



Crime prevention and safety tips

July 2011

Board of County Commissioners | Criminal Justice Liaison

Youth Gang Prevention Tips for Educators and Mentors

The following tips are excerpts from the National Crime Prevention Council's [Straight Talk About Youth Gangs](#). They provide gang prevention education components and positive alternatives to gangs.

- Educate young people about the costs and consequences of gang involvement. Gang members may risk personal injury from rival gangs, injury to family members, and even death. To combat the growing number of gang-related crimes and offenses, new laws are being implemented around the nation supporting some of the stiffest penalties for gang-related offenses, including larger fines and longer sentences for gun violations, drug trafficking and violence.
- Keep youth in school and enrolled in positive activities when the school day ends. Find ways to help at-risk youth by developing interesting school-wide programs or taking part in the [National Crime Prevention Council's Community Works curriculum](#). Help create and coordinate afterschool learning and recreational activities for latchkey youth, so that they do not participate in delinquency during these critical afternoon hours.
- Raise awareness among parents and students of the signs of gang activity. When students understand gang characteristics, they will know who and what to avoid.
- Advocate for a dress code that prohibits any clothing or symbols that suggest gang membership.
- Provide students with opportunities to practice refusal skills. Create realistic scenarios and allow young people to role-play appropriate responses. Promote self-esteem and responsible decision-making; these developmental skills will bolster youth confidence and assertiveness.
- Engage students in community service or service-learning projects. Allow students to select, plan and execute a project that addresses a concern or issue in their school or community. Community service can increase positive attitudes toward others, the community and the future.
- Encourage youth who want to leave a gang to talk to an adult they trust and respect. Direct them to appropriate social services, victim service providers, crisis hotlines, or other community support agencies.
 - Office for Victims of Crime's Directory of Crime Victim Services, <http://ovc.ncjrs.org/findvictimservices>
 - The National Center for Victims of Crime Helpline, 800-FYI-CALL and Hopeline (800-442-HOPE): Both crisis hotlines will speak with youth and help find local resources to help youth leave gangs.
 - Community religious leaders can also provide counsel and assistance to youth in need.

Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioner goals are to reduce property crime, violent crime and overall crime by 2015. These tips are intended to increase your awareness and help avoid crime. If you have a proven prevention or awareness tip that can be shared, contact fax it to 813-276-2630 for consideration for a future Crime Prevention and Safety Tip. If you have questions regarding this tip, call 813-276-2033.