

SESSION 3

Victims of Crime

This session looks at the victims behind the national crime statistics, focusing on the effects of crime on individuals and communities. Teens will see that they are themselves the most frequent victims of crime. They will practice how they might respond if a friend is a crime victim.

TEENS WILL LEARN

- ▶ how crime affects victims
- ▶ who are most often the victims of crime
- ▶ how they can help those they know who are crime victims.



2 HOURS



TEACHING STRATEGIES

These teaching strategies are included and described in this session.

- Brainstorm
- Whole-Group Discussion
- True/False Statements
- Concentric Circles
- Role Play
- Journal Writing



MATERIALS NEEDED

- newsprint, markers, and masking tape
- paper and pencils for teens to use in groups
- Handout 1: *Who Are Victims?*
- journal for Session 3



SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Step A. Warm Up—10 minutes
- Step B. What Do You Think?—20 minutes
- Step C. Activity: *Who Are the Victims?*—30 minutes
- Step D. Activity: *If a Friend Is Hit by Crime*—50 minutes
- Step E. Wrap Up—10 minutes



TIME WISE

If you have less than 2 hours for this session, end the session after Step C and continue your next session with Step D.

- To reduce the time it takes to do this session, in Step C, #2, drop numbers 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 in the true/false exercise. In Step D, have two teens do a demonstration role play—with teen audience input—instead of having each pair do the role play.



BEFORE THE SESSION

1. Note: A good community resource person to invite for this session would be a victim assistance specialist or someone who has been a victim of crime—especially someone who responded to victimization by becoming active in helping other victims. (See and review the section in the introduction on how to prepare for a resource person.) If it's not possible to invite a resource person, have two leaders, because the topic of victimization often brings up tough emotional baggage if there are group members who have been victims of crime. With two leaders, one of you can help a teen who has been victimized, if that is necessary, while the other leader can continue with the session. For suggestions on helping teen victims of crime, see the excerpt from *Talking With Youth*, Appendix D.
2. Read the session plan.
3. Decide if you want to do Step C as a Whole-Group Discussion or using Concentric Circles. Concentric Circles are more interactive but take more time.

**BEFORE THE SESSION CONTINUED**

4. Decide how you will involve teens in the session as helpers, leaders, readers, etc. For more information about facilitating teen involvement, consult the Introduction.
5. Make copies for all group members of Handout 1: *Who Are Victims?*
6. Make copies for all group members of the journal for this session.
7. Post the teen-created guidelines from Session 1 in the room.
8. Gather the materials you will need.
9. Try to allow about an hour after the session in case any of the teens want to talk to you. They may want to consult with you about a friend who was victimized or talk about their own victimization. You may also want to bring a referral list with you. The community resource person can also help with this.



STEP A 10 MINUTES**Warm Up**

1. **Review.**
 - Have teens think for a minute about the purpose of the *Community Works* program. Ask them to tell what they remember.
 - Ask the group members to update newcomers and those who missed earlier sessions. Assign this task to teens on a rotating basis. Explain that it helps build public-speaking skills.
 - Remind teens that these sessions will help them get information and develop skills to avoid being the victims of crime, as well as develop skills to help others and their communities become safer.
 - Return their journals with your comments from the last session.
2. **Purpose of this session.**
 - Tell teens, or have a teen volunteer announce, that they will look at the victims behind the national crime statistics. They will focus on the effects of crime on individuals and communities. Teens will find out who are the most frequent victims of crime, and they will practice how they might respond if a friend is a crime victim.
3. **Remind teens of the guidelines they developed for these sessions. Be sure their list is posted on the wall.**

**TIP**

To increase teens' involvement and give them ownership of the session, you can

- ▶ have one or two of them explain these guidelines to the group. Rotate this responsibility.
- ▶ have a volunteer recap what the group learned in the last session.

4. **Icebreaker (optional)**

To warm up the group, choose an icebreaker from the Introduction. (Allow additional time for this activity.)

STEP B 20 MINUTES**What Do You Think?****TEACHING STRATEGIES**

- Brainstorm
- Whole-Group Discussion

1. Ask teens, "Have you or someone you know been the victim of crime? How did the crime affect the victim?"
 - Note: Let teens know that they do not have to use the name of the victim if the victim wouldn't want to be known by name.
 - Encourage all teens who want to talk about this issue to do so.
 - This will help them start thinking about crime victims' situations, losses, and reactions.
 - Write teens' responses on the chalkboard or newsprint under the heading "Effects on Victims."
2. **Explore with teens how crimes can affect victims' physical, emotional, and financial well-being.**
 - As volunteers relate anecdotes, discuss the kinds of injury the victim experienced. For example, Angela was mugged and her purse was stolen:

| <i>Physical</i> | <i>Emotional</i> | <i>Financial</i> |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Her arm was broken | She is scared to come home from her part-time job at night. She lost the only picture she had of her mother. | She lost \$30. How will she pay her emergency room bill? |

- What are examples of physical injuries? (Get two or three suggestions. Examples could be cuts, bruises, wounds, or damaged property.)
 - What are some emotional injuries? (These are things that may happen emotionally as a result of victimization, such as insomnia, fear, guilt.)
 - What are some other financial injuries? (Get two or three suggestions. For example, the victim suffers financially through loss of wages because of time away from work, money stolen, property stolen.)
3. Ask teens, “How did these crimes affect your community?” This question will help teens to see that crime takes a toll on the whole community because
- people can become increasingly concerned or afraid.
 - people lose loved ones.
 - businesses might close or move away.
 - people might eventually isolate themselves from each other, destroying the spirit of community and surrendering control to the criminals.

Write teens’ responses on the chalkboard or newsprint under the heading “Effects on the Community.”

STEP C

30 MINUTES

Activity: Who Are the Victims?**TEACHING STRATEGIES**

- Whole-Group Discussion with true/false statements
or
- Concentric Circles with true/false statements (see page 47 in the Introduction for instructions)

1. Use Handout 1: *Who Are Victims?* to see how much teens know about who are crime victims.
 - Tell teens that they already know some important information about crime’s victims, and this session will help them build on what they know.
 - Distribute pencils or pens and have teens answer the questions on the handout.
 - Read each statement and ask teens to raise their hands when you ask if the statement is true or false.
 - Inform teens that a key point here is to dispel myths that most people believe about who are victims of crime. So, if most teens have the wrong answers, they are not “dumb” but share common misconceptions with many other people.
 - As you provide the correct information below, ask teens for their comments and questions. You want them to start—not stop—thinking about this topic.

2. Give teens the correct information for each statement.

a. *Most Americans will never be victimized by crime.*

False. Studies show that sooner or later almost everyone will be touched by crime. Each year, more than 40 million Americans are victimized at home, at school, or on the street.

b. *The age group “65+” is most often hit by crime.*

False. Older people are victims of crime less often than teens. For all major types of crime, people aged 12 to 19 are the most frequent victims; those 65 and over, the least.

c. *Women are more likely to be victimized than men.*

False. Men are twice as likely as women to be victims of crime.

d. *The rich are more likely to be victims of crime than the poor.*

False. The poor, the unemployed, and the separated or divorced are more likely to be crime victims.

e. *Members of minority groups are more likely to be victimized by violent crime.*

True. African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans are more likely to be victimized than whites. Also, people are more likely to be victimized by persons of the same ethnic group.

f. *Once people become victims, not much can be done to help them.*

False. Many communities have established victim assistance programs. These programs include rape crisis centers and other counseling programs, drug hotlines, and assistance for victims who go to court.

g. *The younger the person is, at least down to age 16, the more likely he or she is to be a victim.*

True. Younger teens (aged 12 to 15) are victims far more often than adults. (The full extent to which children under 12 are victims is not known, because it is almost impossible to design surveys to measure these crimes.)

h. *If a person looks vulnerable, it adds to the risk of victimization.*

True. People who appear physically disabled, feeble, depressed, drunk, or mentally incompetent are more likely than the general population to be victimized.

i. *Very few victims know their assailants.*

False. Almost half of violent crimes (45 percent) are committed by a victim’s acquaintance or relative. Nearly half the violent crimes against teens are committed by someone the victim knows at least well enough to recognize.

j. *When the victim and the assailant know one another, the victim’s chances of being injured are lower.*

False. Under these circumstances, the chances the victim will be injured are higher, but it is also less likely that the crime will be reported.

3. If you have time, consider asking teens some of these questions:

- Why are teens victims of crime more frequently than any other age group?
- What kinds of things can be done to reduce the number of teens who are victims of crime?
- What might account for male teens being more frequently crime victims?

- How would you convince other teens to do things to reduce their risk of injury?
 - Why do teens report crime less often than adults? How could we encourage teens to report crimes more often?
 - What steps should be taken to reduce the risk of crime to teens while they are away from home?
4. Tell teens that they will be learning about and discussing these issues in the coming sessions.

STEP D

50 MINUTES

Activity: If a Friend Is Hit by Crime**TEACHING STRATEGIES**

- Whole Group Discussion
- Role Play

1. What can you do?

- Tell teens that, whatever the reasons for violence, there is something—in fact many things—they can do about it.
- One thing they can do is to learn how to help a friend who is a victim of crime.

2. First, try not to make the situation worse for your friend. Some important information:

- Tell teens that not only do victims suffer from the original crime, they often go through something called “secondary injuries.” Ask them to guess what these are. (Take two or three comments.)
- Secondary injuries are those that happen to the victim as a result of the crime and the victim’s involvement with the justice system—what family, friends, and the community (faith community, hospital, police, or criminal justice system) might do to the victim after the crime. For example,
 - someone might say—“Wow, that was really dumb—to be walking down that alley at 2 in the morning.” Your friend has already had that thought a million times since the incident;
 - or someone in your friend’s church might say, “It is God’s will”;
 - or the police won’t let an elderly lady have her TV back until after the trial (because it is evidence), even though it is a great source of companionship for her.

3. What we should do when someone we know has been victimized:

- One of the best things you can do is just *listen* in a nonjudgmental way to what the victim says.
- There are three things to say that will really help victims:
 - I’m sorry it happened.
 - It wasn’t your fault.
 - How can I help?

**TIP**

Write each of these sentences on a piece of paper and give it to three teens to read aloud.

- If your friend has not notified the police, encourage him or her to report the crime. If possible, offer to accompany your friend.

4. Use a scenario or situation that you think best fits the community and experiences of the youth in your group. (You could also have teens develop their own role play. If they do this, allow more time for the activity.) The scenario of Tanya is one example:
Your friend Tanya is mugged on the way home from school. She is in the hospital with a broken arm and a concussion.
 - Write the situation on the chalkboard or newsprint.
 - Read the situation aloud to teens or ask a volunteer to read the situation aloud.
5. Ask teens to role play in pairs, a conversation in which one of them is Tanya and the other is her friend.
 - Have teens consider these questions to prepare for their role play. Write the questions on the chalkboard or newsprint to focus their attention on how to prepare for the role play.
 - What do you think Tanya's *feelings* are?
 - What kind of *problems* could she have *in the future*?
 - *What could you do to help her* with her practical and emotional problems?
 - *Who else might be hurt or troubled* because of the crime against Tanya?
6. Possible answers are in parentheses below. Use them as needed as you move around, helping the pairs stay on track. You can also use this information after the role play to discuss it.
 - What do you think Tanya's *feelings* are?
 (Tanya is probably confused and upset, as well as physically ill and weak. She is probably blaming and second-guessing herself. Tanya feels vulnerable and angry, does not trust people very easily, and will need understanding friends who are willing to listen when she needs to talk about what she experienced. She will also need help to feel physically and emotionally strong again.)
 - What kind of *problems* could she have *in the future*?
 (Tanya's future problems could include continued fear and a feeling of vulnerability. She might also become angry about what happened to her, and she might transfer that into anger against the world and people in general or to people who look like or cause her to remember the offender. She could become cynical and mistrustful about the world.)
 - *What could you do to help her* with her practical and emotional problems?
 (Tanya's friends could provide understanding and companionship, encourage her to get counseling if she needed it to cope with her feelings, and provide other practical support. For example, they could help her make up her schoolwork by bringing her assignments and tutoring her if necessary.)
 - *Who else might be hurt or troubled* because of the crime against Tanya?
 (Tanya's family is probably frightened by and angry about the crime. They might need counseling to deal with their feelings and to better help Tanya. Her friends will be upset because she is. Classmates who walk the same route to school might be worried about being mugged. Friends who are helping Tanya cope may also have difficulties.)
7. Reconvene the group and ask teens to share their answers to the questions with the group. If you want to take the time, pick one or two pairs to do their role plays for the whole group.

STEP E 10 MINUTES**Wrap Up****TEACHING STRATEGY**

■ Journal Writing

1. Sum up.

- Distribute journal for Session 3.
- Explain, remind, or ask teens the purpose of the journal. Be sure they know it is to help them reflect on what they learned—and for you to read and respond to what they write. Be clear that you will not be “correcting” what they write—just reading and responding.
- Ask teens to write their answers to these journal questions:
 - I learned . . .
 - I was surprised . . .
 - One thing I observed about the group during this session:
 - The next time I learn that a friend has been victimized . . .
 - My biggest question is . . .
 - What I liked best about this session was . . .
 - What I liked least about this session was . . .
- Ask teens who are willing to share their thoughts with the group.
- Collect their journals to review them after the session and write short comments. Tell them you will return their journals with your comments at the next session. This gives the teens something tangible and provides them with a connection to previous sessions.

2. Relate the session to teens’ lives.

- From the information they noted in Step D of this session, have teens develop a “Hot Tips” sheet for other teens to learn about crime and victims of crime.
- List their tips on newsprint and hang it on the wall with masking tape.

**TIP**

If you have the time, ask for volunteers who may want to use their artistic talents to make a poster or brochure with these “Hot Tips.” Have the teen(s) present their work at the next meeting.

- Ask for volunteers for the next session’s tasks, such as making posters, contacting community resource people, and setting up the room.



HANDOUT 1

Who Are Victims?

Please respond to the following statements by marking each “T” for true or “F” false.

- a. _____ Most Americans will never be victimized by crime.
- b. _____ The age group “65+” is most often hit by crime.
- c. _____ Women are more likely to be victimized than men.
- d. _____ The rich are more likely to be victims of crime than the poor.
- e. _____ Members of minority groups are more likely to be victimized by violent crime.
- f. _____ Once people become victims, not much can be done to help them.
- g. _____ The younger the person is, at least down to age 16, the more likely he or she is to be a victim.
- h. _____ If a person looks vulnerable, it adds to the risk of victimization.
- i. _____ Very few victims know their assailants.
- j. _____ When the victim and the assailant know one another, the victims’ chances of being injured are lower.



SESSION 3

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I learned _____

I was surprised _____

One thing I observed about the group during this session: _____

The next time I learn that a friend has been victimized, _____

My biggest question is _____

What I liked best about this session was _____

What I liked least about this session was _____

NAME _____

DATE _____