

CAP TIPS is a series of periodic messages to assist in the planning and implementation of NCVRW Community Awareness Projects. Please feel free to send your individual questions or requests for assistance to Anne Seymour at annesey@atlantech.net.

CAP TIP #2

To Improve Public Awareness

Tips to Promote the 2015 NCVRW Theme Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims.

Introduction

The 2015 NCVRW *Resource Guide* published by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) features tips to promote the 2015 theme. All NCVRW CAP applicants are included on OVC's mailing list to receive the *Resource Guide* as soon as it becomes available.

As you begin your planning efforts, the resources in this CAP TIP can help you promote the 2015 NCVRW theme, and develop victim/survivor outreach, community and public awareness and training/education strategies that can contribute to "engaging communities" and "empowering victims."

Know Your Crime Statistics

In order to successfully promote the 2015 NCVRW theme, it's essential to know recent crime statistics – both nationally and in your state. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) recently published "Criminal Victimization, 2013" and here are some of the important highlights from 2013:

- Forty-six percent of violent victimizations and 61 percent of serious violent victimizations were reported to police.
- Three million persons (1.2 percent of all persons age 12 or older) experienced at least one violent victimization, and about 0.4 percent (1.1 million persons) experienced at least one serious violent victimization.
- Less than one out of ten (9.5 percent) of violent crime victims received assistance from a victim service agency.

- There was a 10.5 percent reduction in violent crime and a 14.5 percent reduction in property crime between 2012 and 2013.
- Nine percent of all households (11.5 million households) experienced one or more property victimizations.

BJS, "Criminal Victimization, 2013"
<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5111>

"Takeaway Points" from Crime Statistics

After two consecutive years of increases, the overall violent crime rate slightly declined. However, less than half of violent crimes (46 percent) were reported to police; and less than one out of ten (9.5 percent) of violent crime victims received assistance from a victim service agency.

OVC's 2015 NCVRW *Resource Guide* will include statistical overviews on over a dozen different types of crime that can be used to help promote the theme to targeted audiences.

State Crime Statistics

It's a good idea to know crime statistics that are specific to your state, and even to your community. You can access the FBI's Uniform Crime Statistics by state (including violent and property crimes) at <http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/Search/Crime/State/StatebyState.cfm>; Your local law enforcement agencies should be able to provide you with statistics for your jurisdiction, and the "My Local Crime" website offers crime statistics by specific address and zip code at <http://www.mylocalcrime.com/>.

How to Build Community & How to Empower Crime Victims & Survivors One-page Posters

Sometimes, *simple messages* are the most effective.

Included with this CAP TIP are two one-page posters that address "how to build community" and "how to empower crime victims & survivors," with 25 tips on each poster. Please consider these a "starting point" – each poster can be easily adapted to your organization, community and/or state.

You can use these posters for victim/survivor and public awareness leading up to and during 2015 NCVRW in several ways:

- Print each poster in its entirety for wide dissemination in your jurisdiction (and include contact information for your organization at the bottom of each poster).
- Beginning on April 1, create a Twitter campaign that runs through April 25, which features a daily suggestion with the hashtags:
 - #2015NCVRWhowtobuildcommunity
 - #2015NCVRWhowtoempowercrimevictims&survivors

- During the entire month of April, ask your Planning Committee to include *one tip* on “how to build community” and one tip on “how to empower crime victims & survivors” on the bottom of their daily emails
- Use these “nuggets” to create your own that are specific to your organization, state and/or NCVRW 2015 CAP activities

Develop a Local Perspective on “Engaging Communities” and “Empowering Victims”

Every state or jurisdiction is unique in terms of its strategies for “engaging communities” and “empowering victims.”

And the concept of the 2015 NCVRW theme is also unique to every victim-serving profession within a jurisdiction!

As such, it’s important to personalize the 2015 NCVRW theme to *your* state or community. Consider for a moment the range of agencies, organizations, individuals and professionals who assist victims of crime; for example:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Crime victims and survivors | • Mental health |
| • Community-based victim assistance organizations | • Public/medical health |
| • Social service organizations | • Schools |
| • Law enforcement | • Social services |
| • Pre-trial and courts | • Colleges/universities |
| • Prosecutors | • Multi-faith communities |
| • Community corrections | • Department of Defense |
| • Institutional corrections | • Organizations that assist traditionally-underserved populations |
| • Appellate-level agencies | • Private sector/businesses |
| • Juvenile justice agencies and organizations | • Others |

It’s a good idea to conduct proactive outreach to these important constituents, and engage them in “defining the 2015 NCVRW theme” in a manner that personalizes it to your jurisdiction.

Here are two recommended approaches:

1. Conduct direct outreach to crime victims and survivors that solicits their input, *based upon their personal experiences*.

The “sample worksheet to obtain input on the 2015 theme” (*included at the end of this CAP Tip*) can be adapted to conduct direct outreach to crime victims and survivors. You can ask victim advocates and allied professionals involved with your Planning Committee to email or “snail mail” survivors to seek their opinions about strategies that can “engage communities” and “empower victims,” based upon their personal experiences as victims of crime. Here’s some sample language you can use:

“Dear Friends:

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW) is scheduled for April 19 – 25, 2015. The theme for this year’s commemoration is “Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims.”

In order for us to be able to promote this theme during 2015 NCVRW, it’s important for us to hear first-hand from crime victims and survivors. Based upon your personal experiences, what do you think are *effective tactics* that can “engage communities” and “empower victims.”?

I am enclosing a response form where you can answer these two important questions. We’d like to use the responses we receive from crime victims and survivors to help articulate the 2015 theme in a way that personalizes it to *your experiences* and to *our community*. Your responses are confidential, and you will not be identified in any way as the source of the response.

Please return this form to me by (*means of return*) no later than (*day/date/year*). I appreciate your consideration of this important request, and thank you in advance for contributing to our promotion of 2015 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.

ATTACHMENT: “Response Form”

You can ask a volunteer or intern to compile the responses you receive into a centralized database for use in promoting NCVRW (see “How to Use the Theme Input You Receive” below).

2. Develop a brief online survey that solicits input on the theme of “Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims.” (consider using free survey software such as *Survey Monkey* at www.surveymonkey.com). You can include a “demographic” check list (see above) about the profession of respondents, and provide a brief overview of why you are soliciting input and information about submitting the survey, for example:

“National Crime Victims’ Rights Week (NCVRW) is scheduled for April 19 – 25, 2015. The theme for this year’s commemoration is “Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims.”

It’s important for our *community/state* to be able to define effective strategies that “engage communities” and “empower victims” to promote individual and community safety and justice. We’d like you to take a few minutes to complete our online survey that will help us personalize the 2015 NCVRW theme to our *community/state*.

Please complete and return this survey by (*at least one month in advance of NCVRW*) so we can ensure that your input is included in our NCVRW victim/survivor outreach and public awareness activities.”

Examples of survey topics relevant to “**engaging communities**” include:

- Recognize the significant impact of crime on individuals, families, neighborhoods, schools, communities and the economy
- Identify the fact that “everyone *is* or *knows* a victim of crime.”
- Encourage community members, victims and survivors to report crimes
- Providing meaningful opportunities for voluntarism that benefits crime victims and survivors
- Have victims share “the power of their personal story” with communities to demonstrate the personal impact of crime
- Educate the news media to improve sensitivity in coverage of crime and victimization
- Educate the public about the often devastating impact of crime on victims and communities

Examples of survey topics relevant to “**empowering victims**” include:

- Ensure that crime victims are aware of their constitutional and statutory rights
- Promote victim autonomy and decision-making
- Promote victim participation in justice processes, including the rights to be heard, to be informed, and to reasonable protection
- Support programs and strategies that promote victim safety and protection
- Always balance the rights of those accused and/or convicted of crimes with the rights of victims and witnesses
- Provide advocacy and support to victims who engage with the criminal or juvenile justice systems
- Encourage victims and survivors (reporting and non-reporting) to seek supportive services in their communities
- Ensure that justice- and community-based victim services are culturally competent
- Encourage collaboration among public, private, non-governmental and cross-jurisdictional agencies (geographic, as well as local/state/federal) agencies to create comprehensive victim services across systems and jurisdictions
- Create partnerships among crime prevention, justice, victim assistance, mental health and substance use/abuse professionals (*among others*) to encourage seamless delivery of victim assistance services
- Other (*provide space for survey respondents to provide open-ended input*)

Tips for Engaging the Community

As you begin to consider strategies for community engagement and partnerships, here are five excellent resources that provide guidelines, quick tips, curricula and other helpful information that can inspire your 2015 NCVRW planning related to the theme:

- University of Kansas
Community Toolbox
<http://ctb.ku.edu/en>
- Northwestern University
Asset-based Community Development Institute
<http://www.abcdinstitute.org/>

- United We Serve
Community Collaboration Toolbox
http://www.serve.gov/sites/default/files/ctools/CommunityCollaborativeToolkit_all%20materials.pdf
- Temple University
Intergenerational Community Building Resource Guide
http://communitiesforallages.org/sites/default/files/cfaa_resourceguide.pdf
- University of North Carolina, Wilmington (thesis)
Building Community Capacity in Resource-poor Neighborhoods
<http://uncw.edu/csurf/Explorations/documents/Lancaster.pdf>

Engaging the Community to.....

You want to “engage the community” to..... *WHAT?*

It’s a good idea for your NCVRW Planning Committee to develop messaging that is *very specific* to your state, jurisdiction and/or community and the needs of its crime victims and survivors. Depending on your specific needs, you can consider the following “community engagement priorities:”

- Learn about crime victims’ rights and services
- Support crime victim assistance organizations
- Be able and prepared to make a referral to any victim in need
- “Volunteer for victims”
- Report crimes
- Get to know and support their local law enforcement agency and professionals
- Start/join Neighborhood Watch Programs
- Mentor young people
- Get involved in neighborhood schools to promote crime prevention and victim assistance

Engaging Online Communities

Social media offer one of the most cost-effective and easy ways to engage a wide range of communities. Messages can be targeted to end users that reflect their age, gender, ethnicity, geography, dis/ability, and sexual orientation; and different social media venues also can be used for reaching specific types of audiences.

A report entitled “The Demographic Trends for Every Social Media” published by Business Intelligence in October 2014 offers important insights into usage of social media across the U.S. population. Some key highlights include:

- Facebook still skews significantly female (women in the U.S. are more likely to use Facebook than men by about 10 percentage points)
- Facebook remains the top social network for U.S. teens (with more daily teen users than any other social network)
- That said, Instagram has edged out Facebook and Twitter in terms of *prestige* among young users, who describe Instagram as “most important.”
- LinkedIn is actually more popular than Twitter among U.S. adults
- Twitter has begun to lean worryingly toward male users (22% of men versus 15% of women use Twitter)

- YouTube reaches more adults aged 18 to 34 than any single cable TV network
- Snapchat is the social network used most by young people aged 18-to-24 (six out of 10).

Piper Jaffray’s twice-yearly teen survey, “Taking Stock of Teens,” identified the following percentages of teens who use different social media:

SOCIAL MEDIA	% OF TEENS WHO USE
Instagram	76%
Twitter	59%
Facebook	45%
Pinterest	22%
Other	14%

Digital journalist Leah Betancourt offers ten tips for increasing user engagement with all types of online communities:

1. Make it easy to participate.
2. Be a leader.
3. Interact with the community.
4. Welcome newbies
5. Identify and nurture power users.
6. Showcase and cross-promote user-generated content.
7. Reward contributors.
8. Be timely about posting user-generated content.
9. Allow profile creation (personal profile information, preferences and even user-generated content statistics).
10. Engage with popular existing communities (such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube)

Betancourt’s excellent full article can be accessed at <http://mashable.com/2009/12/16/community-engagement/>

Engaging Youth and Schools

Youth and schools are important partners in promoting 2015 NCVRW. Important general messages include victim awareness, crime/violence prevention, and resources available for assistance; and specific messages that reflect youth problems with victimization include anti-bullying, sexual assault and intimate partner violence.

Included among NCVRW CAP recipients’ activities geared toward youth and schools are:

- Resource fairs
- Carnival games
- Online town hall
- Art slam
- Art contests and shows
- Student poster/essay contests
- Balloon releases
- Music festivals
- Scavenger hunts

The ACT Youth Center of Excellence offers a comprehensive publication entitled “Engaging Community Partners for Positive Youth Development.” This includes information about:

- Youth engagement – what it is, its benefits, and why it’s important

- Youth/adult partnerships – defining partnerships and identifying and addressing barriers to such partnerships
- Engaging non-traditional partners
 - Businesses
 - Faith communities
 - Health care providers
 - Parents and families
 - Policy makers

This publication can be accessed at

http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/communities/partners/.

Another good online resource sponsored by Edutopia is “Building Community Partnerships with Schools,” which includes a “Resource Roundup” of additional information and ideas. You can access this at

<http://www.edutopia.org/article/community-business-partnerships-resources>.

Tips for Empowering Crime Victims & Survivors

NCVROW CAP programs can address any or all of these 10 effective strategies to empower victims in your victim and community outreach initiatives:

1. **Autonomy** – crime victims and survivors should be able to make their own decisions about their lives and, where applicable, their cases. Victim advocates and communities can enhance victim autonomy by ensuring that they have access to support, services and information.
2. **Safety and security** – One of the reasons that fewer than half of victims of violent crimes report their victimizations is that they have serious concerns about their personal safety. Enhancing victims’ sense of safety and security enables them to make informed choices about their lives, their cases and their futures. One of the most important victim assistance services is *safety planning*. Below are four resources that can be used to promote safety planning during 2015 NCVROW and throughout the year:

Safety Planning with Adult Sexual Assault Survivors

Victims’ Rights Law Center

http://www.victimrights.org/sites/default/files/Safety%20Planning%20with%20Adult%20Sexual%20Assault%20Survivors_A%20Guide%20for%20Advocates%20and%20Attorneys.pdf

Technology Safety

National Network to End Domestic Violence

<http://nnedv.org/resources/safetynetdocs.html>

Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence and Stalking Safety Planning

National Network to End Domestic Violence

<http://nnedv.org/component/finder/search.html?q=safety+planning&Itemid=95>

Safety Planning with Children

3. **Options and opportunities** – To the degree possible, crime victims should be made aware of and offered various options to help them recover in the aftermath of crime and navigate the criminal, juvenile, Tribal and/or civil justice systems. Victims who are given options and opportunities can make informed decisions and begin on their path to reconstructing their lives in the aftermath of criminal victimization.
4. **Implementation of victims' rights** – Nationwide, there are over 32,000 Federal, state, tribal and local laws that define and protect victims' rights. If victims are not aware of their constitutional and statutory rights under law, they will not be able to seek to have them enforced. OVC sponsors the online website VictimLaw, which provides information about victims' rights nationwide that is searchable by topic, term and/or jurisdiction. VictimLaw can be accessed at <https://www.victimlaw.org/>.
5. **Information** – Victims have a critical need for basic information about their rights and services available to help them. Victim information should be available in multiple languages and accessible in both paper-based and online formats, and to victims with disabilities.
6. **Access to services** – Regardless of where victims live or their personal circumstances, they should be able to readily access helpful services to help them cope in the aftermath of criminal victimization and, for victims who report crimes, to receive assistance in navigating the criminal or juvenile justice system. OVC offers an excellent Online Directory of Victim Assistance Services that can be searched by geography, type of crime, and/or type of service one is seeking. The Directory is available at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices/search.asp>. Through VictimLaw, OVC also offers a brief overview of the criminal justice system, which is available at <https://www.victimlaw.org/victimlaw/pages/justiceSystem.jsp>.
7. **Confidentiality** – Victims' right to privacy can enhance their capacity to report crimes and access services. Their very real fears of their offender finding out about their engagement of victim- or justice-related services can preclude their willingness to report crimes and/or participate as witnesses in the justice system. *All* interactions with victims must be kept confidential with clear agency policies developed that address victim privacy.
8. **Cultural competence** – Victims of crime in America are diverse by gender, age, geography, culture, ethnicity, socio-economic status, immigration status, dis/ability and sexual orientation. Services provided to victims must reflect and respect their rich diversity.
9. **Trauma-informed services** – According to SAMHSA's concept of a trauma-informed approach:
"A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed:
 - *Realizes* the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
 - *Recognizes* the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;

- *Responds* by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
- Seeks to actively resist *re-traumatization*."

Additional information about trauma-informed services is available from SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-informed Care at <http://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/trauma-interventions>

10. **Offender accountability** – People who commit crimes should be held accountable for their actions in accordance with the law. Victims and communities have a reasonable expectation that those who violate the law and harm others will be held responsible; and victims who participate in the criminal and juvenile justice systems as witnesses seek offender accountability in their quest for justice.

Promoting 2015 NCVRW Theme Strategies that *Work*

There is currently a major emphasis on "evidence-based practices" (EBPs) in crime victim assistance and justice practices. A good definition of "evidence-based practice" from EHow (www.ehow.com) is:

"Evidence-based practice refers to the use of research and scientific studies as a base for determining the best practices in a field. The movement began in the 1990s with a focus on the medical profession. It has since crossed the line to other professions.....The basic premise of the movement is to provide transparency and to assure the public that techniques and procedures will provide the best possible interventions or treatments."*

In your jurisdiction, it's a good idea to identify any victim assistance practices that are EBPs and promote their efficacy as strategies that can contribute to "balancing the scales of justice" for crime victims and survivors. You can visit the USDOJ Crime Solutions website (www.crimesolutions.gov) that provides overviews of program effectiveness in a number of justice-related areas – including victim services – and rates program modalities from being "effective," to "promising" to "no effects."

For More Information

Please contact National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at annesey@atlantech.net; or by telephone at 202.487.7329.

* Nanette Richford. 2012. "Definition of Evidence Based Practice." EHow, www.ehow.com

HOW TO EMPOWER

CRIME VICTIMS & SURVIVORS

LEARN ABOUT & UNDERSTAND VICTIMS' RIGHTS

LISTEN WITH EMPATHY

VALIDATE A VICTIM'S EXPERIENCES

SHOW THAT YOU CARE

NEVER SAY "I UNDERSTAND" BECAUSE YOU DON'T

DON'T FORCE FORGIVENESS

BE A *HELPER*, NOT A *SAVIOR* - THIS *EMPOWERS!*

LEARN ABOUT CRIME VICTIM SERVICES

MAKE A REFERRAL TO A VICTIM IN NEED

LEARN ABOUT VICTIM AUTONOMY

NEVER BLAME OR SHAME A VICTIM

ASK, "WHAT DO YOU NEED *RIGHT NOW?*"

RESPECT CULTURAL DIVERSITY

DON'T SECOND-GUESS OR JUDGE VICTIMS

OFFER OPTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

RESPECT A VICTIM'S CONFIDENTIALITY & PRIVACY

LEARN HOW TO HELP A VICTIM FEEL SAFE

OFFER VICTIMS VOICES & CHOICES

LEARN ABOUT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

LEARN ABOUT THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

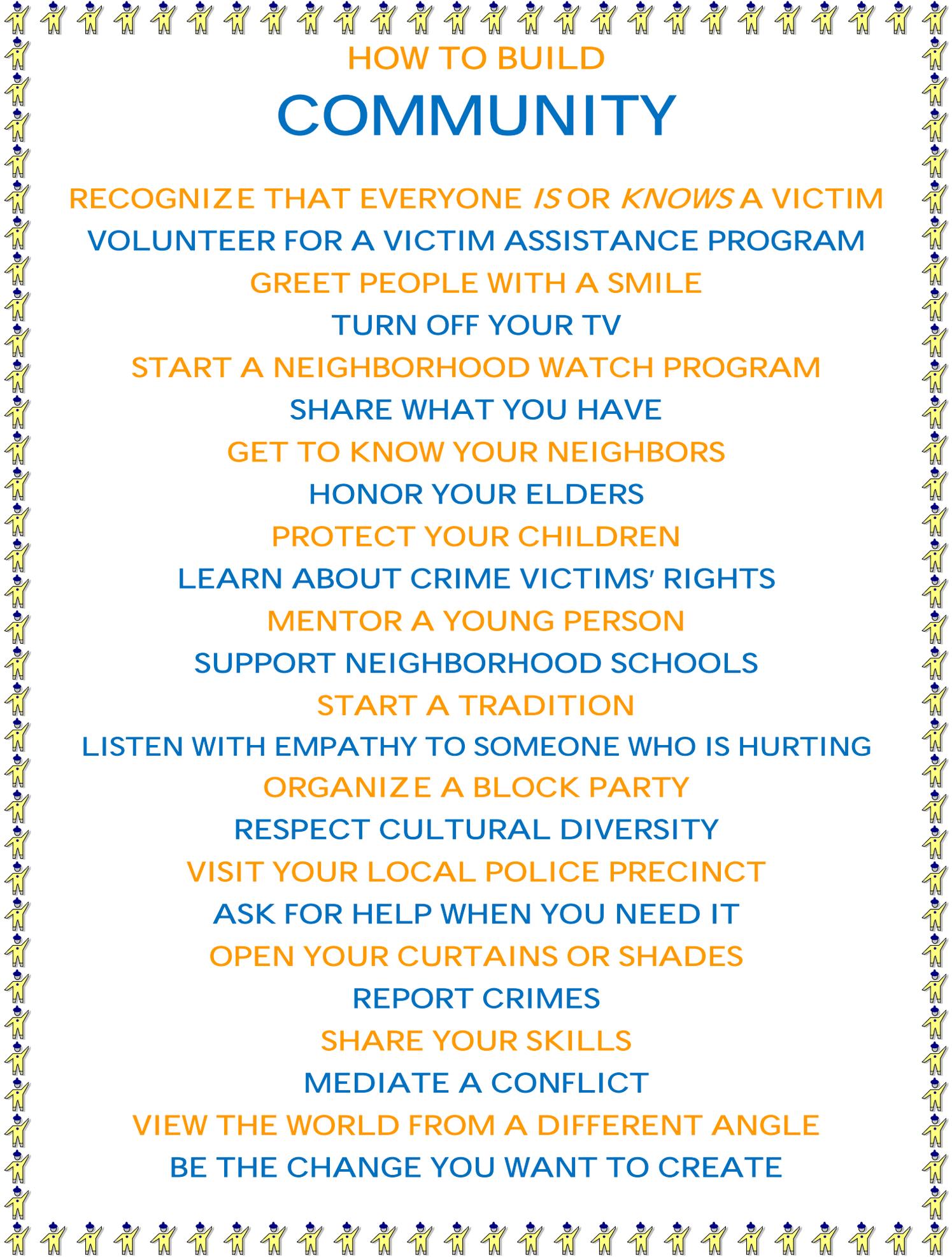
THINK ABOUT OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY

VOLUNTEER FOR A VICTIMS ORGANIZATION

SPEAK UP FOR INDIVIDUAL & COMMUNITY SAFETY

BE THERE FOR THE LONG RUN

BE A VOICE FOR VICTIMS



HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY

RECOGNIZE THAT EVERYONE *IS* OR *KNOWS* A VICTIM

VOLUNTEER FOR A VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

GREET PEOPLE WITH A SMILE

TURN OFF YOUR TV

START A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM

SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

HONOR YOUR ELDERLY

PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN

LEARN ABOUT CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS

MENTOR A YOUNG PERSON

SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

START A TRADITION

LISTEN WITH EMPATHY TO SOMEONE WHO IS HURTING

ORGANIZE A BLOCK PARTY

RESPECT CULTURAL DIVERSITY

VISIT YOUR LOCAL POLICE PRECINCT

ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

OPEN YOUR CURTAINS OR SHADES

REPORT CRIMES

SHARE YOUR SKILLS

MEDIATE A CONFLICT

VIEW THE WORLD FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO CREATE