

# **CRIMES AND CONSEQUENCES**

### **OUTCOMES**

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define the terms "crime" and "consequence"
- Identify the four categories of crime
- Analyze possible consequences of crime to offenders, victims and the community
- Understand and apply the concept of restorative justice to various circumstances and offenses

### **MATERIALS NEEDED**

- Chalkboard or flip chart
- Chalk or markers (at least five colors, if possible)

### **HANDOUT**

- 1 A Crimes and Consequences (enough for 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the students)
- 1 B Crimes and Consequences (enough for 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the students)
- 1 C Crimes and Consequences (enough for 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the students)
- 1 D Crimes and Consequences (enough for 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the students)
- 1 E Crimes and Consequences (enough for 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the students)

## TRANSPARENCY OR POSTER

Ranking the Seriousness of Crimes

## PREPARING TO TEACH THIS LESSON

- Write up and post the lesson objectives
- Make copies and prepare materials needed

### **COMMUNITY RESOURCE PEOPLE**

Invite any or all of the following resource people to assist with this session:



- A staff member from a victim's advocacy agency or the state victim's compensation office can discuss problems that victims face and what types of assistance are available.
- Victims of crimes can share their experiences with crime situations. Emphasis should be placed on the impact of the crime on them, their families, their communities, and their place of employment. Discussion should cover any help that was given to them and what else the participants feel should be done to help victims.
- Newspaper reporters who cover crime can discuss specific cases where they
  have witnessed the impacts of crime on individuals, families, and the
  community.

Send a copy of the lesson when confirming the date and location. After he or she has received the lesson, discuss how you will work together to teach it.

### SUMMARY

At the end of this lesson is a summary section. It is very important to time the lesson to allow sufficient time to complete the debrief (summary) with the students. During this reflection time the students can discuss the information learned, clarify any concerns and analyze the skills that they have practiced. This is a critical step in the learning process and must not be neglected.

# PART ONE: WHAT IS A CRIME? (5 minutes)



Share outcomes with participants. If a Community Resource Person has joined you for this lesson, introduce him or her now.



Write the term "crime" on the board. Ask the group for a definition. Write the definition and leave it there for reference during the session.

Make sure both of the elements are included in your definition.

A crime is an act that is forbidden by law or the failure to do an act that the law requires. It is also <u>behavior</u> for which the government has established a punishment.



Ask the group to name crimes they know. Invite a student to record these on the board or flip chart.



Be sure there is at least one crime listed from each of the categories listed below.

Status offense, misdemeanor, petty offense, felony

4

**NOTE:** A resource person who knows these categories should facilitate this part of the session. If the resource person is not familiar with crimes and you are not sure of the correct categories for each crime named, inform the participants. Let them know you will find the answers to any questions before the next session.

After they have named a few crimes, tell them that different crimes fall into different categories.

### Ask students:

Which of these crimes would NOT be considered crimes if they were committed by an adult?

This category is called status offenses.

Using one color of marker or chalk, have a student volunteer circle all the status offense on the board. If necessary, invite the students to add more examples.

#### Ask students:

Which of the remaining crimes are most serious? Answers will vary.

After they have named a few crimes, ask them if they know the name of the category for the most serious offenses (*felonies*). Have a different student volunteer use a new colored marker to circle the felonies.

### Ask students:

Do you know the name of the two categories that describe less serious crimes?

Petty offenses and misdemeanors

Explain the differences between these categories using the definitions below. Then invite one student to use a new color to circle the petty offenses and a different



student to use a new color to circle the misdemeanors.

Review the crimes they name and categorize them into the following four groups.

- Status Offense an act that is only a crime if it is committed by a juvenile.
   Examples: Running Away, Curfew Violations, Truancy.
- Petty Offense a less serious crime that is usually punishable by a fine or an extremely short period of imprisonment. Examples: Minor Traffic Violations, Littering.
- Misdemeanor less serious crimes that are punishable by imprisonment of one year or less. Examples: Petty Theft, Vandalism, Public Drunkenness.
- Felony more serious crimes that are punishable by more than one year of imprisonment. Examples: Robbery, Murder, Rape, Assault with a Deadly Weapon.

## PART TWO: RANKING CRIMES (40 minutes)



Put participants into five groups and ask students to move so they can see and hear each other well. The groups will be named A, B, C, D, and E.

Ideally, each group will have between three and five students. If you have more than 25 students, you should create a duplicate of one of the groups. For example, you may have to have two "A" groups.



Distribute the different versions of "Handout 1 (A - E): Crimes and Consequences", to the appropriate groups. The handouts can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

Ask for a volunteer to read the <u>directions</u> aloud as other students read them silently. Check to be sure everyone understands the directions. (The directions are the same for all the handouts. The scenarios are different for each group.)

Then ask students to work with their groups to read their scenario and to answer the questions in Part One.

Tell them they have five minutes to complete part one. Write the ending time on the board or flipchart paper and tell students to begin.

While the students are working, you and the Community Resource Person(s) should



circulate around the room to listen to their discussions. Give a one-minute warning when time is nearly up.

# 3

When the students have finished working on Part One, have the students turn their chairs so they can all see the chalkboard or flipchart.

Project the "Transparency or Poster: Ranking The Seriousness of Crimes", which can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

Ask the reporter for Group A to stand and then to:

- read the situation
- explain whether his or her group thinks that situation is a crime
- if it is a crime, identify what type of crime it is

Record Group A's answers on the transparency or poster. If necessary, correct any misunderstanding about what is a crime.

Follow the same pattern for Groups B – E.



Ask students to think about which situation seems the most serious and which seems the least serious. Then conduct a poll asking students to identify the most and least serious. Ask one student to do the counting for the poll. Ask another student volunteer to record the vote tallies on the transparency or poster.

At the conclusion of the presentations, ask students:

- Do you think the poll showed that the people in our youth court group agreed or disagreed about the seriousness of these events?
- Why do you think there were so many similarities or differences?

  Students will likely refer to the fact that different people have different values so they are likely to rank crimes differently. If the rankings are very similar, students will likely recognize that their judgments and values may be similar if they have had similar experiences.
- How do you think different view about crime affect the way society deals with crime? For example, would we all agree about what actions should be crimes?



Would we all agree on priorities about how to spend our resources fighting crime? Etc.

# PART THREE: WHAT ARE CONSEQUENCES? (60 minutes)



Discuss the term "consequence" with the group and write a definition together.

A consequence is what happens, good or bad, as the result of a specific action.

**NOTE:** Be sure that students understand that not all consequences are bad.



Ask:

Do you think people who commit crimes (like the people in these scenarios) think about the consequences of their actions or who could be affected? Ask students to explain their answers.



Have participants return to their original small groups and instruct them to pick a new recorder and a new reporter for their group. Then students should list three possible consequences for the people in the situations or to others as a result of the activity described in each situation. They should record their thoughts on the line called "Part Two: Consequences" for each scenario.

Ask students if they understand the directions for this part of the activity. Clarify, if necessary. Tell students they have fifteen minutes to complete this task. Write the ending time on the board and instruct students to begin. Give a two-minute warning when time is nearly up.

**NOTE:** The most important part of the activity is the group discussion. The instructor and the resource person should circulate to ensure that each group thoroughly discusses all of the possible consequences of the behaviors in each scenario.

**NOTE:** It is important for the entire group to participate in the group discussions. Those who see the possibility of several different consequences resulting from the conduct depicted will counterbalance participants who think there are no consequences. Another way to further develop this discussion is to have participants compare these situations with ones they have read or heard about in the news.



# 4

When the groups have completed their discussions about consequences, invite the reporter from each group to stand and share its list of consequences with the rest of the class.

At the conclusion of the group presentations, ask the class the following questions:

- Who are the victims in these scenarios? Who are the potential victims?
- Would the action described in the situations change a victim's life? How? For how long?
- Could the youths in the situations become victims? In what ways? How?

Ask students what potential consequences there are to the offenders in the scenarios.

- What happens if they get caught? What if the case goes through juvenile court? What if the case gets referred to youth court?
- What happens if the offenders don't get caught? Are there potential negative consequences to "getting away with it?"

**NOTES:** If a staff member of a victims' compensation agency is present, ask him or her to discuss any additional problems victims might face. If victims of crime are present, they can discuss the impact of crime on themselves, their families, their places of employment, and their communities.



Ask participants to remain in their small groups to write a newspaper headline for the probable consequences resulting from each of the scenarios. Remind the participants of the following points:

- Each group should have a reporter and recorder.
- Students should write their headlines in the space that says: "Part Three: Headlines."
- Be realistic could your consequences really happen?

Ask students if they understand the assignment. Clarify the directions, if necessary. Tell them they have fifteen minutes to complete the task and write the ending time on the board.

As students are working, distribute a blank piece of flipchart and marker to each group. Instruct the recorders to write their headlines for all the scenarios on the



flipchart.

Again, the instructor and Community Resource Person should circulate around the room to observe students working and to assist as needed. Give a two-minute warning when time is nearly up.



Ask each the reporter for each group to read the headlines while another student tapes up the flipchart so the class can see it. You may want to do one scenario at a time, having each group give its headline before you move to the next scenario.

**NOTE:** If a reporter is present, ask him or her to take a few minutes to comment on the student headlines and to share his or her experiences covering similar stories.

## PART FOUR: CHOICES (5 minutes)



Look at the handout again. Have participants focus on the immediate as well as the long-range effects of these acts. See if participants can think of the options that are available to each person that would help them avoid negative consequences.

# 2

Explain that anticipating consequences allows people to make better decisions. Ask:

- What should Esteban do? What about the other youth?
- What should Parneet do?
- What should Scott do?
- What should Seth do? What about Abdullah?
- What should Ahn do? What about Jihea?

# 3

The broadest scope of consequences is to the community. A whole community can become a victim. Using the above situations, ask participants if they can describe some consequences of crime to the community at large.

Can any of these consequences be avoided?



## PART FIVE: SUMMARY (10 minutes)



Ask participants to define "consequences" in their own words.

2

Ask participants which individuals suffer the most from the consequences of crime.

- Is it the person who commits the crime? How?
- Is it the person and/or family against whom the crime is committed? How?
- Is it the community in which the crime was committed? How?

3

If a victim's advocate is present, ask him or her to discuss the type of assistance that is available in your area. If victims are present, ask them to discuss any help that was given to them and what else the students think should be done to help victims.

**NOTE:** Be sure to leave at least five minutes for steps 4 and 5 of the summary.

4

Explain the one of the most important goals of the justice system is to restore the harm done by an offender to the victim(s), to the community, and to himself or herself. This concept is called "restorative justice."

Pick a few headlines from the student's work and ask students to look at the headline again. Ask students to imagine that this headline and the consequences it refers to really happened.

Now ask students to imagine they are serving on a jury and have the opportunity to give the offenders a chance to repair the harm done to the victims, community, and to the offenders themselves. Ask students: What might be an appropriate disposition, (sentence,) for this offender --- one that focuses on reasonably repairing the harm done?

After a discussion of one headline, if time permits, take two or three additional headlines and repeat the questions discussions above.

5

Thank students and the Community Resource Person for their participation.



This page is intentionally blank.



# HANDOUT 1-A CRIMES and CONSEQUENCES

- You are in Group A. Your partners are: \_\_\_\_\_\_
- You will look at the situation below three times throughout the activity. Do not begin a new part until you are instructed to do so.
- You will have fifteen minutes to complete the tasks in each step.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>recorder</u> to write down the decisions of the group and the reasons for your group's decisions.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>reporter</u> who will announce your group's decisions to the rest of the class.

SITUATION - A
A group of young people is drinking beer at Esteban's house. They decide to take his mother's car for a drive around town. "My mother won't mind. Nothing will happen to us," says Esteban.
Part 1: Crime analysis
Is it a crime? Why or why not?
If so, what category of crime does it fit into? (status offense, petty offense, misdemeanor, felony?)
Part 2: Consequences List three possible consequences for the people involved in this situation or for other people.
<del></del>
Part 3: Headline Write a newspaper headline that describes the possible consequences of the situation described above. Be creative, but realistic.



# HANDOUT 1- B CRIMES and CONSEQUENCES

- You will look at the situation below three times throughout the activity. Do not begin a new part until you are instructed to do so.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>recorder</u> to write down the decisions of the group and the reasons for your group's decisions.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>reporter</u> who will announce your group's decisions to the rest of the class.



# HANDOUT 1-C CRIMES and CONSEQUENCES

- You are in Group C. Your partners are: \_\_\_\_\_\_
- You will look at the situation below three times throughout the activity. Do not begin a new part until you are instructed to do so.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>recorder</u> to write down the decisions of the group and the reasons for your group's decisions.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>reporter</u> who will announce your group's decisions to the rest of the class.

SITUATION - C							
'This weed is great", thought Scott. "Getting high can't hurt me."							
Is it a crime? Why or why not? If so, what category of crime does it fit into? (status offense, petty offense, misdemeanor,							
Part 2: Consequences List three possible consequences for the people involved in this situation or for other people.							
Part 3: Headline Write a newspaper headline that describes the possible consequences of the situation described above. Be creative, but realistic.							
List three possible consequences for the people involved in this situation or for other people.  Part 3: Headline Write a newspaper headline that describes the possible consequences of the situation							



# HANDOUT 1-D CRIMES and CONSEQUENCES

ı	You are in <b>Group D</b> .	Your partners are:
---	-----------------------------	--------------------

- You will look at the situation below three times throughout the activity. Do not begin a new part until you are instructed to do so.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>recorder</u> to write down the decisions of the group and the reasons for your group's decisions.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>reporter</u> who will announce your group's decisions to the rest of the class.

SITUATION - D
"I'll take care of you", 18 year-old Seth says to 13-year old Abdullah. "You be on the look out while I go in the window and look for some money."
Part 1: Crime analysis Is it a crime? Why or why not? If so, what category of crime does it fit into? (status offense, petty offense, misdemeanor, felony?)
Part 2: Consequences List three possible consequences for the people involved in this situation or for other people.
Part 3: Headline
Write a newspaper headline that describes the possible consequences of the situation described above. Be creative, but realistic.



# HANDOUT 1-E CRIMES and CONSEQUENCES

- You are in Group E. Your partners are:
- You will look at the situation below three times throughout the activity. Do not begin a new part until you are instructed to do so.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>recorder</u> to write down the decisions of the group and the reasons for your group's decisions.
- For each part, your group will need to select a <u>reporter</u> who will announce your group's decisions to the rest of the class.



# TRANSPARENCY or POSTER RANKING THE SERIOUSNESS OF CRIMES

Situation	What happened?	Is it a crime?	If so, what type?	# of students who think this is the MOST serious crime	# of students who think this is the LEAST serious crime
А	Drinking Beer/ driving Mom's car				
В	Running Away				
С	Smoking marijuana				
D	Look out / looking for money				
E	Shoplifting sunglasses				