

Leader Notes: Reggie's Problem Situation

Unique among the problem situations, Reggie's Problem Situation concerns parental rather than peer pressure. Furthermore, whereas in peer situations the peer has a negative or irresponsible aim or behavior, in Reggie's Problem Situation the mother is at least well intentioned in her questions about the father.

This situation is problematic for groups until Question 3 when the majority position tends to be that Reggie should tell his mother what he knows. The majority tends also to choose "What's best for the family" as most important for Reggie's decision (Question 4) and "Important" for telling the truth (Question 5). Reasons for telling the truth include the following: By covering, Reggie would be helping his dad become an even worse alcoholic; Reggie would help stop his father's deception and harm to the family; Reggie wouldn't want his mother or himself beaten up; The truth will come out sooner or later anyway; Someone could get killed by the father driving drunk. Reasons for the importance of telling the truth include that society is based on trust (an especially mature Stage 4 reason).

Dissenters emphatically suggest that it was wrong for Reggie's mother to put Reggie on the spot (Question 2) and that getting Reggie involved is too heavy a burden to place on a child – Reggie could feel guilty if his disclosure resulted in a divorce. They may suggest that Reggie could help in a limited way by having a private talk with his Dad. Pragmatically, however, if Reggie tells his mother (Question 1), his Dad may beat him up. In response to one group member's minimizing comment ("She shouldn't hassle him just because he had a beer on the way home"), other group members countered that it's rarely just one beer. That they know through their personal experience how often it happens that Dad is drunk and violent (Question 3) by the time he gets home.