

YOUTH - LED DIALOGUE WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

A Toolkit for
Boys & Girls Club Teens



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA



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A YOUTH-LED DIALOGUE WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

A TOOLKIT FOR BOYS & GIRLS CLUB TEENS

Overview

This toolkit provides guidance for hosting a dialogue in the Teen-Led Dialogue with Law Enforcement in your community.

The purpose of the Teen-Led Dialogue with Law Enforcement is to promote discussion and understanding between community members – with a focus on teens – and law enforcement. Organizing a dialogue is just one of the many ways Clubs can interact with local law enforcement agencies to encourage collaboration and community-building.

The main objectives are to:

- Bring to light the questions teens have about teen/ law enforcement interactions.
- Invite Club teens, non-Club teens, law enforcement, parents and other community leaders to participate in constructive dialogue and open conversation with local law enforcement officials.
- Take a first step in building or strengthening positive youth relationships with law enforcement in our communities.



Planning the Dialogue

Planning is an important part of creating these dialogues. Most Clubs will spend at least four to six weeks preparing to host their events. This section provides tips for getting started.

Determine Platform for the Conversation

You'll need to pick a technology platform to plan for your dialogue and where you will have your dialogue. Platforms like Google Hangouts, Facebook Live, or Zoom are options for live interactive programs, while YouTube, Vimeo, and social media like Facebook or Instagram are super easy ways to provide prerecorded video or links. Gather whatever tools you will need and be sure to test them. If you are unsure where to start, we've got more in-depth guidance under "Core Resources" on www.BGCA.net/virtualprogramming.

Determine Who Will Be Involved

Before hosting the dialogue, Clubs need to determine who will be involved:

- **Who from your Club will be involved?** Identify Club members who will be involved in planning the dialogue. Identify all Club staff who will support you.
- **Will you involve other Clubs? Which ones?**
- **Will you involve other teens from the community who are not Club members?** Where will you recruit them?
- **Which community members will be involved?** Will you involve families? Will you involve other community leaders, including those from other organizations?
- **Which representatives of law enforcement will you invite?** Which law enforcement agencies in the community should be involved? Who are key contacts at these law enforcement agencies?
- **Are there any businesses you want to involve? Are there any that could sponsor the dialogue, provide food or gifts for participants or opportunities for you to advertise?**
- **Who will be the facilitator/moderator?** Will it be a teen involved in the planning, someone else or both?
- **Who else would be important to engage in the dialogue?**

Establish Key Roles and Responsibilities

An organized and dedicated team is essential to the success of your dialogue. Here are some possible leadership roles to include on your team. You may already have individuals or committees playing some of these roles. Use the structure that works best for your Club and meetings, whether virtual or via safe social distancing.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>Key Contacts (One person, or two who will share leadership roles)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide the planning process • Ensure that tasks are completed • Serve as the key contact to answer questions and confirm event attendance • Help team implement “next steps” after the dialogue
<p>Public Relations Committee (Two to three people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market and promote the dialogue • Videotape and photograph the dialogue and, if desired, the process of producing the event • Develop social media plan • Prepare press release
<p>Outreach Committee (Works hand-in-hand with public relations committee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the dialogue • Recruit other teens • Explain the dialogue to stakeholders • Generate excitement and enthusiasm
<p>Greeter (One to two people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and assist arriving participants • Introduce the intent and goal of the dialogue • Introduce speakers • Pass out and collect surveys
<p>Facilitator/Moderator (One to two people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and inspire discussion among participants • Keep the conversation focused on the topic • Pose discussion questions
<p>Note Taker (One to two people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record key points of the discussion • Organize notes to present to others • Present findings and help guide “next steps” after the dialogue
<p>Evaluator (One to two people; role may be played by the Note Taker)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiles survey data or questions • Helps group think about next steps



When you establish roles that work for your Clubs, remember that some team members should be actively involved in the entire process. You'll need these team members to ensure communication between the committees, see that team members are not duplicating work, and maintain a "big picture" view of everything that is happening so they can step in if any individual team member gets sick or is otherwise unable to fulfill their assignments.

Gather Background Information

Survey teen Club members and/or community regarding teen/law enforcement interactions to determine the main questions, issues and concerns to address. Information from law enforcement officials about their concerns may be helpful, too. The note taker should keep notes on everyone's points of view; later, you will turn these points into the specific goals and objectives of your dialogue. In the sections below are some guiding questions that you can ask Club teens, non-Club members and law enforcement officials to gather background information.

Information from Teens Planning the Dialogue

Create a few general questions that you want to ask members about their views on teens and law enforcement, and have a conversation by asking those questions. Ensure you conduct the conversation with openness and respect. Establish group agreements at the beginning and allow time for members to debrief and reflect on the process and how they feel after the conversation.

Possible questions:

- What have you observed in our community about teen and law enforcement interactions?
- How do teens in our community view local law enforcement?
- What are the main issues that influence relationships between teens and law enforcement?
- What information would you hope to learn through a dialogue with law enforcement?
- What are some questions you would like to ask law enforcement?
- What can we do with the information we have learned?

Information from Other Club Members

Ask your identified Club staff members for help getting information from other members in your Club. Is it easier to interview individual members or small groups?

Possible questions:

- What have you observed in our community about teen and law enforcement interactions?
- How do you view local law enforcement? How do you think other teens in our community view local law enforcement?
- What are the main issues influencing relationships between teens and law enforcement?
- How can the Club help improve relationships between teens and law enforcement?
- What are some questions you would like to ask members of law enforcement?
- How helpful would it be to have a dialogue event with teens and law enforcement members at the Club? Would you be interested in attending this dialogue?

Information from Non-Club Teens

Gathering information from non-Club teens could also be helpful in getting perspectives from others in your community. Think about the best ways to engage non-Club teens. Is it easier to interview them or have them complete a survey?

Suggested questions include:

- What have you observed in our community about teen and law enforcement interactions?

- How do you view local law enforcement? How do you think other teens in our community view local law enforcement?
- What are the main issues regarding interactions between teens and law enforcement that should be addressed?
- What are some questions you would like to ask members of law enforcement?
- How helpful would it be to have a dialogue event with teens and law enforcement members at [insert name of your Club]? Would you be interested in attending this dialogue?

Information from Law Enforcement

Getting background information from law enforcement will also be helpful as you plan your dialogue. Ask Club staff to help identify local law enforcement agencies and key contacts. Create a brief explanation of your goals before you ask if you can interview someone from law enforcement.

Some of the questions you can ask law enforcement are:

- What have you observed in the community about interactions between teens and law enforcement?
- How do you think teens view local law enforcement in the community?
- What are the main issues affecting relationships between teens and law enforcement?
- How has your agency addressed some of these issues?
- What are some questions that you would like to ask teens?
- How helpful would it be to have a dialogue event with teens and law enforcement members at [insert name of your Club]? Would you be interested in attending this dialogue?

You may also want to gather resources from social media, newspapers and other news outlets to learn more about local current events. Can you find statistics on crime and violence in your community, specifically statistics on youth crime and violence? If so, use that information to create a fact sheet.

Take notes on all of the input you gather and work with the team planning your dialogue to create goals based on what you've learned. (The Harlem Keystone Club, for example, made it a goal of their project to educate teens about their rights when dealing with law enforcement, based on their hypothesis and research that found many teens didn't know this information.)

Determine the Goals of your Dialogue

Once you have gathered, compiled and reviewed all of your background information, determine the goals of the dialogue. Based on the information you collected:

- What are teens' main questions, issues and concerns?
- What are law enforcement's main questions, issues and concerns?
- What type of questions would be important to discuss in a dialogue between teens and law enforcement?
- Why is this conversation important to you or your community? What do you hope will happen as a result of having these conversations?

Once you determine the main concerns that you want to address and questions to ask, think about what you hope these conversations will accomplish.

Generally, teen and law enforcement dialogues focus on three things:

- How teens and law enforcement feel about one another
- Recommendations for how to improve relationships
- Potential next steps to build supportive relationships

Facilitator Discussion Questions

Based on your main concerns, develop discussion questions for your facilitator to ask the group.

Some discussion questions used in previous teen and law enforcement dialogues include:

- What do you think is the biggest issue between teens and law enforcement?
- Why do you think there are issues between teens and law enforcement?
- What are reasons that make law enforcement officers question a teen?
- What are some things that make teens afraid of law enforcement officers?
- What can teens and law enforcement do to improve relationships?

Group Activities

Decide whether you want the facilitator to lead the group in any other activities to help encourage discussion. Some activities used in other dialogues include:

- Visuals or drawing exercises, such as asking participants to draw the changes they want to see in the community, how they feel when they interact with a teen or law enforcement official, or what a good relationship between teens and law enforcement would look like
- An activity in which teens and law enforcement get to share a common experience or hobby that can help with understanding different perspectives

Debriefing Activities

Leading participants in a debriefing activity after the session can help the group learn how everyone is feeling after the experience. Some debriefing questions that allow participants to reflect include:

- How did you feel during the dialogue and activities?
- What are some things that you wish had happened during the dialogue?
- What is something that you can take from the session and apply to your life?

Debriefing activities also help with action planning and opening the group up to discuss next steps.

Develop Your Plan

Once teens have agreed on the goal and general direction of your dialogue, you must take steps to make your idea a reality. You can do this by developing a project plan that outlines what you want to do, how you are going to do it, and who is responsible.

When developing your project plan, here are some key questions that you may want to think about:

- **What:** What are the tasks you must complete in order to host the dialogue (e.g., create questions, find a facilitator, marketing)? When will be the deadline to complete each task?
- **Who:** Who will be involved? How many people will you invite? Who will be responsible for each task?
- **Where:** Where will the dialogue be held? What type of equipment will you need? What type of supplies?
- **When:** When will the event be held? What is the time and the date? How long will it last?

Make an Invitation List

During the planning process, identify who should attend the virtual or safe social distancing event so you can schedule it around the availability of law enforcement or other community partners you wish to include. Determine how many people you want to invite and make sure your venue has enough space. Your recruitment team should work on recruiting participants and determine whether other organizations will help with recruitment as well.

Once you have established your project plan and determined the number of people you want to invite, start engaging sponsors. How will you ask them to let you know whether they are attending? Who on your team will follow up to confirm their attendance? As you invite participants, prepare an attendee list so you can track how many people are coming and which organizations they represent.

Recruitment Strategies

Determine how you will recruit different groups you want involved in the dialogue. You may need to use different types of recruitment strategies for different groups. For example, posting flyers in the Club may work to recruit Club members, while posting on social media may be a way to reach teens who are not Club members.

Tips for Recruiting Non-Club Teens:

1. Promote your dialogue series within your Keystone Club
2. Use your recruitment committee to promote via social media channels.
3. Develop marketing materials appealing to teens.
4. Establish incentives for current members to recruit their peers.

Tips for Recruiting Community Members:

1. Consider how to use families as a part of the series.
2. Have a family suggestion box at the Club where family members can submit their thoughts.
3. Raffle a gift card to any families who attend the dialogue.

Tips for Recruiting Law Enforcement:

Sample Email or Letter Invitation to Law Enforcement

Dear [Insert Name],

On behalf of the [Insert name of Boys & Girls Club Organization], we want to extend an invitation to your group to join our Teen-Led Dialogue with Law Enforcement.

The goal of our dialogue is to convene teens and law enforcement to promote discussion and strengthen relationships between youth and law enforcement. We hope to create a conversation that is collaborative, safe and respectful as we address the issues that are important to our community. Below you will find key details for our event (insert name, date, time, location and contact person).

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP by (insert date) to (contact person). We are excited to have you join the conversation and look forward to hosting you.

*Kind regards,
(Insert signature)*

Establish an Agenda

Once your Club has determined the goals of the dialogue, determine the flow of your dialogue and prepare an agenda. Your background research should provide ideas about the key issues teens and law enforcement want to discuss. Also think about certain issues you may want to stay away from during this dialogue – considering that this will be a first conversation – and the best ways to engage participants.

Below is a sample agenda:

Sample Teen and Law Enforcement Dialogue Agenda

I. Introductions (Establish time length)

- Introduce goals and objectives
- Establish group agreements to ensure a safe and positive environment

II. Teen and Law Enforcement Dialogue Session (Establish time length)

- Icebreaker/reflection activity
- Questions by the facilitator

III. Summary of Key Issues to Address (Establish time length)

- The key issues that were mentioned should be summarized on paper and read aloud for everyone to hear

IV. Plan for Next Steps (Establish time length)

- Debriefing
- Outline next steps
- Evaluation of session

Be sure to provide an agenda to your facilitator/moderator so they can be prepared. Some things to think about when engaging with the facilitator/moderator:

- Share your agenda and overall goals
- Provide your list of discussion questions
- Make sure they know their responsibilities the day of the session

Market and Promote Your Dialogue

Marketing is how you spread the word about your dialogue to potential attendees. The more time you spend promoting the dialogue to get them engaged and excited, the better chance they will attend.

Which activities or strategies will you use to market your dialogue? You have several options to choose from, but you'll want something that fits with your goals/objectives and works for the audience you're trying to reach. Examples include:

- Press release to local media
- Social media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/YouTube Channel)

Sample Press Release

[INSERT CLUB NAME] Hosts Teen-Led Dialogue with Law Enforcement

The need for strong, collaborative partnerships between teens and local law enforcement is apparent. [INSERT CLUB NAME] hosted a dialogue on [DATE] where teens and law enforcement from across the [INSERT NAME OF CITY] community came together to discuss local issues.

This dialogue had an overwhelmingly positive response from the community. [INSERT NUMBER OF TEENS, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO ATTENDED]

[INSERT QUOTE FROM LOCAL CLUB EXAMPLE]: “We are very proud of our teen leaders here at the Club for their contributions for this inaugural experience.”

Boys & Girls Clubs across the nation have existing relationships with law enforcement and established trust with youth. Clubs are optimally positioned to promote discourse and understanding around youth and law enforcement relationships.

[INSERT CLUB BOILERPLATE LANGUAGE]

Sample Facebook Post

Encourage followers to get involved:

Did you know that teens have the power and influence to inspire other teens, law enforcement officials, community leaders and families to start a conversation that promotes community building? We're helping young people learn how to make their voices count, and you can too!

Sample Tweet

Announcing the dialogue:

What can you do to build relationships with law enforcement officials in the community? Our teens are making a difference by starting the conversation and offering solutions that build relationships and establish trust. Learn more @ [Insert URL to learn more]

Evaluating the Session

In order to find out how helpful your dialogue was, ask participants their thoughts about the session. You can create a survey for participants to complete after the session, or ask questions at the event while your note taker records responses. You can also think of other creative ways to learn what participants thought. In general you want to find out:

- What did participants like about the dialogue?
- What would participants change about the dialogue?
- What is something important that participants learned?
- What would participants like to see happen next?

The Day of the Dialogue

Preparing a Checklist

Preparing a checklist for the day of your dialogue can help make it run more smoothly. As you create your plan, you might want to create a checklist to remind the team of everything needed to be prepared for the event. Your checklist might include:

- ✓ Welcome script
- ✓ Bios of participants
- ✓ Discussion questions
- ✓ Agenda
- ✓ Make sure the team is present or online and everyone knows their roles
- ✓ Make sure all technology is working properly
- ✓ Attendance list
- ✓ Survey questions

Creating a Safe and Positive Environment

It is important to try your best to create a safe and positive environment so everyone can feel comfortable speaking to one another.

Creating Group Norms and Expectations

Establishing group norms and expectations and displaying them during the dialogue can help establish a safe space and encourage discussion:

- ✓ The facilitator should state the goal of the dialogue so everyone is on the same page about the intent of the session
- ✓ Ask all participants to agree to expectations and how to respond if someone is not meeting group expectations
- ✓ Think about whether you want the group to agree to certain “off-limits” topics that may be too emotional to discuss during the session
- ✓ Have a “parking lot” (decide on your own language) where people can post issues that are raised but that the group may not address during the dialogue
- ✓ Have the group agree to share responsibility for teens and law enforcement to listen to one another and try to understand each other
- ✓ Determine how law enforcement officers should be addressed (i.e., by title, first name, etc.)
- ✓ Make sure everyone is on the same playing field when expressing themselves and both groups are being treated fairly
- ✓ Make sure the facilitator is aware of how to move the conversation forward if participants are becoming uncomfortable

Introductions, Icebreakers & Reflections

Think about how your team wants participants to introduce themselves to the group at the beginning of the dialogue. Do you want people to share why they decided to participate? Or maybe what they like to do? How will the group briefly get to know each other in an easy way?

Having an icebreaker or reflection activity can help relax the group and make it easier to share thoughts and feelings. Reflection activities give group members an idea of how everyone is feeling and encourage group participation. Some sample possible activities include:

- ✓ Ask everyone to share on a scale of 1-10 how they are feeling today
- ✓ Ask everyone to share on a scale of 1-10 how well they would rate the relationship between law enforcement and teens in the community
- ✓ Ask everyone to pick one word to describe how they are feeling today
- ✓ Ask everyone to share one thing they hope to learn today

Facilitating the Dialogue

Your facilitator will have the discussion questions that your team chose during the planning stage to ask the group. If you plan to have the group engage in any activities, make sure these are listed in the instructions for the facilitator.

Wrapping Up and Next Steps

After the dialogue is finished there should be time for the group to brainstorm next steps for building supportive relationships between teens and law enforcement. What other opportunities exist to collaborate? Forming a teen task force? Inviting law enforcement to attend Club events?

Discuss when you'll hold your next dialogue and what the group wants to see happen before it meets again. It may also be helpful to create a smaller group with interested Club teens and some of the law enforcement officials to work together to make sure the next steps are implemented.

Ending with a reflection activity or group discussion can help bring everyone back together before completing the event.

After the Dialogue

Congratulate and thank everyone involved in leading your dialogue. It takes a lot of hard work and effort to lead these events, to start creating change and to continue the dialogue.

Feedback and Debriefing on the Process

One to two weeks after the dialogue, debrief as a group to discuss what worked and didn't work. This can be helpful in planning the next event. Share the results of the evaluation, feedback and steps for moving forward. Follow up with law enforcement to learn their thoughts about the dialogue. Make sure people are accountable for the next steps and think about ways to follow up.

Show Gratitude

Send thank-you emails or notes to participants and encourage participation in future dialogues. If you have taken photos of the dialogue, consider including the pictures or a link. Use the sample thank-you note below or write your own.

Dear [First Name]:

On behalf of [Insert Club Name], we want to thank you for your participation in the Youth-Led Dialogue with Law Enforcement. This dialogue was an important first step in building stronger relationships between teens and law enforcement in our community. We look forward to continue working with you in this process.

*Sincerely,
[Insert signature]*

Share Your Results

With the Media

You can alert your local media about your dialogue or share information on your Club's website or through social media.

Facebook Sample Post

We are so proud to be part of a national movement to engage teens as leaders in dialogue between youth and law enforcement. Thank you to all those who attended and committed to building a stronger community. Visit <http://www.GreatFutures.org/millionhours> to learn more about ways Clubs are giving back around the nation. [Include a photo of the dialogue]

Sample Tweet

Our teens hosted more than XXXXX people in a dialogue about teen and law enforcement interactions. We are proud of their work and the impact they made in [Insert city name].

Moving Forward

Work with your Club staff to discuss lessons learned and create a timeline for next steps. Continue to work with law enforcement and community partners to create an ongoing plan to improve relationships in your community

Additional Resources

Opportunities for youth to participate in training activities for policing.

http://discoverpolicing.org/find_your_career/?fa=opp_young_adults

Opportunities for youth to learn about state laws and police and teen interactions.

<http://strategiesforyouth.org/for-communities/juvenile-justice-jeopardy/>

Initiative led by mayors across the U.S. that includes opportunities for youth.

<http://citiesunited.org>





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