

# **Building Blocks of Effective Crime Prevention Projects**

## **Developing an Effective Presentation: Learning Methods**

### **About Learning**

Learning is a dynamic process that involves changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Teens learn differently from children or adults.

In elementary school, especially in lower grades, children learn by “do as you are told” approaches. Generally, children listen, observe, remember, and apply the knowledge to a specific task.

As children get older, their learning methods become more sophisticated. They learn by thinking through situations and by problem solving rather than by listening. They need to interact with the source of the information, the presenter.

Adults learn best if they see the information as personally useful, contributing to successful experiences, and associated with their prior knowledge. They respond well to an informal yet structured presentation style and learn most effectively as participants in an active, cooperative group learning process.

### **How Youth Learn**

Young people 12 to 15 years of age

- Can engage in complex, abstract, analytical thinking and learn from their own experiences, not depending mainly on others for ideas
- Are beginning to be concerned about broader community and social issues
- Explore and analyze their own beliefs and attitudes
- Experiment with their own identity, with relationships with other people, and with ideas
- Are concerned about how others see them
- Want to be accepted, especially by peers
- Understand the concept of being part of a group and can allow group needs to supersede individual needs
- Feel that they can influence the direction of their own lives
- Want and need to participate in the community
- Enjoy taking risks

Here are some hints for developing a presentation for youth in this age group:

- Use more abstract visual aids such as charts, graphs, and diagrams.
- Challenge students to examine and analyze different viewpoints and opinions.
- Whenever possible, teach reasons and concepts, not just rules and facts.
- Assist students in linking information to real-life situations.
- Help students generate ideas for solutions as well as identify problems.
- Give students feedback that rewards creativity, constructiveness, and risk-taking.

## **Experiential Learning Appeals to Teens**

Many teens (and adults) learn best when they understand how the topic is relevant to their lives. This style is called experiential learning. Participants draw on their own experience, share, interpret, generalize, apply, and provide feedback.

**Experience:** The learning process begins with an experience that is real and gives the audience information about some event or situation. Ask some of the following questions:

- What is going on?
- How would you feel about that?
- Can you offer a solution to the problem?

**Share:** In this phase, members of the audience share their own feelings and seek to understand those of their peers.

- What happened in your experience?
- How do you feel about that?
- Who else had the same experience?
- Who reacted differently?
- Were any of you surprised at your experience?

**Interpret:** Encourage the audience to think about the causes of the experience or event. What might have happened if someone had acted differently? Some questions to make analysis easier:

- How did you account for that?
- What does that mean to you?
- How was that significant?
- What was important about that?
- How might the experience have been different?

**Generalize:** Encourage the audience to consider their conclusions in relation to other more general experiences. For example, when teaching about hate crimes, you can provide newspaper stories of hate crimes in the community. The following questions will help with generalizing:

- What have you learned from your experience?
- What does this suggest about other similar experiences?
- Can that be applied to any other experience?
- What does that help explain?

**Apply:** Encourage the group to apply what they have learned to real-life situations. Ask questions that will help them apply the generalized knowledge they have gained to their personal lives.

- How could you apply that in your own life?
- What are your options?

- How could you make the experience better?
- What would be the consequences of doing that—or not doing it?

**Feedback:** In this stage, the audience thinks about the entire experience. Use questions to solicit feedback:

- What did you feel about this experience?
- What was good or bad about the experience?
- How might it have been more meaningful?
- What are the benefits?
- If you had it to do over again, what would you do?
- What would you change?

### **The Role of the Presenter**

The way you present your information is often as important as the information itself in determining whether or not the audience will learn. Here are some tips for a good presentation:

- Have clear goals and objectives for the session.
- Actively involve students.
- Stimulate thinking.
- Show how the learning applies to real life.
- Help young people develop and apply problem-solving skills.

To accomplish this, you will need to do seven things:

- Know your subject matter.
- Know your audience.
- Plan your presentation.
- Create and maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Manage the flow of the session.
- Manage individual participation.
- Evaluate.

**Know your subject matter.** You don't need to have all the answers, but you should know where you can find those that are outside the area of your expertise. Tell your audience that you don't know the answer but you will find out and—if appropriate—report back to them. If you have not presented a particular topic for a while, it is a good idea to brush up in advance. Keep abreast of current statistics and relevant developments in your community. Invite a guest, a law enforcement officer for example, to cover specialized information.

**Know your audience.** Get some key facts about your audience before you plan your presentation. How many will be there? Will your audience be one age group or a mix? Are you speaking as a result of a particular incident? Are there special needs or concerns to be aware of? Is your presentation part of a series? Does the audience know a little or a lot about the topic? Are certain kinds of activities

more successful than others? The more you know about your audience, the better you can meet their needs.

**Plan your presentation.** Given the needs of your audience, what information do you want to convey? How much time will you have? Here are some tips for planning your presentation:

- Be familiar with the physical setting. Will you be in a classroom or an auditorium? Will the people be sitting at desks or tables or on the floor? Can you rearrange the seating? If you want to use a visual prop or show a movie, can everyone see? What equipment will you need? Can you set it up in advance? A sample form is available to help you gather this information.

If people are seated in desks in rows, it can be difficult to make eye contact with the entire group, especially those in the back of the room. It also discourages discussion because people cannot easily see each other. Arranging desks or chairs in a circle or semicircle makes it easier for the audience to participate.

- Choose your learning objectives thoughtfully. Allocate your time wisely, and be sure to address the needs of the group. Don't repeat materials they have already heard, and don't pack too much information into too little time. It is better to cover one learning objective well than to cover four inadequately.
- Present information in a focused, concise way. Adult attention wanders after about 12 minutes; children's and teens' attention spans are even shorter.

Plan to re-engage attention periodically, based on the attention span of the audience. Present information that directly supports and reinforces the learning objectives. Rather than just lecturing, give examples. Use visual aids to emphasize your point.

- Actively involve the group. The more a person participates, the more likely he or she will retain information. If you use several activities, vary the styles and methods. See "Choosing Activities for Your Presentation" (below). Here are some examples of activities:

Brainstorming  
Cartoons  
Crossword puzzles  
Demonstrations  
Films/videos  
Improvisations  
Interviews  
Magic tricks  
Memorization  
News articles

Case histories  
Competitions  
Debates  
Discussions  
PowerPoints/slides  
Games  
Lectures  
Maps  
Music  
Internet

Panel discussions  
Picture studies  
Raffles  
Questions & Answers  
Art  
Role-plays  
Stop and summarize

Problem solving  
Plays  
Quizzes  
Skits  
Reports  
Testimonies  
Storytelling

Successful activities begin with clear instructions. Before the activity begins, be sure that everyone understands what to do and why they are supposed to do it. Stopping an activity to clarify instructions interrupts the flow and risks losing the group's attention and interest.

If participants are working in small groups, you should circulate, observe, answer questions, and offer encouragement. Being aware of what is happening in the groups enables you to identify common themes. But be careful not to "take over" as you visit each group.

- Choose effective examples to incorporate into the presentation. Presenting dry facts is often boring, so follow these tips:
  - Use relevant, real-life stories.
  - Share your own experiences, when appropriate.
  - Share events that have happened in your community.
  - Invite audience members to share their own experiences.
- Reinforce your points. Emphasize key points in one of the following ways:
  - Make the same point several ways.
  - End the presentation with a review, or ask the audience what they have learned and how it applies to their own lives.
  - Ask the audience to recall key points and write them on a chalkboard or flip chart.
- Allow for feedback. During your presentation, check with the audience to see if you got your points across. Ask questions, and allow time in your schedule for questions from the audience at intervals, not all at the end.

**Create and maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning.** In such an atmosphere, each participant

- Knows that he or she is heard and taken seriously
- Believes that he or she is an equal and important member of the group
- Feels safe and trusts the other members of the group
- Is comfortable with making mistakes, taking risks, and expressing humor in the group

**Manage the flow of the session.** You will need to manage the flow of the session, including transitions from one activity to another. Be prepared to cope with unplanned distractions, interruptions, or behavior problems during the session.

- Make sure that activities do not exceed the attention span of your audience. When an audience gets bored, they will lose interest in the remainder of the presentation.
- Have extra activities in reserve. If the group works faster than you anticipated, you will not run out of things to fill the rest of the session.
- Take your cues from your audience. If they seem to be losing interest, move on to a new activity.

**Manage individual participation.** Helping each participant be effective in the group can be a challenge. Here are some useful tips:

- At the beginning, try to identify group members who might present behavior problems or those whose support will help you engage the rest of the class. Get these people involved, ask for their assistance, and try to get them personally invested in the presentation.
- Do not let a few people dominate the discussion. Encourage everyone to contribute.
- Call on a variety of audience members to answer questions.
- Thank each participant for his or her contribution.

**Evaluate.** The best way to learn is to continually assess your work and look for ways to be more effective. After your presentation, ask yourself what was effective, what was not effective, and what should be changed.

### **How To Be the Best: A Summary**

- Know your material and be clear about the message you want to leave with your audience.
- Rehearse your presentation.
- Make sure that the first five minutes of your presentation are interesting. Tell a story, ask questions to pique interest, or present dramatic statistics from the community. Hook the audience by explaining why this information is relevant to them.
- Develop your own style. You can learn from watching others, but develop a style that makes you feel comfortable.
- If possible, rehearse activities with people who are the age of your intended audience.
- Preview movies, videotapes, and other visual aids.
- Be familiar with the facilities and equipment you will be using.
- Know your audience.
- Do not talk too fast. Vary the level and tone of your voice to help keep the audience's attention.
- Listen to and accept ideas from your audience.

- Praise people as they learn.
- Use examples and situations your audience can identify with.
- Determine the needs of the group and focus on them in your presentation.
- Be creative in your presentation.
- Make your presentation fun.
- Ask for feedback from the audience.

### **Asking Your Audience Questions**

The questions a presenter should ask the audience depend on the age of the audience, but here are some general rules:

- Ask questions that don't imply an answer or a judgment. Ask, "Why do people do graffiti?" rather than "Why do people deface the school walls?"
- Avoid questions that can be answered "yes" or "no." They cut off discussion and do not demonstrate audience understanding.
- Use a nonintimidating question to coax a timid youth to participate. For example, "Do you share the opinion that vandalism is a big problem in your community?" Use friendly questions to help the student feel comfortable.
- Ask questions of specific people in the audience. If you know their names, use them. This helps develop a friendly relationship between presenter and audience.
- Give the respondent time to complete the answer. Some questions require more time to think through. But don't ask double questions ("What happened ... and why do you think it happened?")
- If someone seems uncomfortable with a question and can't come up with an answer, call on someone else.
- Use questions to move the discussion from one topic to another. For example, "Do you know about acts of vandalism in other areas?"

### **Choosing Activities for Your Presentation**

Choose activities that are appropriate for the age of your audience and that complement your presentation and encourage the audience to participate. Here are some tips:

- Be enthusiastic—and your audience will be enthusiastic too!
- If you are using handouts, be sure you have enough for everyone.
- Read the directions and practice each activity before using it for the first time. Make sure the directions are clear to the participants before you begin the activity.
- Encourage full participation.
- End each activity with a summary of what the participants have learned. Involve the participants in developing the summary and applying what they have learned to their daily lives.

Four types of activities can make your presentation more exciting: case studies, role-plays, interactive lectures, and small-group activities and discussions.

**Case studies:** Case studies describe events or situations that present problems to be solved. They provide a practical, hands-on experience for small groups.

Case studies can help youth learn how to

- Understand and analyze facts in a complex situation
- Identify problems
- Recognize that there may be multiple valid approaches to resolving a problem
- Develop alternative solutions to a problem

Advantages of a case study:

- Actively involves all participants in dynamic discussion
- Involves use of many skills
- Uncovers different opinions, values, and attitudes
- Allows discussion to be concrete rather than theoretical

Disadvantages:

- Can be ineffective if not presented clearly and concisely
- Is not directly experiential: participants hear about the situation instead of experiencing it
- Can take a lot of time

Tips for delivering a case study:

- Make sure the case study is specific, believable, easy to understand, concise, and relevant to the age of the audience.
- Describe the purpose of the case study.
- Explain to the participants what they should do after hearing or reading the case (e.g., take notes, discuss it with a partner or the group, write down three proposed solutions to the problems).
- Distribute the case on a handout, and give participants time to read it.
- After participants have read the case, have them review the instructions and discussion questions to get them started on their task.
- Be available to answer questions about the case.
- End the exercise with a discussion that airs all participants' ideas. Try to reach consensus on the top five solutions to the problems. Encourage the participants to apply their solutions to the generic problem.

**Role-plays:** In role-plays, participants play different roles in a scenario. Participants are usually given a description of the situation and the role they will play. The description presents a situation that needs to be resolved, but the solution is not scripted. Participants are encouraged to bring their own experiences to the roles.

Role-playing builds skill by allowing participants to practice their communication and social interaction skills in a lifelike setting. It can also raise participants'

awareness and sensitivity to different perspectives on a particular situation. Role-playing activities help participants learn by doing; they can then apply the lessons they have learned to their own lives.

Advantages of role-playing:

- Is a high-interest activity and can be fun
- Allows participants to try out new behaviors in a safe environment
- Provides opportunity for participants to experience situations from another person's perspective
- Can be conducted spontaneously and informally

Disadvantages:

- Usually does not work well in large groups
- Can deteriorate into play
- Can exclude participants who are shy or self-conscious about performing in front of others
- Can be seen as superficial, phony, or irrelevant to real life

Tips for doing role-plays

- Share background material with participants, and be sure they understand the scenario.
- Once players have been identified, give them some time to become familiar with their roles.
- Set time limits for performing the scenario.
- Make sure there is enough space for the activity; move tables and chairs, if necessary.
- Make sure you have the props you need to make the situation more realistic.
- Once the participants have begun the role-play, do not interrupt.
- Stop at the designated time and thank the players.
- Help the group understand what has been learned with the role-play. You might want to ask these questions:
  - How effective were the specific strategies the players used to resolve the situation?
  - Has anyone in the group been in a similar situation? If so, how did he or she handle it?
  - What suggestions do participants have for other ways of handling the situation?

**Interactive lectures:** In an interactive lecture, the presenter uses questions and discussion to encourage participation, assess the audience's understanding, and help them relate the information to their own experiences. The interactive lecture is particularly effective with teens and adults.

Advantages of an interactive lecture:

- Actively involves the group
- Conveys information credibly and relevantly
- Capitalizes on the experience of the group
- Establishes two-way communication between the presenter and participants
- Clarifies the participants' understanding of the subject
- Encourages participants to look within themselves for answers

Disadvantages:

- It may be difficult to move from one point in the discussion to another if the participants become too involved.

Techniques for delivering an interactive lecture:

- Energizers: Involve participants in an enjoyable physical activity to get their attention.
- Associations: Ask participants to identify ideas they associate with the topic, and list the ideas on a chalkboard or flip chart.
- Reactions: Ask participants to identify their initial reactions. "What is the first thing you think of when I say...?"
- Self-assessment: Ask participants to apply the information to their own lives and share their insights.

Help participants by doing the following:

- Listing major points on a chalkboard or flip chart
- Using concrete examples they can easily identify with
- Regularly summarizing what you have covered
- Sharing your own experiences
- Soliciting comments from the group using a variety of methods including current events (ask for examples from the news to illustrate points in the lecture) and questions or review (stop from time to time to ask a listener to restate a key point or concept; distortions, misinterpretations, and omissions can be clarified before you continue).

**Small-group activities and discussions:** Structured small-group activities give the audience a chance to work with new information, learn from each other's experiences, and contribute to the session. Active involvement increases learning and retention.

Consider dividing a large group into smaller groups when the work calls for

- Problem solving
- A variety of solutions
- Close examination or exploration of an issue
- Building and strengthening working relationships
- Brainstorming a variety of approaches to a problem or issue

Before beginning a small-group activity, identify

- The purpose and intended result of the activity or discussion
- The specific tasks to be accomplished by the group
- The time available for the activity or discussion
- How participants will share knowledge with other groups

Advantages of small-group activities and discussions:

- Allow more individual participation
- Promote group cohesiveness
- Allow work to be divided into manageable segments
- Produce a variety of ideas and solutions

Disadvantages:

- The larger group does not benefit from small-group discussions unless the groups are brought together to report their experiences.

### **Using Audiovisual Materials**

Audiovisual aids increase learning by appealing to a variety of senses. Selecting or creating good audiovisual material does not have to be difficult or time-consuming, but it does require thoughtful planning. Audiovisual aids should do the following:

- Support the learning objectives of the presentation
- Be appropriate for your audience's age range and situation
- Reinforce, not repeat, your verbal message
- Be accurate
- Be easy to use

In addition, they should have

- Lettering that is clean, legible, and large enough to be easily seen by those in the back of the room
- Bold colors to add interest and draw attention to key points

When you are selecting audiovisual aids, consider the following:

- Circumstances: Where will they be used? Will they be comfortably visible to all in the audience?
- Subject: How can they help the audience better understand this subject?
- Cost: How much money is available for audiovisual materials?

Be sure to preview any audiovisuals you use. Be familiar with the content to make sure that it supports the learning objectives of the presentation. Many "bargain" films and tapes contain information that is outdated. Also, be sensitive to your audience when choosing film and tapes; e.g., youth in a rural community will not relate as well to a film set in an urban environment, and an African American or Asian audience may not relate readily to an all-white cast. The film should be long enough to convey the message you want to get across—perhaps

20 to 30 minutes—but should not take up all of the presentation time. Allow ample time for introductory activities, discussion, and processing.

## Preparation Checklist

Three or more weeks before the presentation:

- Select the date of the program.
- Find out what room you will be using—an auditorium, a classroom, a club meeting room, etc.
- Find out if you will have a power source for audiovisual materials.
- Confirm with panelists, if appropriate.
- Meet with or call the teacher or contact person.
- If you are going to be meeting in a room that has little furniture, find out where you can get chairs.
- Confirm the number of participants.
- Have handout materials printed.
- Make a list of all items you will need for the presentation.
- Locate audiovisual equipment and aids.

One week before the presentation:

- Check your itemized list to make sure you have all the items you need—name tags, felt-tip markers, pencils, notepads, props for skits or activities, etc.
- Read over the materials you are presenting.
- Test all equipment.

Day of the presentation (a minimum of one hour before the presentation begins):

- Recheck your list to make sure you are not missing anything.
- Organize materials so you can find them easily.
- Make sure room is set up properly.
- Tape electrical cords to the floor, if necessary.
- Test equipment again.

## Presentation Overview

Date of presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Setup time: \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning time: \_\_\_\_\_

Ending time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people expected:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Age group: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Special needs of audience:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Setting (e.g., classroom, auditorium, meeting room, etc.):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Seating arrangement (e.g., fixed desks, movable desks, tables and chairs, floor, etc.):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Equipment (e.g., chalkboard, flip chart, easels, microphone, projector, screen, video player and monitor, electrical outlets, etc.):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Developing Youth-led Crime Prevention Projects**

We cannot know the exact cause of any particular crime, but we do know that crime can be prevented if everyone works together. There are several strategies that will help curb crime in your community:

- Educate the community about crime.
- Remove or reduce the opportunity for crime to be committed.
- Report crimes to the police.
- Serve as a good role model for youth in the community.
- Build community support and cooperation in organizing crime prevention activities.

Here are some examples of crime prevention programs and the benefits they offer to a community:

- Block or Neighborhood Watch (and other variants): Safer streets, more secure homes, child protection
- Community cleanup campaign: Increased pride in the community, increased property values, reduced vandalism
- Afterschool program: Reduced juvenile delinquency, increased child safety
- Teen employment program: Reduced dropout rate, reduced juvenile delinquency, increased self-esteem
- Teen victimization prevention course: Reduced crime against teens
- School crime prevention program: Safer schools, increased school pride, reduced school vandalism

### **Building a Stronger Community Through Partnership**

Young people are a vital resource in solving the problem of crime in the community. Their contributions are valuable to any crime prevention project.

They bring to the effort the following:

- Keen awareness of the effects of crime on the community
- Firsthand knowledge of the vulnerability felt by members of a highly victimized age group
- Idealism and creativity
- An affinity for risk-taking
- Knowledge on how to reach the ears of their peers
- An enormous amount of energy
- The desire to be part of a group

Crime prevention efforts that overlook teens as resources are missing out on a valuable source of leaders, planners, and doers. A community that makes an effort to involve teens in crime prevention will accomplish the following:

- Reduce crime among a highly victimized population
- Change the negative image of teens held by many adults
- Foster an investment by teens in their communities

- Reduce community problems such as vandalism, littering, loitering, street crime, and drug trafficking
- Promote safer schools
- Improve relationships between teens and community institutions

### **The Needs and Tasks of Adolescence**

Every teen is affected by a variety of influences as he or she grows up: families, schools, friends, relatives, and living environments are different for each person. The adolescent years are a time of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth with specific developmental needs and tasks. When successfully guided, teens develop into mature and responsible citizens. According to experts on adolescent development, teens should have the opportunity to do the following:

- Participate as equal partners, members of a household, workers, and responsible members of society, with power to influence the policies and practices of the groups in which they participate
- Gain experience in decision making
- Understand themselves in relation to others
- Examine personal values
- Experiment with their own identity and try out different roles
- Develop self-esteem and confidence
- Discover personal strengths and be recognized by others for competence and skill
- Make a significant contribution to a group or to other individuals
- Expand their world by sharing experiences with persons of different social classes, cultures, and ages
- Have productive outlets for their immense physical energy
- Develop skills necessary for economic independence
- Become involved in a cause and experience the results of their commitment and perseverance

### **The Four R's of Successful Programs**

The National Crime Prevention Council has identified four factors—the Four R's—common to successful youth-led projects: Resources, Relationships, Responsibilities, and Rewards.

**Resources:** Resources are the crucial goods, services, and support necessary to start and sustain the program. They include the following:

- An adult—mentor, coordinator, or leader—who acts as an institutional liaison, provides advocacy and support, and serves as a role model and partner
- Youth involvement in the identification and solution of local crime problems
- Support from such local adult institutions as the chamber of commerce, city council, school board, service clubs, civic associations, police department, and judicial system

- In-kind or cash donations to purchase supplies or operate the program, such as a neighborhood printer producing a flier, a local resident or Rotary Club donating cash, or a local restaurant donating food
- A permanent base of operations that provides youth with a sense of professionalism and lends credibility to the project in the community
- Training that provides youth with the skills necessary to carry out their jobs, builds self-esteem, gives them credibility among adults and peers, and builds confidence in using their new skills

**Relationships:** Relationships between young people and adults are vital to the success of youth-led programs. Other important relationships include those between the teens and their peers and between teens and younger children.

Adults should treat teens as people evolving into adulthood and offer them appropriate respect and recognition. Adult leaders offer the following guidelines for developing positive relationships with youth:

- Provide a nonjudgmental atmosphere, a place where teens are allowed to be themselves.
- Allow teens the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Do not demand or expect perfection.
- Be patient; learning takes time.
- Allow teens to work out their own solutions to problems, but be there to provide support.
- Value the individual; do not stereotype.
- Listen and be receptive to teens' ideas and concerns.
- Be prepared to have your commitment, reliability, and sincerity tested.

Open, honest communication is important for a successful relationship. Teens need to feel that they will be listened to and that their ideas are valued. Here are some guidelines for building positive communication with teens in your community:

- Talk with teens; do not patronize them.
- Be honest.
- Be yourself.
- Listen to what is being said.
- Be attentive to nonverbal communication.
- Show your interest by asking questions.
- Take opportunities to talk one-on-one in informal settings.
- Let teens know that you value their friendship and their contributions.

Teens need to treat adults with openness and respect. Here are some guidelines for teens who want to develop positive relationships with adults:

- Voice your opinions thoughtfully.
- Communicate your feelings.
- Treat adults as you would want to be treated.

- Be reliable.
- Dress the part! Dressing nicely can set the tone, especially when you are working with adults.
- Respect confidentiality.

For a hands-on activity to enhance this section, see “Adult Guidance: To Have or Not To Have” below.

**Responsibilities:** Responsibilities vary widely, ranging from providing services to running the organization itself. Here are several guidelines for setting responsibilities when you are working with youth:

- Have clear rules.
- Establish specific roles and job descriptions.
- Establish and maintain high standards and expectations.
- Identify and use specific talents and abilities; take advantage of the skills of a young artist, writer, mechanic, organizer, technology whiz kid, or musician.
- Let young people be responsible for decision making.
- Allow for mistakes.

**Rewards:** Rewards include all kinds of payoffs for group and individual endeavors and provide motivation for participation. The rewards offered by a project influence participants’ feelings about whether it is a good investment of their time and energy. Rewards may include the following:

- Tangible results that are measurable and meaningful and that demonstrate how the project makes a difference in the community
- Recognition by peers and adults, through newspaper articles, television and radio coverage, and special certificates or award nights sponsored by adult groups or peers. Even a simple “thank you” can be a recognition.
- Social opportunities such as food and fun, meeting new people, spending time with old friends, and developing close relationships with adults
- Personal satisfaction that comes from tangible results, recognition, and group interaction. This is also influenced by the teens’ sense of self-worth and feelings of achievement, personal growth, and importance to the group.

### **Planning for Success**

The following Steps for Success model (APLAN) can assist you in organizing a youth-led project. Teens can design good projects without completing every step, but these five steps will help make a good project even better.

Involving youth in all facets of planning and implementation generates interest, enthusiasm, commitment, and results. The degree of youth involvement can vary, but experience has shown that if youth involvement is strong, the program will be more successful.

### **Steps for Success (APLAN):**

1. **Assess** your community’s needs and select a problem.

2. **Plan** a successful project.
3. **Line up** resources.
4. **Act on** your plan.
5. **Nurture, monitor, and evaluate.**

These steps may be quick or lengthy, simple or complicated, depending on the problem and the situation. Young people interested in forming walking groups for greater safety as they go to and from school may need only 15 to 20 minutes to plan their project and carry it out. Youth who want to create a hotline for peers may need ten to 15 hours of planning plus an equal amount of time in training. An assessment of needs may consist of a ten-minute youth group discussion or may take several hours of research.

### **Step One: Assess Your Community's Needs and Select a Problem.**

The first step is to define your community. You might decide to focus on your place of worship, a school, a neighborhood, or a special group of people such as latchkey children, disabled persons, or seniors. Your community can be any size, but it does need boundaries although they may not be geographic ones.

- **Define your community's boundaries to focus efforts and measure results.** If the community is a place of worship, does it include the grounds outside the building? Will you include the areas where the members of the congregation live? If it is a neighborhood, perhaps near your place of worship, how far does it extend? If you are focusing on a special group, how do you define it?
- **Research the community's crime and related problems.** Never assume that you know the problem. Get the facts. If appropriate, survey the community to gather information and develop a current picture of its needs. For a special tool for assessing your community needs, see "Community Attitude Survey on Crime" below.

Sources of community information include the following:

- Reports from local planning and zoning departments, health departments, and other local government and private agencies and organizations
- Newspaper articles, especially those published in local or school newspapers
- Police records on crime and related problems
- School records on security, disciplinary actions, and vandalism
- Surveys of the community by other groups
- Interviews with key community leaders

### **Step Two: Plan a Successful Project.**

Once you have defined your community and identified the problem you want to solve, it is time to develop the blueprint. Developing an operational plan will help you

- Identify specific tasks to be accomplished
- Assign responsibilities
- Generate interest and enthusiasm
- Determine what resources you will need
- Focus your group on its goal

The energy, support, and commitment you generate early in the project will often carry over into implementation. When you develop your plan, consider the following:

- Spell out goals and objectives. Goals are your reasons for doing the project (e.g., “to reduce crime in a local neighborhood near our place of worship”). Objectives are measurable steps you need to take to achieve your goals (e.g., “to make all the teens in this neighborhood aware of the crime problem and to persuade two-thirds of them to join our youth group’s crime watch association”).
- Choose strategies to reach the objectives. For example, to convince the teens that crime is a problem in the neighborhood, you might conduct a survey and publish the results in a local newspaper and create a flier to pass around to families in the neighborhood.
- Set target dates for completing strategies.
- List specific tasks. For each strategy, determine job responsibilities: who will do what and when will they do it.
- Develop a plan for evaluating your project. This can be simple. For instance, we planned to do x, y, and z. Did we do x, y, and z? What did we learn?

For a special activity, see “Action Planning” below.

### **Step Three: Line Up Resources.**

During the planning stage, you should determine what resources you will need and how you will get them. Resources may include the following:

- People who are already addressing crime problems
- Members of your faith community
- Key adult leaders in the community
- The skills in your own group
- People or groups who can donate money, materials, and services (e.g., office space, desks, telephones, office supplies, printing, food, and transportation)

### **Step Four: Act on Your Plan.**

Several things may make your project run more smoothly: providing training, developing leadership, recognizing the contributions of volunteers, and securing public acknowledgment.

**Training** should cover the following points:

- Explanation of the goals and objectives of the project to generate enthusiasm and commitment and to ensure that each member of your team understands the purpose of the program and can explain it to others
- Explanation of the roles and responsibilities of each team member to clarify lines of responsibility and accountability
- Explanation of any special rules to ensure the smooth operation of the project or to meet local laws

In planning your training session, consider drawing on resources within your group or faith community, as well as inviting outside speakers. In addition, your project may require such special skills as mediation training or training in counseling.

**Leadership** must be learned and practiced. Effective leadership will keep the project on track and build a sense of camaraderie among group members. If leadership responsibilities are shared, teens will acquire and exercise leadership skills. Remember that youth—and adults—all have different levels of leadership experience and expertise. Consider mentoring or formal training to build these skills.

**Recognizing and acknowledging** the contributions of those who work on the project helps retain participants and build their self-esteem. Here are five ideas for recognizing volunteers:

- Membership cards printed with your group's name and logo
- A pizza party, sponsored by a local business, to say "thank you"
- Teens as stars in public presentations and media interviews
- T-shirts, jackets, or hats with your name or logo
- Publicity

**Step Five: Nurture, Monitor, and Evaluate.**

Periodic formal checks provide an objective way to see how well you are doing. Ask whether you are using your resources wisely, if your action plan is running smoothly, and whether you are reaching your goals.

There are a variety of ways to conduct an evaluation. A key is deciding at the start what measurements will be useful and how those data will be collected. Be sure to note success stories, problems, and suggestions for improvement.

**Do not forget:** Working with teens places certain responsibilities on adult partners:

- Be familiar with relevant regulations, policies, and procedures of agencies involved in your project (e.g., schools, local law enforcement agency, sites at which you provide services).
- Because volunteers are usually minors, parents and guardians should approve their child's participation. Require permission forms, especially if

participants will be involved in off-site activities. Keeping in touch with parents may encourage them to become involved in the project.

**Publicizing your project:** Getting publicity for your project makes people aware of it, gives the project credibility, provides a boost for volunteers, helps recruit new participants, and attracts community sponsors.

Some publicity efforts require no money and little effort; others require greater resources:

- Place stories in the school newspaper or the bulletin or newsletter at your place of worship.
- Issue a news release.
- Develop and distribute posters, fliers, or brochures announcing your project.
- Write public service announcements for local newspapers, television, and radio.
- Design “walking billboards” (T-shirts, caps, or buttons for your volunteers to wear in the community).

## Adult Guidance: To Have or Not To Have

**Objective:** To identify when teens want and do not want adult guidance and what factors influence their decisions

**Time:** 20 minutes, including discussion

**Materials:** A copy of Attitude Check for each participant.

Teens are usually capable of much more than adults (or they themselves) give them credit for, and they frequently think of innovative solutions and actions that adults overlook. Teens often know more about the crime issues on hand, and they know ways to market to other teens that adults might not be familiar with.

In this activity, teens fill out a short survey about their attitudes about adult governance on a variety of activities. Which activities in community efforts are teens capable of doing? How much adult support do they want? Give the students ten minutes to fill out the survey; then tabulate the results and discuss them with the group. Did the teens mostly agree on when they need guidance? Why or why not? What attributes of the activity (e.g., perceived difficulty, familiarity with the activity, training) influenced how much support teens wanted? What opportunities would they most like to be given? Why might adults be hesitant to let them take on those responsibilities? What might the teens do to prove that they are ready to handle responsibilities?

### Attitude Check

**Rate the following activities on a scale of 1 to 4.**

- 1: Teens can do this entirely on their own.
- 2: Teens can do this with adult help.
- 3: Teens can advise adults on this, but adults should make the final decision and do it.
- 4: Adults should do this entirely on their own.

#### **In a Place of Worship**

Hiring staff	1	2	3	4
Answering telephones	1	2	3	4
Sitting on the Steering Committee	1	2	3	4
Visiting shut-ins	1	2	3	4
Planning projects and carrying them out	1	2	3	4
Serving refreshments at worship services	1	2	3	4

#### **In a School**

Counseling students	1	2	3	4
Evaluating teachers	1	2	3	4
Filing in the school office	1	2	3	4
Choosing school curriculum and textbooks	1	2	3	4
Setting rules and regulations	1	2	3	4
Taking attendance	1	2	3	4
Tutoring other students	1	2	3	4

**In a Neighborhood**

Conducting a community needs survey	1	2	3	4
Organizing a “speakout”	1	2	3	4
Cleaning a park	1	2	3	4
Rehabilitating abandoned housing	1	2	3	4
Organizing a block party	1	2	3	4

## Community Attitude Survey on Crime

Person Answering: \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female

Age/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*This survey will help our youth group choose and design a project to improve safety. Your opinion is important and will remain confidential.*

**1. Crime in my community is (pick one)**

- Very serious
- Serious
- A problem, but not too serious
- Not a problem

**2. The most typical type of crime in my community is:**

\_\_\_\_\_.

**3. In the last year, crime in my community has (pick one)**

- Increased
- Stayed about the same
- Decreased

**4. When I walk around in my community during the day, I feel (pick one)**

- Very safe
- Somewhat safe
- Somewhat unsafe
- Very unsafe

**5. When I walk around in my community after dark, I feel (pick one)**

- Very safe
- Somewhat safe
- Somewhat unsafe
- Very unsafe

**6. Someone I know \_\_\_ was/ \_\_\_ was not the victim of a crime during the past 6 months.**

If no, go to question 7. If yes:

What crime(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Was the crime reported to an adult? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Was the crime reported to the police? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

**7. If I saw a crime taking place in or near my community, I would (pick one)**

- Call the police

- Call an adult or friend
- Try to catch the person
- Do nothing

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**8. If my friends saw a crime taking place, they would (pick one)**

- Call the police
- Call an adult or friend
- Try to catch the person
- Do nothing

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Youth in my community accept \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility for their personal safety (pick one)**

- A lot of
- Some
- Little or no

**10. Adults in my community accept \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility for their personal safety (pick one)**

- A lot of
- Some
- Little or no

**11. The three biggest crime problems at or near my community are (check only three)**

- Fighting and assaults
- Stealing/larceny
- Vandalism
- Graffiti
- Drug abuse
- Alcohol abuse
- Truancy/skipping school
- Harassment
- Bias-motivated violence
- Extortion
- Abuse (including sexual abuse)
- Shoplifting

**12. I \_\_\_ would/ \_\_\_ would not be interested in helping in an effort to reduce crime in my community.**

## Action Planning

**Objective:** To identify strategies in which youth can be resources to the community in preventing crime and in community-building

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** A hat and slips of paper; current issue of the local newspaper

This activity gives youth a chance to brainstorm solutions to community problems. Before your presentation, cut a sheet of paper into small slips that can be folded and placed in a hat. On each slip, describe a problem that can affect a community (e.g., an increase in vandalism). For ideas, refer to the end of this section, or refer to your local newspaper for crime problems in your own community. You will need one idea for every three teens.

Ask the teens to form groups of three, and let each group pick one slip from the hat. Tell the groups they are to come up with three to five possible group projects to address the problem. Projects can be small scale or large scale, cost-free or expensive, but each must be realistic. After a 15- to 20-minute brainstorming session within each group, ask for volunteers to present their group's ideas for general discussion.

### Sample Problems

- There is a growing presence of violent youth gangs in the community.
- There has been a series of drunk-driving crashes involving students.
- A man has sexually assaulted several women in the area around your place of worship.
- A predominantly African American church has been vandalized by a neo-Nazi hate group.
- Incidents of child abuse are increasing dramatically.
- People have been selling drugs near local elementary schools and parks.
- There were fights during lunch period every day last week at a local high school. One student had to go to the hospital with a broken collarbone.
- Students are afraid to walk home after extracurricular activities because of the increased incidence of crime in the area.

## When a Youth Reports a Crime

### Why Many Young People Do Not Report Crime

Many young people are victimized and do not tell anyone, or they tell someone who doesn't understand or believe them. If a child or teen discloses victimization during or as a result of your crime prevention presentation, it is important that you help the victim feel comfortable, understood, and supported. The victim needs to believe that telling about the victimization will serve a useful purpose, whether to himself or herself or to the community at large. If the victim senses a negative response to the disclosure, he or she is unlikely to tell anyone else.

This section is a summary of a complicated issue. For an in-depth discussion, we strongly recommend *When a Child Reports a Crime* (published by the National Crime Prevention Council).

Crimes committed against youth are the least reported. Here are some of the reasons why:

- **Lack of awareness:** The youth may not know that what happened was a crime.
- **Secondary victimization:** Sometimes, the systems that should be protecting youth (including schools, social service agencies, law enforcement agencies, and the legal system) exacerbate the young person's victimization by not believing the report, breaking confidentiality, or not acting on the information given.
- **Fear:** Crime results in fear that is often compounded by other fears:
  - Fear of retaliation by the perpetrator
  - Fear of not being believed
  - Fear of parental disapproval or rejection if the perpetrator is someone the family knows or if the youth was in a place or engaging in a behavior that parents would disapprove
  - Fear of punishment if the youth participated in the behavior
  - Fear of being shut out by friends
  - Fear of law enforcement

It is important to recognize these fears and help the young person deal with them. The fear will not disappear just because you tell the person that it's irrelevant or unimportant.

### The Trauma of Victimization

To effectively handle disclosure of victimization by a young person, you need to be aware of the kinds of damage victims may suffer. Crimes can affect victims in a variety of ways. Some are easier to detect than others, but all cause trauma:

- Physical injuries, such as cuts, bruises, and other wounds, or damaged or destroyed property

- Emotional injuries that can be serious and long-lasting; common symptoms in young people include the following:
  - Insomnia, nightmares, fear of the dark, fear of sleeping alone
  - Bed-wetting or thumb-sucking
  - Distrust and fear of strangers
  - Difficulty in concentrating; poor school performance
  - Increased risk-taking behavior and recklessness
  - Confusion and guilt
  - Depression; feelings of isolation from family and friends
  
- Financial injuries, ranging from economic inconvenience to the devastation that the youth's family may suffer from these injuries:
  - Medical expenses
  - Lost money or destroyed property
  - Legal fees
  - Lost income from taking time off from work
  - Costs of transportation, lodging, meals, childcare, and other expenses incurred through hospital and doctor visits and attending legal meetings and court procedures

### **Recovery From Victimization**

It is hard to tell how long it will take a victim to recover from a crime, but most victims experience certain stages as they recover. The feelings and thoughts in each of these stages are normal, but a victim who becomes stuck in one stage for a long time may need professional counseling.

Depending on the crime, the environment, the support available, and the individual, a person's recovery from the effects of a criminal victimization may take anywhere from a day to a decade or even a lifetime in the case of serious crimes. Adult reactions have been found to follow, in general, the pattern outlined below. Children and youth victims seem to follow similar patterns but often show their reactions differently. For instance, an adult may verbalize his or her rage and express anger clearly. A child may withdraw or "act out," unable or unwilling to put feelings into words.

### **Responses of Adult Victims**

Adult victims generally pass through six stages:

- **Shock/denial:** Immediately after the crime, victims feel out of control and have trouble believing what happened. They may refuse to talk about the event and may become confused or disoriented.
- **Anger/rage:** Victims accept what has happened and become angry. They may be angry at themselves, at the assailant, at someone close to them who should have protected them, or even at God for allowing bad things to happen

to good people. Victims need to be able to talk to someone who will listen without making judgments or giving advice.

- **Feelings of powerlessness:** At the time of the crime, the perpetrator took control of the victim's life. If the crime was reported to the police, the criminal justice system takes over. At times, it may seem that the victim has no control over anything, not even his or her emotions. Victims may feel that their lives will never again be the same. Reporting the crime often helps victims regain a sense of control, even if the case does not go to court.
- **Guilt:** Victims mentally replay the crime scene and wonder, "Was it my fault?" "Did I make this happen?" "What did I do wrong?" "Did I deserve it?" "Is there something wrong with me?" "What would have happened if I had...?" It is important to assure victims that they were not responsible for the crime. The blame belongs solely to the criminal.
- **Depression:** Victims continue to feel fear, anxiety, and vulnerability. They may be afraid to go to sleep or to get out of bed; they may have difficulty performing routine daily tasks.
- **Acceptance:** As time passes, victims focus more on day-to-day living. The problems may not have gone away entirely, but the victims feel okay about themselves again and in control of their lives.

### **Responses of Child Victims**

Children of different ages will exhibit different behaviors in response to having been hurt by crime. Although their general patterns of response are like those of adults, six- to nine-year-olds might be expected to exhibit some of these behaviors either immediately or eventually:

- Clinging to adults
- Bed-wetting or thumb-sucking
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Crying
- Irritability
- Confusion and guilt
- Distrust of others
- Fear
- Withdrawal/isolation
- Panic
- Fear of dying
- Anger at the person who committed the crime

Ten- to 11-year-olds might be expected to exhibit these behaviors in response to victimization:

- Shock
- Shortened attention span
- Unaccustomed listlessness or hyperactivity
- Decreased school performance;
- Risk-taking (e.g., playing chicken or Russian roulette, hitchhiking)

- Internalized guilt
- Depression
- Denial or intellectualization of the event

### **Responses of Teen Victims**

Teen victims exhibit a mixture of child and adult responses to crime. It's normal for teens to experience mood swings in response to the physical and emotional changes of adolescence. This sometimes makes it hard to distinguish typical teen behavior from that of a youth who is dealing with victimization. In addition, adolescence is a time when teens dealing with questions of self-identity, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Consequently, teen who have been victims may blame themselves for the victimization and withdraw from friends and family. They may internalize their feelings and not search out people who can help them through this difficult time.

### **Reacting to a Disclosure in the Meeting Room**

Whenever crime is the topic of a presentation, someone in the audience might choose that moment to disclose a victimization. Such a disclosure may be very difficult and emotional for the victim during presentations on sexual assault, rape, or child abuse. You may want to consider making your presentation with a partner or someone with a counseling background, so that one person can leave the room if a participant decides to reveal his or her victimization, while the other person finishes the presentation.

When a young person reports a crime, you may feel discomfort, disbelief, or anger. It is important to be aware of your own feelings and reactions. The victim will be sensitive to your verbal and nonverbal reactions. If you are uncomfortable, the victim may think that telling you was a mistake, that there is something wrong with him or her, or that the victimization was his or her fault. Your first priority is to attend to the immediate needs of the victim, but if your feelings are getting in the way of helping, here are two ways to cope:

- Excuse yourself for a few minutes. Take time to collect your thoughts, compose yourself, and take some deep breaths before you return.
- Ask the victim if you can ask another concerned adult from your faith institution to join the discussion. This will give you a break and shift the victim's focus from you to the other person.

Your goal is to determine what happened, help the victim feel as stable as possible, and provide appropriate follow-up.

### **A Checklist**

Dr. Marlene Young of the National Organization for Victim Assistance has developed a crisis checklist that can help structure your interviews with young victims. The first two steps of her checklist ("Deal with life, death, and injury" and "Ensure safety and security") usually don't apply to disclosures, but the others help you understand what kinds of things you can do to help the victim.

Depending upon the crime, the time elapsed, and the victim, the discussion may take three minutes, 30 minutes, or three hours.

- Calm and comfort.
- Give back control.
- Help the victim ventilate and validate.
- Reassure and respond.
- Surmount the “insurmountable” problems.
- Find solutions.
- Predict and prepare.
- Say goodbye.

A victim may not want to be touched. If you are moved to hold the person’s hand or put your arm around him or her while you talk, always ask if it’s okay before you do it. You might consider buying an inexpensive stuffed animal for the person to hold while you talk.

**Calm and comfort:** Ask how the victim is feeling. At this point, the teen may be experiencing many different feelings about what has been disclosed and where he or she chose to disclose it—in front of friends or peers. He or she will be checking you out to determine whether you can be trusted. Be conscious of your body language and tone of voice. Beware of double messages: You may be saying that you care, but your tone or style might be intimidating. Here are some things that can help victims feel more comfortable:

- Let the victim know that talking about what happened is good, that you are there to help, and that you believe what he or she is telling you.
- Sit while talking to the young person so you can make eye contact easily, but don’t sit behind a desk; it creates a barrier.
- Use a comforting tone of voice.
- Establish positive rapport with the victim by talking about neutral subjects such as school work, friends, or sports.
- Be creative in helping the victim talk about what happened. It may help the teen if he or she tells the story in the third person: “This person was home alone and....”

By showing your concern and caring, you are providing an opportunity for the victim to think about what he or she is feeling and to discuss these feelings. Be aware that boys are generally not as verbal as girls; that girls often disclose victimization through a friend; and that privacy is important—youth don’t want to be embarrassed in front of others.

**Give back control:** The victim often feels a loss of control, which can be more devastating for young people because so much of their lives is already controlled by others. Remember, too, that a young person’s sense of control is damaged even further if he or she is victimized by someone who had been thought to be

trustworthy. The young person's disclosure can be an opportunity to restore some of this control.

Ask the victim, "Where would you like to sit? Would you like water or a soda?" The power to choose, even on minor issues, can provide an opportunity for the person to get back the sense of control that was taken away by the perpetrator.

**Help the victim ventilate and validate:** Allow the victim to talk about what happened, believe what he or she says, and praise him or her for disclosing. Be prepared to give as much time as the victim needs to feel comfortable and to tell what happened.

Ideally, the victim should have the opportunity to tell the entire story and talk through feelings. You should be prepared to provide appropriate referrals and to comply with any reporting requirements. Check with your local police department or children's services agency to find out these requirements.

**Reassure and respond:** This step provides comfort and demystifies the experience. Teen victims may be frightened by their feelings. Let the victim know that feelings of anger, fear, and anxiety are normal, that others have the same feelings, and that talking to someone might help him or her feel less scared. Ask what worries or fears the victim has.

**Surmount the "insurmountable" problems:** The teen has just disclosed a major event in life and may be faced with a variety of seemingly overwhelming problems because of the crime. He or she may feel that life has been shattered and the problems are insurmountable. Ask the victim to help you make a list of questions, concerns, needs, or problems and then choose the three most important to address. This method will diffuse the feeling that the problems are too overwhelming to handle.

**Find solutions:** Ask questions to determine if the victim knows what to do about these concerns. Other personal experiences may help him or her solve the problems or identify ways to deal with the situation. You may want to ask how he or she would advise a family member or friend in a similar situation. By helping the victim find solutions, you are helping him or her regain control. Make note of any problems that should be referred to a social service agency.

**Predict and prepare:** The victim disclosed because he or she trusted you. Now you must ask permission to tell someone else about the crime. Explain why you think that sharing with someone else would help or why you *must* share. If you are required by law to report the incident, you might say: "Because of my job, I need to share our talk with \_\_\_\_\_, someone who helps people with problems like yours."

When the victim agrees to involve other people, explain the next steps. Keep your explanation simple, and use words appropriate for the person's age. For example, you might say, "I'll share our talk with your school counselor. He will probably ask you to come into his office to talk about what happened. I understand that this might make you feel a little uncomfortable. Explain what happened and let him know how you feel. Your counselor cares about you and wants to help. Do you have any questions about what will happen?" Encourage every adult who will talk with the teen to keep him or her informed about each step in the process.

**Say goodbye:** It is now time to bring the interview to a close. Tell the teen that you are sorry about what happened and that it was not his or her fault. If the victim feels comfortable with physical contact, a hug might be reassuring. Review the case with the assigned law enforcement officer and other concerned authorities and share the information the victim gave you. Encourage them to call you if they have any questions or need additional help.

### **Back at the Meeting**

It is important to be sensitive to the feelings of the other young people in the audience. It is often upsetting for them to see a friend in distress. If the disclosure situation warrants it, you or another responsible adult can do the following:

- Discuss what they can do to help their friend.
- Remind them not to discuss their friend's situation casually or spread rumors about it.
- Emphasize that the support of friends is important; they should not tease their friend.

### **Providing Appropriate Referrals**

It is essential to be familiar with your institution's policies and procedures regarding victimization disclosure. They may detail steps to follow and require specific referrals. If the policies and procedures allow for your discretion, there are several guidelines that may help:

- The young person may be hesitant or afraid to report the crime. Answer questions truthfully, and do not promise to "fix everything." Help the victim prepare for what will happen.
- Be familiar with the resources available in the community. Many communities have special groups that will assist young victims. Check with your local child protective services office, the prosecutor's office, or a victim assistance or rape crisis center for information about nearby resources.
- Refer the victim to an organization equipped to deal with young people.
- If appropriate, follow up. Use reasonable judgment in determining the length and intensity of your involvement.

For more information, assistance, or training, consult with your local victim service or child protective service providers.

