INVISIBLE YOUTH
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My statements and opinions do not reflect those of the Attorney General’s office.

DISCLOSURE

PERPETRATORS OR VICTIMS
“The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend.”
Robertson Davies

“We all see only that which we are trained to see.”
Robert Anton Wilson

THE STATISTICS: HOMELESS YOUTH 16-24
• 50% of homeless youth have been in foster care during their childhood.
• 1 in 3 will be recruited by a pimp within 48 hours of leaving home.
• 70% of youth will experience physical or sexual violence.
• 54% of youth will be victims of property crimes.
• 55% of women are victims of physical domestic violence.

MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE...
• Homeless youth are criminals
• Homeless youth are drug addicts
• Homeless youth are lazy
• Homeless youth don’t want help
• Homeless youth are drop outs
**HOMELESS YOUTH ARE**
- Human beings
- Victims of abuse and neglect
- Tenacious
- Compassionate
- Creative
- Talented
- Invisible

**LACK OF PROTECTIVE FACTORS**
- No safe home.
- Lack of a support system.
- Lack of food.
- Lack of clothing.
- Lack of education.
- Lack of voice.

**REPORTING**
- 23% don’t tell anyone
- 16% tell a social worker or counselor
- 20% tell a police officer

**WHY DON’T THEY REPORT?**
- Fear of being charged with something
- They don’t trust people who are supposed to protect them.
- Fear of being sent back to where they came from.
- Feel like law enforcement is against them.
- They are not believed.

**SURVEY: WHY WOULDN’T YOU REPORT A CRIME?**
- I’m not a snitch.
- Too afraid.
- It can backfire.
- The police show up and I get into trouble.
- I just handle things myself.
- I’m concerned for my safety.
- I’m not a victim.
- Mamma didn’t raise no bitch.
SURVEY: WHY WOULD YOU REPORT?

- I believe in justice.
- To help others.
- It’s the right thing to do.
- Because they should pay.
- So you’re not an accomplice.

SURVEY: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT POLICE?

- It’s rare that you find an officer who treats you with respect.
- They keep me safe.
- I’m afraid of them.
- They don’t care about me.
- Some are jerks, mostly good.
- They are there to help.
- They cause more problems than they solve.
- FTP.

SURVEY: WHAT CAN POLICE DO TO HELP YOU?

- Remember that we’re all humans, all equal, we all make mistakes, and we all deserve forgiveness.
- Care about what happens to me.
- Accept that people can change and aren’t all bad.
- Listen better and be compassionate

SURVEY: HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN REPORTING?

- Ignored and unimportant.
- Hard to deal with.
- Scared and crazy.
- Scared and awkward.
- Cool.
- I was ashamed at first, but the cops helped me stay cool.

INCORPORATING REPORTING AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Why?
  - Because they are kids.
  - Because we want these youth to be successful.
  - Because we want the ones committing crimes to learn new ways of survival and coping skills.
  - Because homelessness impacts everyone not just the youth on the street.

HOW?

- Build relationships:
  - Positive interactions outside of the investigative role.
  - Volunteer to provide a meal at the center.
  - Teach a class through the legal clinic.
  - Only arrest/cite when necessary.
- Alternatives to arrest and citation:
  - Take them to the youth center.
  - Take them to get the service they are committing the crime to solve.
  - Provide them with information about services.
WHY BUILD A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP?
- Cooperation in the present and in the future.
- Mentoring without knowing it.
- Give them a sense of worth.

THEIR PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD
- Their traumatic history has changed the way they process information.
- They see threats where there is no threat.
- They become reactive.
- They go into survival mode: opposition, aggressive, withdrawn.

PERCEIVED THREATS
- A trigger is something that activates an emotional response based on prior experiences.
- Don’t always recognize they are being triggered.
- Can’t always identify triggers.
- Can be objects, places, smells, people (similarities), sounds, a touch, anything that reminds their subconscious of the trauma.

START BY BELIEVING
- Hear them out.
- Ask questions.
- Show empathy or no emotional response, just don’t go negative or sarcastic.
- Ask them what they would like to see happen.
- Explain the process to them.
- Give them some time frame and a phone number where they can follow up.
- Give them the number to the victim’s advocate office.

RELATE AND EMPATHIZE
- Don’t take it personal.
- Remember they are responding based on past experiences that don’t have anything to do with you personally.
- Remember they are functioning at a limited emotional capacity.
- Identify the underlying emotion.
- Find similar situations which have triggered that emotion in your life.
- Validate their feelings.

ASSUMPTIONS
- Assume you are dealing with a person with an altered world view; one of hidden threats.
- Don’t assume malice, when fear, anxiety and maladaptive coping skills will explain a child’s behavior.
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