Crime Prevention in Changing Times

Crime Prevention Week - November 1st to 7th, 2017

Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility



Young people are the future. One day the 'young people' will be the 'adults' and society's leaders. Engaging youth in meaningful participation can have a positive and diverse effect on them as individuals and amongst their peers

According to an ecological perspective of human development, youth engagement is a central principle of youth development. Young people are agents of their own development. Youth are actively involved in shaping their development by interacting with the people and opportunities made available within their environments.

What is Youth Engagement?

Youth engagement is the "meaningful participation and sustainable involvement of young people in shared decisions which affect their lives and those of their community. It is about empowering young people to offer their expertise and their experience so an organization can do a better job of creating and sustaining the services, opportunities and supports that young people need for healthy growth and development.

Benefits of Youth Engagement

For Youth	For Communities
Helps youth recognize that everyone has value. Know that their voice is important, regardless of their successes, challenges, strengths or limitations.	Gain an increased pool of knowledgeable, active citizens with exposure to addressing issues and challenges through collaboration.
Provides an opportunity for youth to give back to their community. Become connected to other youth and their community. Break down generational barriers adults.	Generational stereotypes are challenged and overcome by having youth and adults to work together towards common goals.
Develop resilience, and a sense of pride and accountability. Builds self-esteem.	Engaged youth have an increased understanding and consideration for others who reside in their community.
Develop leadership and problem-solving skills. Develop skills and knowledge that support transitions to adulthood and independence.	Encourages democracy and social responsibility while increasing a community's social capital.

What Happens when Youth are Engaged?

Decreased alcohol use

Decreased marijuana and hard drug use

Lower rates of school failure

and drop-out

Lower rates of sexual activity and pregnancy in girls

Lower rates of anti-social and criminal behaviours

Lower rates of depression

Intervening where intervention is not needed can have negative repercussions

A lack of understanding of local crime and safety issues and context can result in the selection of the wrong type of prevention or intervention activity. This may result in failure and could have counterproductive outcome.

The first and most important step in any crime prevention or youth engagement initiative is to fully understand the problem to be addressed in order to deliver a targeted, effective response and create lasting partnerships.



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Guiding Principles

- Focus on stages of life, not ages: There are many different stages of life within the youth demographic (high school student, young adult, university/college student, young professional), and each needs a different approach to become engaged.
- Engage Youth Early: People often develop their core interests, beliefs and habits in their high-school years (or, in some cases, earlier).
- Foster partnerships & build youth capacity: Leverage the partnerships of youth-focused organizations to build youth capacity and establish support for your initiatives.
- Put youth in positions of influence: Youth engagement works best when it's youth-led. When they see other people their age in positions of influence, it gives them greater confidence that their interests and perspectives will be respected.
- Consider different geographies and income levels: Every community is geographically, culturally and socioeconomically diverse. Different approaches need to be considered for different audiences.
- Work towards both short-term and long-term change: For youth engagement to be most impactful, it needs to include both quick actions and actions that focus on longer-term goals.
- Go to where youth are: Meeting youth in the physical and virtual spaces they inhabit can bring them into conversations in a way that is convenient for them.
- Make it fun! Youth are more likely to participate in a process that's fun, creative or social.

Building Meaningful Partnerships

- Show interest in the issues being addressed or task at hand. Ask youth to help you; they can provide creative youth focused ideas or solutions. Act as a resource for information and connections to assist. Assist in maintaining the energy and focus where required.
- Allow youth to take responsibility and leadership.
 Challenge them, push them to be their best and share their knowledge without restrictions.
- Spend time talking to youth, asking open ended questions that build a conversation. Listen with undivided attention, avoid multitasking (responding to emails and texts) and be present.
- Build in time for maintaining relationships. Laugh with them and at yourself, humor is important to building trust. Admit when you are wrong and be upfront about boundaries and limitations.
- Be dependable and pride yourself on being true to your word. Where appropriate, keep information shared by youth confidential.
- Ask youth for their feedback on what's working and what needs to change. Show appreciation, recognize youth contributions.
- Be flexible. Meet at times and locations that are convenient, accessible and safe to youth. Incorporate healthy activities into the partnership (i.e. working out, going for a walk, healthy snacks).

Additional Resources

BC Ministry of Children and Families Youth Engagement Toolkit: a toolkit developed to assist organizations make young people genuine partners in their work.

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/data-monitoring-quality-assurance/information-for-service-providers/youth-engagement-toolkit

McCreary Centre Society: committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, evaluation and community based projects. Provides links to youth engagement resources and research. www.mcs.bc.ca

The Students Commission - Center of Excellence for Youth Engagement: Provides resources to support youth participation in the activities of local, provincial, national and international organizations and governments www.studentscommission.ca

Search Institute: Provides research, resources, and expertise help our partners in organizations, schools, and community coalitions solve critical challenges in the lives of young people.

www.search-institute.org

In Partnership with:







BC Municipal Police Forces
RCMP "E" Division
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