

Project S.A.F.E. Informational Guide

SAFETY AWARENESS AND FIREARMS EDUCATION

Gun violence among youth poses a serious challenge for communities.

Project S.A.F.E offers interventions designed to help youth rethink their relationship with firearms, build life skills, and make safer choices to create long-term behavioral change.

What is Project S.A.F.E.?

Project S.A.F.E. is a **specialty court initiative designed to support youth adjudicated delinquent for Minor Possession of a Firearm**. The program focuses on promoting safety awareness, self-reflection, and personal development. Youth engage in structured activities, including peer support sessions, life skills coaching, and career goal setting, with the guidance of credible messengers who have walked similar paths.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE: Journey.do Modules, In-Person Sessions, and Life Skills Coaching



Project S.A.F.E. **combines online learning through Journey.do modules, in-person group sessions, and personalized life skills coaching** provided by credible messengers—community leaders who offer support, share life experiences, and provide mentorship.

Journey.do Modules

Journey.do is an engaging online platform that uses **interactive, self-guided modules** to help youth develop key life skills, reflect on their choices, and set future goals. Youth in Project S.A.F.E. are required to complete a series of modules that focus on various aspects of personal and social responsibility.

Module 1: Understanding Firearm Safety and Laws

This module provides an overview of firearm laws, the consequences of firearm-related offenses, and the importance of making safe, lawful decisions. It challenges youth to reflect on their relationship with weapons and the role firearms play in their lives.

Module 2: Accountability and Personal Responsibility

In this module, youth explore the concept of accountability, emphasizing the importance of owning their actions and their impact on the community. They engage in reflective exercises that encourage honest self-assessment and identify ways to rebuild trust with their families and peers.

Module 3: Conflict Resolution and Decision-Making Skills

Youth learn skills for resolving conflicts peacefully and making sound decisions in high-pressure situations. Through interactive scenarios, they practice these skills in real-world contexts.

Module 4: Setting Goals and Planning for the Future

This module focuses on goal setting, encouraging youth to identify positive, realistic career and personal aspirations. It provides step-by-step guidance on how to create actionable plans that align with their strengths and interests.

In-person sessions are held regularly to complement the online modules and **provide a space for youth to interact with peers, share their experiences, and receive support from program facilitators.**

WHAT'S NEXT: In-Person Group Sessions

Credible Messengers

A key feature of Project S.A.F.E. is the involvement of credible messengers, individuals from the community who have overcome similar life challenges and now serve as mentors. They **provide a unique form of mentorship and life skills coaching, connecting with youth on a deeper level due to their shared experiences.**

Life Skills Coaching

Credible messengers work with youth on **essential life skills**, including financial literacy, job readiness, emotional regulation, communication, time management, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

These one-on-one sessions help youth build practical skills they can apply in their daily lives, empowering them to make positive choices.

Mentorship and Guidance

Through their own lived experiences, **credible messengers provide youth with relatable guidance**, offering advice on overcoming obstacles and avoiding pitfalls.

They function as role models, showing that **positive change is possible and that past mistakes do not define one's future.**

Peer Support and Connection

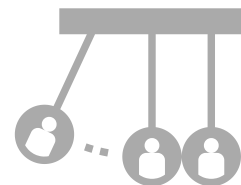
Youth benefit from the credible messengers' ability to **foster trust and rapport**, creating a safe space **where youth can share openly about their struggles and receive constructive feedback.**

Victim Impact

A critical aspect of Project S.A.F.E. is recognizing the impact of firearms-related offenses not just on the youth involved, but also on victims, families, and communities. This component is designed to promote accountability, empathy, and restorative justice. Youth are encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their actions, particularly how firearm possession and related offenses harm others.

The focus is on:

- **Emotional Harm:** Victims often experience fear, anxiety, and lasting trauma due to the presence or use of firearms.
- **Physical Harm:** Incidents involving firearms can lead to life-threatening injuries or even death, affecting victims' quality of life and sense of security.
- **Community Impact:** Firearm offenses contribute to a heightened sense of danger within the community, eroding trust, and safety in neighborhoods.



Project S.A.F.E. integrates restorative justice principles by offering youth the opportunity to participate in **Victim Impact Panels.**

These sessions help youth understand the far-reaching effects of their actions on victims and communities. Through guided discussions, workshops, and peer discussions, youth are encouraged to consider the perspectives of those affected. This process fosters the development of empathy. **By understanding the personal stories of victims, youth can grasp the broader consequences of their behavior, learn to accept responsibility for their actions, and work toward making amends—a vital part of the rehabilitative process.**

How It All Works Together

- **The Journey.do modules are designed to be completed independently**, allowing youth to reflect on the material in their own time. Each module is followed by questions or exercises that youth must complete before the next in-person session.
- **The in-person sessions provide an opportunity to delve deeper into the topics introduced online**, giving youth a chance to apply their knowledge in a group setting. Facilitators guide discussions, mediate peer reflections, and help youth make meaningful connections between their actions and future opportunities.
- The life skills coaching, and mentorship provided by credible messengers **ensure that youth receive individualized guidance and real-world advice** from mentors who understand their unique challenges and can offer strategies for personal growth.

Final Presentation

The Final Presentation is a critical component of Project S.A.F.E., **where youth can show the court their personal growth and the lessons they have gained throughout the program. Key Elements of the Final Reflection:**

1. Personal Journey Reflection:

- **Self-Reflection:** Youth articulate how their perceptions of firearms, violence, and risk-taking behavior have evolved during the program.
- **Growth and Accountability:** They reflect on key moments of change, challenges they overcame, and how they've taken responsibility for past actions.

2. Key Learnings from Program Components:

- **Firearms Awareness:** Youth discuss what they've learned about firearm safety and legal consequences, highlighting how these insights will shape future decisions.
- **Peer Support:** They reflect on the value of peer interaction, detailing how they contributed to the group and benefited from the shared experiences.

3. Goal Setting and Future Plans:

- **Personal Goals:** Youth show their progress toward personal and career goals, such as educational achievements or career planning.
- **Future Plans:** Youth explain how they plan to apply what they've learned in the program to avoid risky behaviors and build a positive future.

4. Demonstration of Behavioral Change:

- **Behavioral Insights:** Youth provide concrete examples of how they've changed their behavior and how they manage conflicts or peer pressure differently.
- **Commitment to Avoiding Recidivism:** Youth share their commitment to making positive choices to avoid future involvement with the justice system.

5. Creativity in Expression:

- **Youth are encouraged to present their reflections in creative ways, such as:**
 - Presentations or speeches
 - Multimedia projects (videos, photo slideshows, art pieces)
 - Written journals or essays

6. Public Speaking and Confidence Building:

- **The final presentation offers an opportunity for youth to build confidence through public speaking,** allowing them to share their story and reflect on their journey in a supportive environment.

ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

Gun violence is a significant concern for communities, especially when it involves youth. Project S.A.F.E. addresses these concerns by **providing young people who have been adjudicated for Minor Possession of a Firearm with the knowledge, skills, and support needed to change their behaviors and make safer, more responsible choices.**

Here's how the program plays a vital role in reducing gun violence in the community:

1. Promotes Firearm Safety Awareness: Youth who participate in Project S.A.F.E. gain a deeper understanding of firearm safety laws and the consequences of gun-related offenses. The Journey.do modules provide education on state and federal gun laws, helping youth realize the risks of possessing and using firearms illegally.

By encouraging them to reflect on their relationship with firearms, the program helps youth re-evaluate the role weapons play in their lives, leading to more responsible choices.

2. Builds Conflict Resolution and Decision-Making Skills: Gun violence often stems from an inability to resolve conflicts peacefully. Project S.A.F.E. equips youth with conflict resolution and decision-making skills that are critical in preventing violent encounters.

Through the Journey.do modules and in-person sessions, youth practice de-escalation techniques and learn how to avoid confrontations that might otherwise result in violence. This education helps reduce impulsive actions that could lead to firearm-related incidents.

3. Provides Positive Role Models through Credible Messengers: The involvement of credible messengers in Project S.A.F.E. is key to preventing future violence. These mentors have firsthand experience with overcoming life challenges and offer practical, relatable guidance to youth.

By forming trusting relationships with youth, credible messengers help youth recognize that their current circumstances do not define their future. This support encourages them to abandon violent behaviors and embrace healthier ways of interacting with others.

4. Focuses on Personal Accountability and Community Impact: Project S.A.F.E. emphasizes personal responsibility and accountability, helping youth understand how their actions affect not only themselves but also their families, peers, and the wider community.

By reflecting on their choices and working toward repairing harm, youth become more aware of the ripple effect of gun violence. This fosters a greater commitment to making positive contributions to the community and avoiding behaviors that might escalate into violence.

5. Supports Long-Term Behavioral Change: Project S.A.F.E. offers youth the tools and support needed to make lasting changes in their lives. Through life skills coaching, credible messengers, and peer support, youth develop long-term strategies for success.

The program helps them set career goals and make actionable plans for their future, reducing their likelihood of engaging in gun-related crimes. This focus on future aspirations not only benefits the individual youth but also reduces the risk of recidivism and further violence in the community.

6. Enhances Community Safety: By guiding youth toward safer behaviors and providing them with tools to succeed in their personal and professional lives, Project S.A.F.E. directly contributes to community safety. As youth gain the skills and confidence to avoid future involvement with firearms, the program helps reduce the incidence of gun violence, creating a safer environment for everyone.

WHY REFER TO PROJECT S.A.F.E.?



Structured Support: Youth are given tools to rethink their relationship with firearms and build healthy, productive lives.



Reducing Risk of Violence: By equipping youth with firearm safety knowledge and conflict resolution skills, Project S.A.F.E. helps prevent future gun-related incidents.



Creating Positive Change: Through mentorship, accountability, and personal development, the program supports youth in making choices that lead to safer, more successful lives.



Supporting Community Well-being: The impact of Project S.A.F.E. goes beyond individual youth, fostering a safer community by addressing the root causes of youth gun violence.

By participating in Project S.A.F.E., youth are empowered to make life-changing decisions, break the cycle of violence, and contribute positively to their communities.