

Community Works

Property Crimes and Vandalism

WHAT IS *COMMUNITY WORKS*?

Community Works is a curriculum that combines education and action to reduce teen victimization and involve young people in service to their communities. It develops self-esteem, leadership, and citizenship skills by engaging young people in action to positively affect the circumstances of their lives. The curriculum is designed to motivate young people to take safety seriously and to make their communities better and safer.

Community Works has been grouped into nine issue-specific lessons, each focusing on a different issue. These sets include lessons on

- Bullying
- Dating violence and sexual assault
- Gangs
- Drinking and drugs
- Property crimes
- Shoplifting
- Hate crimes and diversity
- Robbery, assault, and handguns
- Planning a service-learning project

HOW TO USE THIS SET OF LESSON PLANS

This set of *Community Work* lesson plans is designed to help you educate youth on property crimes and vandalism: what it is, why it's a serious problem, and what they can do about it. Youth will explore the serious impact property crimes and vandalism have on individuals and communities. Youth will also learn how to help protect themselves and others from property crimes and will consider strategies for how to prevent vandalism

This set comes complete with everything you will need. Within the set are lessons that contain all the basic instructional content, step-by-step instructions for each activity, and tips for administrating smoother sessions. Reproducible handouts, tips, and easy-to-follow models of projects are all included within the set.

INTEGRATING *COMMUNITY WORKS* INTO YOUR CLASSROOM

These lesson plans may be easily integrated into an English, civics, or health class, as well as an afterschool program. Youth will learn to define and think critically about property crime and vandalism and how to prevent these crimes.

Each of the ten steps within the set will take between 20 and 45 minutes. Lessons can be taught once a week, once every other week, or every day for ten days. Starting the day with a lesson is a great way to get youth engaged and excited about learning.

If you are pressed for time or need a way to shorten lessons, skip the icebreakers and start directly with *Step B*. You may also choose to skip over the *Wrap-ups* and the *Review and Previews*. Although the reflection is a time for youth to look back on what they have learned, it may be left out if time constraints are an issue.

HOW *COMMUNITY WORKS* MEETS THE STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Overview of Lessons	National Standards for Civics and Government	National Standards for English	National Standards for Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn what property crimes are and how they can be prevented. • Students assess vandalism in their community, examine its personal and financial costs, and consider ways to reduce this crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The place of law in an American society (NSCG III.D.1) • Economic rights (NSCG V.B.3) • Civic responsibilities (NSCG V.C.2) • The role of organized groups in political life (NSCG II.B.3) • Forming and carrying out public policy (NSCG III.E.6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of technological and information resources...to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge. (ELA 8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health. (NHES 7)

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PEOPLE

Involving community resource people in lessons is a key component to the success of the *Community Works* lessons. A community resource person is anyone with whom the teens do not usually interact in an instructional or classroom setting. Police officers, social workers, lawyers, and mediators will bring their professional expertise to enliven the lessons with real-life experiences. Incorporating a community resource person will help to foster positive relationships between youth and adults.

We encourage you to use community resource people for as many sessions as possible. Your options are nearly limitless, so be creative! Here are some suggestions:

- Business owners
- Community mediators
- Doctors and nurses
- Police officers
- Victim service workers
- Mental health counselors
- Diversity advisors
- Detectives

DESIGNING A SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

Service-learning projects are a way to integrate community service into academic study. Choosing to design and take part in a service-learning project will help enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. The service-learning component of *Community Works* seeks to tap and focus young people's energy, talent, and enthusiasm so they can make their communities safer. We encourage you to consider designing and implementing a service-learning project with your youth. The set of lesson plans, *Planning a Service-learning Project*, will help youth design a successful service-learning project.

TIPS FOR DAILY SUCCESS

Sometimes the lessons go extremely well and other times they may not go as well as planned. Here are some helpful tips for handling problems that may come up.

- Spend some time having youth get to know each other, as well as get to know you. This will help create a comfortable environment for youth to speak freely.
- Assign youth to lead parts of the lessons. You don't have to be the sole instructor.
- If youth do not seem interested, try using incentives such as food or recreational time to spark their interest.
- If energy seems low, try energizers such as music or cheers to get the energy flowing.
- Have youth sit in a circle during lessons, that way group members are able to hear and see each other.
- Consider involving parents in the program. Involve them in the planning process or host a family night to showcase what youth have learned.
- Review the lesson plans in advance and be prepared with everything you need to make the lesson run smoothly.
- If you've chosen a community resource person to take part in the lesson, follow up with them the day before to make sure they can still make it. If they don't show up, be sure to have a plan B.
- If some of the activities seem too advanced or not advanced enough for your group, feel free to modify them.
- Be prepared for the fact that a youth may recognize that he or she has been victimized and may disclose this during a session. Don't try to discuss the issue in front of the group and know your responsibility to report abuse.