appropriate for this?

Guardians ad Litem (GAL) are assigned by juvenile court to represent the best interests of DCF's wards in court.

- If you were a GAL and you had a youth that was both the victim and perpetrator of sexual abuse, how would you advocate for him/her in court?

RESOURCES

- **ABA Center on Children and the Law**
www.abanet.org/child/home.html
Offers professional training, education, technical assistance, publications and research addressing a broad spectrum of law and court-related topics affecting children.
- **American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children**
www.apsac.org
Membership society dedicated to serving professionals who work in child abuse and neglect.
- **Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers**
www.atsa.com
Membership association for practitioners focused on the prevention of sexual abuse through effective management of sex offenders.
- **David Baldwin's Trauma Pages**
www.trauma-pages.com
Award-winning site providing information for clinicians and researchers in the traumatic-stress field.
- **National Children's Alliance**
www.nca-online.org
A new way of serving abused children through a comprehensive approach to services for victims and their families.
- **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**
www.ncmec.org
Provides services nationwide for families and professionals in the prevention of abducted, endangered and sexually exploited children. Website includes resources for attorneys and law enforcement.

FOLLOWING UP, TAKING ACTION

Chances are you will not have enough time to address all of the issues and questions that interest your audience. Make sure to allow enough time at the end of the discussion to summarize the major points and to make a list of next steps. If you want your screening to be more than a passing event or meeting, establishing follow-up or action items is critical. A next step might be as simple as setting a date to continue the conversation or might include more far-reaching opportunities, such as the following:

- Establishing a regular time to discuss the professional issues raised in *STEVIE*.
- Building alliances with other professionals or agencies.
- Screening the film with clients (offenders, troubled juveniles, foster care parents and/or youth, etc.) and discussing how issues in the film might help them address their own experiences.

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ENDNOTES

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ACTIVE VOICE

Active Voice is a team of strategic communication specialists who put powerful film to work for personal and institutional change in communities, workplaces and campuses across America. Through our practical guides, hands-on workshops, inspiring events and key partnerships nationwide, Active Voice moves people from thought to action. We highlight compelling personal stories and perspectives seldom found in mainstream media, offering a much-needed outlet to people across America to speak out, listen up, and take the initiative for positive change. Active Voice is a division of independent media innovator American Documentary, a nonprofit organization.

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KARTEMQUIN FILMS

Kartemquin Films is one of the longest running film production companies in the U.S., with a 35-year history of producing critically acclaimed social issue documentaries. Over the years, Kartemquin's films have premiered and won prizes at festivals in the U.S. and abroad, and have been broadcast worldwide to critical acclaim. Recent award-winners, in addition to *STEVIE*, include *5 Girls*, *Refrigerator Mothers* and *The New Americans*. Other notable works include *Hoop Dreams*, *Golub* and *Vietnam Long Time Coming*. Kartemquin's films have been used by educational institutions, community organizations and individual families to better understand a changing world.

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SENART FILMS

Incorporating a passion for quality and commercial viability, SenArt Films is the vision and brainchild of Robert May, a former security industry head who is fulfilling a lifelong dream of facilitating great films. SenArt Films, as a company, gets involved at different stages in different films in different capacities: anywhere from developing scripts from the start to coming in halfway through a production to provide completion funds and creative input. In addition to *STEVIE*, SenArt Films projects include Errol Morris' Oscar®-winning *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara*, released by Sony Pictures Classics in fall 2003, and Tom McCarthy's *The Station Agent*, released by Miramax in fall 2003.

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