



OJJDP FACT SHEET

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The Teens, Crime, and the Community Initiative

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Teens, Crime, and the Community (TCC), an initiative developed by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and Street Law, Inc., with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, seeks to prevent the victimization of teens and to engage them as resources for community safety.

TCC teaches young people how to prevent crime and, in doing so, helps them develop a greater sense of social responsibility, thereby reducing risk factors associated with delinquency. TCC's goals are to help teens feel more connected to their community, reduce the high rate of youth victimization by teaching them violence prevention strategies, and build relationships between youth and adults.

TCC achieves its goals in four ways:

- ◆ Educating young people about the costs and consequences of crime and ways to reduce the risk of becoming crime victims.
- ◆ Teaching teens life skills through hands-on classroom activities and community involvement.
- ◆ Engaging young people in youth-led service projects to improve community safety.
- ◆ Enhancing teens' sense of social responsibility.

Just as important, TCC brings its program into the community by using resource persons—including police officers, sheriff's deputies, victim advocates, social service providers, judges, and prosecutors—who discuss community efforts to prevent and respond to crime with young people. These adult volunteers speak from real-life experience, serve as positive role models, and often break down stereotypes that students have held about their professions.

Flexibility, Involvement, Relevance

TCC locations are varied: 73 percent are based in schools, 14 percent are located in juvenile justice settings, and 13 percent of

the sites are based in communities, for which TCC was recently adapted.

The key materials used by TCC are a textbook, a community binder, and conflict resolution manuals that are adaptable to a wide range of settings, involve young people in the learning experience, and offer advice that is relevant to the experience and concerns of youth with their family, peers, and other adults.

Publications

Thousands of young people in secondary schools across the Nation find TCC woven into their civics, social science, health, and other classes using the program's textbook (*Teens, Crime, and the Community: Education and Action for Safer Schools and Neighborhoods*, published in 1998). The text is designed to appeal to a variety of learning styles and to challenge young people to analyze and apply the information they gain to their own situations and those of their friends and communities. The accompanying teachers' guide offers references and camera-ready worksheets with answers and suggested followup questions and activities.

A more recent publication, *Community Works!* (1999), is designed for less formal settings such as youth centers, community groups, juvenile justice settings, and afterschool environments outside of classrooms. This loose-leaf binder contains 31 lessons, complete with overview and setup information for the instructor, a timed lesson plan, detailed activity instructions, and reproducible handouts. Its design is heavily interactive, with young people directly involved in the lesson plans.

Because resolving disputes peacefully is an important component of safer schools and communities, TCC has also published *We Can Work It Out!* (1993) for middle and high school students and *Let's Say "We Can Work It Out!"* (1998) for the fourth through sixth grades. Both publications utilize role-playing and mock mediations to help young people learn and apply the steps of peacefully resolving conflicts in their daily lives in and outside the school setting.

Action Projects

A core element of TCC is the action project. The young people identify a problem in the school or neighborhood and apply effective crime prevention strategies to address it. They learn by doing and discover that their work produces positive results. Sample action projects appear below:

- ◆ Teaching crime prevention skills to children and younger teens.
- ◆ Developing educational presentations for peers.
- ◆ Using arts, drama, and dance to communicate prevention messages.
- ◆ Organizing the neighborhood—for example, with a block club or Neighborhood Watch.
- ◆ Cleaning up the school or neighborhood by picking up trash and debris, painting over graffiti, or clearing out a park.
- ◆ Educating older people about home, personal, and community security issues and concerns.
- ◆ Working with local social service agencies to prevent such problems as date violence and child abuse.

Training and Technical Assistance

The TCC network comprises 16 expansion centers that include metropolitan areas, entire States, or groups of States. The national partners, NCPC and Street Law, Inc., provide training to the expansion centers. These centers offer information, training, and technical assistance to TCC programs within their assigned areas.

The training and technical assistance component includes basic crime awareness sessions, program implementation training, and information on effective teaching strategies, local program support, program applications unique to each community and setting, ideas for action projects, and creative use of resource people, among other subjects. A TCC newsletter includes project updates from sites, offers new resources, showcases local events, highlights new developments in TCC, and provides a forum for ongoing communication by the TCC community on new resources.

Evaluations of TCC

The Teens, Crime, and the Community initiative has undergone more than a dozen third-party evaluations, many using both control groups and TCC participants. These evaluations have found that TCC:

- ◆ Increases student knowledge of the risks of victimization, ways to prevent it, and effective ways to assist victims.
- ◆ Increases students' sense of social responsibility, including bonding to school, feeling more capable of and responsible for improving their community, supporting teamwork, and holding stronger views against lawbreaking.
- ◆ Is perceived to be relevant to young peoples' lives by students, teachers, and administrators.
- ◆ Engages students in a high level of participation compared with programs presented within other class settings.
- ◆ Promotes positive changes in attitudes often associated with delinquent behavior.

For Further Information

For more information about TCC, visit its Web site, www.nationaltcc.org, or contact NCPC or Street Law, Inc.:

National Crime Prevention Council, 1000 Connecticut Avenue NW., 13th Floor, Washington, DC 20036, 202-466-6272, tcc@ncpc.org; Street Law, Inc., 1600 K Street NW., Suite 602, Washington, DC 20006, 202-293-0088, tcc@erols.com. A complete list of TCC expansion centers is online at www.nationaltcc.org/centers.htm.

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