



The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities



Violence & Bullying Prevention through Human Rights Education—The Next Steps

Student Guide

www.safeandcaring.ca

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The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities, 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton AB T5N 2R1

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Introduction

Safe and Caring Youth Action

The Youth Action project provides an opportunity within the school for youth to identify and address specific issues or interests. Students conduct research among their peers and then develop, undertake and evaluate projects that will address the issues/interests they uncover. The steps involved in the Next Steps student-led action are:

1. Planning the Action

- This involves creating priorities from the themes identified in the action research component. Goals and objectives are established to help guide the action plan.

2. Implementing the Action

- Once the plan is completed, the project is put into action.

3. Evaluating the Action

- Once the project is completed, it is evaluated by measuring whether or not the benefits were achieved.

4. Reporting Your Results

- The action plan will be summarized in a report.

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities' has prepared this guide and other youth action and youth engagement resources to provide support for students and their adult supervisors to carry out each step in the youth action process.

Involvement in this project encourages students to improve their research skills, problem-solving skills and knowledge in the area of their action plan. It provides a valuable opportunity for students to adopt leadership roles within their schools and to develop teamwork, communication and presentation skills.

Topic 1: Choosing a Project—Determining Themes

When you completed the focus group component of your youth action project, you wrote a report. Now is the time to review the conclusions from the report. Ask yourself:

- What did you learn?
- What themes emerged?

These themes will help guide your next steps.

It is sometimes best to think about the themes on your own before you brainstorm with your group as you may come up with ideas that the group would not have come up with together.

However, it is important to share all your ideas with the group and then to create a group list of the themes that emerged from the focus groups.

Notes:

Topic 2: Creating the Priorities

The themes that you have identified from the focus groups will help you determine your priorities. It is sometimes easy to get carried away and create too many priorities. Recognize that you do not have limitless time and even though you may have many themes and many priorities, you may not be able to cover them all. You need to determine priorities by looking at your list through these two different lenses:

- What is important to us?
- What do we feel passionate about?

When you look through these lenses, you are most likely to find a project that you can easily sustain and that also sustains you.

Notes:

Topic 3: Understanding Goals and Objectives

When Alice meets the Cheshire Cat at the crossroads in the storybook, *Alice in Wonderland*, she asks him which road to take. He responds by asking her where she wants to go. When she tells him that she “doesn’t much care where”, he replies, “then it doesn’t matter which way you go.”

Goals and objectives are very similar. Goals are the “big picture” ideas and objectives are the incremental steps that are used to help you achieve the goal. Goal setting will help you determine where you want to go and how you can best get there. As illustrated in *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice needed to set a goal to determine where she wanted to go before anyone could help.

Creating awareness of your topic will be a major component of at least one of your goals because you will want the students in your school to become more aware of the topic you have chosen.

Topic 4: Setting Goals and Objectives

There are important guidelines to follow in order to ensure the effectiveness of your goals and objectives:

- **Make the goal valuable.** A goal that has little value is very difficult to achieve. If you cannot see the benefits of achieving the goal, it is likely not a good goal. If you are spending time and effort to achieve a goal, you will want to know that it has value and will be beneficial.
- **Write it down in measurable language.** Writing down a goal makes it real. Writing it in a way that is measurable enables you to easily determine if you have reached your goal. Posting your goal where it is visible for the entire group may be helpful.
- **Visualize your goal.** There is much to be said about the saying, “If you can dream it, you can achieve it!” Picturing yourself achieving the goal helps you to attain the goal.
- **Set realistic deadlines.** If your goals or objectives are not scheduled, you may fall behind or get off task. You need to set enough time to achieve the goal or objective but not too much time so as to get distracted.
- **Identify potential roadblocks.** There will always be roadblocks to achieving your goals and objectives. Roadblocks are things that get in the way of your success. People who are able to achieve their goals and objectives have purposefully and thoroughly analyzed their goals and objectives to determine potential roadblocks. If you think about all the potential problems before they occur, you can either stop them from occurring or you will be ready for them when they do happen. This is called being proactive.
- **Review your progress.** As you are working toward your goals or objectives make sure you set up review periods so that you can check to see if you are where you need to be. Sometimes you may need to change gears part way down the road toward a goal in order to maintain your work toward the desired outcome. It is easier to do this if you are reviewing the goals regularly.

Topic 5: Goals and Objectives—Making it Happen

Identifying your Goals and Objectives

Goal:			
Objective: <i>What needs to be done and how will you know it is done?</i>	Person(s) Responsible: <i>Who will make sure this objective is being taken care of?</i>	Progress Review Dates: <i>What dates do we want to review our progress?</i>	Anticipated Completion Date: <i>When do you anticipate this objective being met?</i>

Possible Roadblocks:	Ways to Overcome These:

Objective Task List

Using the goals and objectives that have been previously identified, choose one objective and break it down into the tasks required to complete the objective.

Objective:			
<i>Person(s) responsible for this objective:</i>			
Task <i>What needs to be done in order to achieve the objective?</i>	Resources <i>Are there necessary resources? Financial resources? Product resources? etc.</i>	Person Responsible <i>Who will make sure this task is taken care of?</i>	Deadline <i>When must this task be completed?</i>

As a team, identify goals, objectives, tasks, resources and deadlines in order to complete the Objective Task List.

Topic 6: Understanding the Perceived Benefits

It is important to have an idea of the benefits that may be acquired if the project is successful. In order to do this, imagine being successful with each of your goals and think about the changes and benefits that success would bring to your school or community.

As you brainstorm the changes and the benefits, keep track of the groups' thoughts. These perceived benefits will help you determine the success of your youth action project.

Topic 7: Obtaining Permission

You now have a good idea of what you would like to achieve through your youth action project. It is necessary to ensure that you have obtained permission prior to embarking on this venture. You must work with your teacher supervisor to determine from whom you need to seek permission to continue with the project.

When you propose the project to others, be sure to provide them with written copies of your goals and objectives as well as a written copy of the perceived benefits. This will help people understand not only the project's importance but also that you have thoroughly thought the project through.

Topic 8: Writing a Budget

Now that you have identified your goals and objectives, you should be able to determine where you may need funding to support them. Although determining where funding is necessary may be easy, determining how much funding is necessary may require some research.

To determine how much funding is necessary, you will need to contact service providers to ask for quotes. When you contact the service providers, you will need to tell them exactly what it is that you want and when you need it completed so they can give you an accurate quote. Always remember to shop around. You will want to get quotes from a couple of service providers so you are able to choose the one that best meets your needs.

Remember when you request funding, you are a representative of the school and therefore the school must be aware and have already given permission for you to seek funding from outside sources.

Topic 9: Seeking Support

Remember—you are not alone.

There are most likely many other people who are working on taking action in the same area as you. Connect with people at your school and in the community to find out where and with whom you might be able to create systems of support. Support may come in the form of helping you with information and it also may come in the form of funding.

Information Support

If you need help in finding information, you will need to be clear on what information you are seeking. Make sure you have clear questions that get at the root of the information you need. You will want to know what has been done previously in this area of research so that this information can inform your work.

Funding Support

There are two different ways to make requests for funding. You may be asking for direct funding to support your project or you may be asking for in-kind funding which means that the supporter will provide services for you without charging a fee. Whether you are requesting in-kind or direct funding support, it is a good idea to let service providers know that you are part of a youth action team trying to create positive change.

Potential supporters may be able to make a funding decision over the phone or they may request a letter about your project to help them make this decision. If you are writing a letter, you should include:

- The project title.
- The goals of your project.
- Who is involved in the project.
- The perceived benefits of the project to the school and the community.
- A very clear explanation of the kind of support you are requesting.
- Timelines for when you expect the project to be completed.
- A “thank you” for their consideration.

You might also decide to attach a copy of your goals and objectives. Potential supporters will want to know that you have thought through the project and have a plan to reach your goals.

Be sure to write the letter in business style. It may be helpful to add a last sentence indicating that you can be contacted if more information is needed and that you look forward to hearing back from them by a certain date.

Topic 10: Monitoring Your Progress

It is important to continually monitor your progress as you work toward achieving the goals of your project. Without monitoring, it is easy to become distracted and not meet the deadlines required to complete the project.

Meet regularly to discuss the progress of the project. Be sure that each person at the meeting knows, when they leave, what they need to accomplish before the next meeting. Keep a record of these meetings.

Notes:

Topic 11: Evaluating Your Success

You will want to determine if your project has met its goals. Achieving your objectives does not necessarily mean that you have met your goals. It is important to know whether or not the completion of your project has achieved the perceived benefits.

In order to determine this you will want to have a method of measuring the actual, as opposed to perceived, benefits of your project. This does not have to be difficult or long. It may simply take the form of asking students in your school to answer a few questions on a survey.

Notes:

Topic 12: Showing Appreciation

There are many people who will likely be involved in the success of your project. People from the community might provide support either by helping you with information or providing direct or in-kind financial support. Be sure to show appreciation to those who help you. This not only demonstrates your awareness of their contributions, but it also helps to build community relations with your school.

The easiest way to thank people is in the form of a card, letter, email or posting on the school website or in school announcements.

You may also wish to include sponsors' names on products produced or on information bulletins about your project.

Writing a public thank you to the local newspaper and/or your school newsletter is also an effective way to show your appreciation. Sometimes people choose to have a social gathering to thank the supporters.

Finally, don't forget to thank your fellow students and the teachers directly involved in the project. You have no doubt accomplished something good and meaningful for your school and community. This is important to remember.

You have probably spent much time and effort on this project and it is important to remember to celebrate your successes and add these new wonderful skills and accomplishments to your resume!



Topic 13: Reporting Your Results

Once your youth action project is completed, the team should prepare a final report.

The following is a template for a report that you can use.

Youth Action Project Title: _____

Youth Action Team Members: _____

School: _____

School District: _____

Number of Students Involved: _____

Teacher Supervisor(s): _____

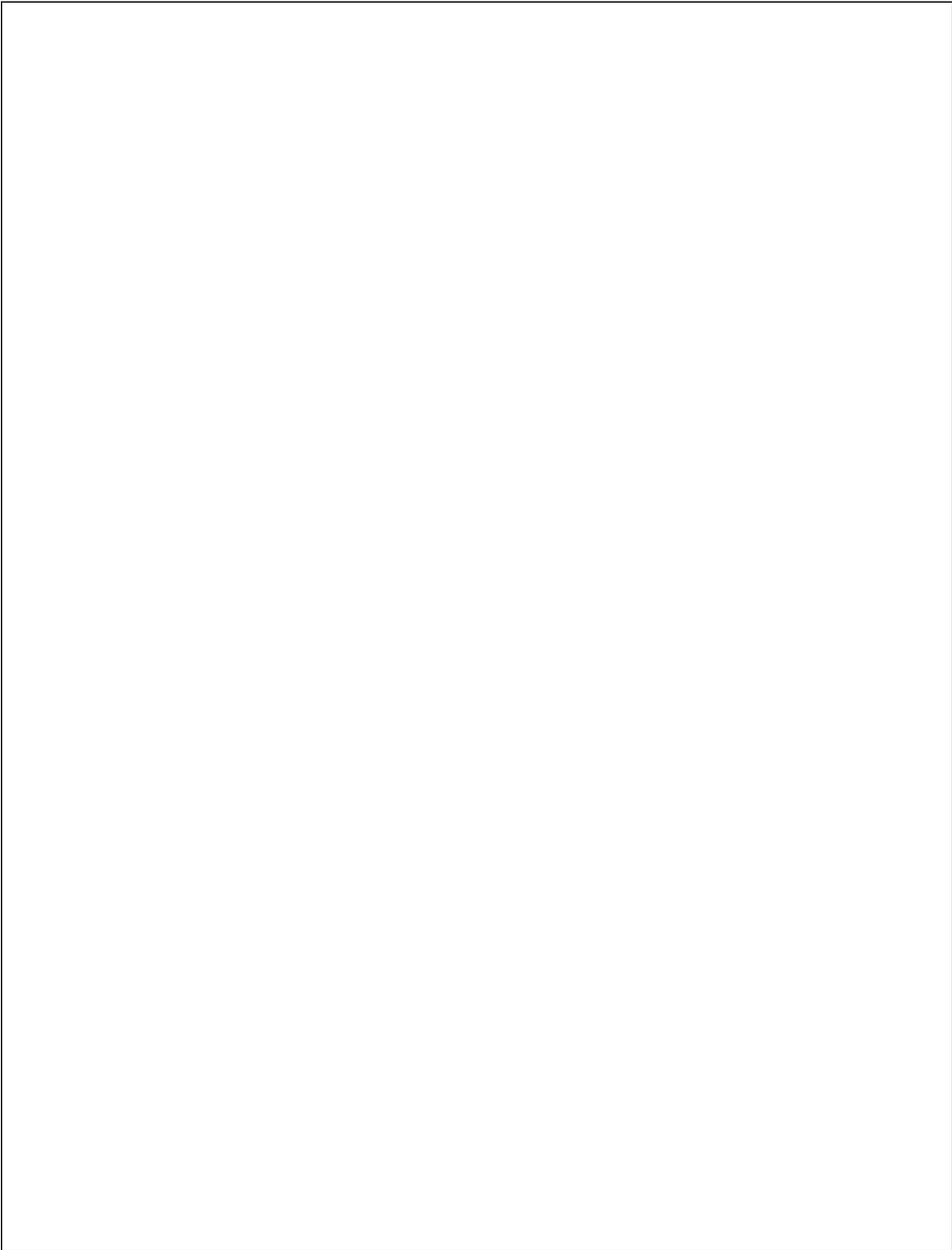
Describe each goal and comment on whether the goal was achieved. If the goal was not achieved, try to determine what prevented the achievement.

What were the most effective components of your project?

What might you change to increase the success of your project if you were to repeat it?

Comment on your preparedness for completing the youth action project. Discuss what helped you be prepared and what else could have been done to prepare you better.

Notes:



Produced by:
The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities
11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton AB, T5N 2R1
(780) 822-1500 in Edmonton
www.safeandcaring.ca



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