



Preventing Violence and Building Safe School Communities

A Guide for Creating Student-Led Clubs

Have you seen or heard about violence in your school and/or community?

As youth and community members, you may wonder how you can help prevent violence in their school communities. Engaging youth in Community Violence Intervention and Prevention (also known as CVI&P) can make a difference! In fact, student-led clubs that focus on preventing violence and building community can create a safer and more supportive environment in your school and community.[1]

[1] Morrel-Samuels, S., Bacallao, M., Brown, S., Power, M., & Zimmerman, M. (2016). Community engagement in youth violence prevention: Crafting methods to context. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 37,* 189–207. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-016-0428-5

What Is Community Violence Intervention and Prevention?

It means working to stop neighborhood violence by helping people before they get into trouble, teaching them about the dangers of violence, and providing support. CVI&P looks at why violence happens—such as unfair treatment and the lack of opportunities—and tries to fix these problems. It brings together students, community leaders, and local groups to create safer communities through teamwork and proven methods.[2]

[2] CDC. (2024). *Community violence prevention resource for action: A compilation of the best available evidence for youth and young adults.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention/media/pdf/resources-for-action/CV-Prevention-Resource-for-Action_508.pdf

A Resource for Gun Violence Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

CENTER ON PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports
READINESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOLS REMS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER
National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
Engagement • Safety • Environment
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Why student-led clubs?

Student-led clubs play a key role in creating a positive and safe school environment. By engaging students like you in leadership and advocacy, student-led clubs extend their influence beyond the classroom into your wider community. They also foster a culture of safety and inclusiveness. Student-led clubs provide a platform for students to express and advocate for their concerns that help enhance peer education on important issues like preventing violence. This focus on community involvement and personal development also helps build a supportive atmosphere for learning and personal growth.

How can a student-led club help?

Student-led clubs focused on prevention violence and building community can significantly enhance efforts to prevent violence within schools and communities. These clubs can not only **address the direct factors that contribute to violence** but also **build a foundation for lasting, positive change in communities**.

By participating in these clubs, with the support of an advisor, students have the chance to **lead and participate in various violence prevention efforts** that also **build their skills as they create safer school environments and communities**.



How Can Student-Led Clubs Be Set Up for Success?

To truly flourish and reach their full potential, student-led clubs must operate in environments in which school leaders also actively address systemic challenges and invest in universal prevention programs. Supportive environments are crucial to foster the conditions necessary for success.

This three-part resource is designed to help student organizers and their advisor(s) create a student-led club that focuses on preventing violence and building safe school communities. (You can select any of the boxes below to jump to that respective item.)

- **PART 1 | How to Establish a Student-Led Club.** This section includes five steps for creating a student-led club. Each step includes tips to guide you through the process.



- **PART 2 | Choosing an Approach for Your Student-Led Club.** Part of creating a student-led club includes choosing your approach for preventing violence or building community. This section includes multiple options to consider.

1. Offer workshops.
2. Implement mentoring programs with caring adults.
3. Implement peer mentoring programs.
4. Coordinate afterschool programs.
5. Engage in positive activities.
6. Engage in direct community outreach.

- **PART 3 | Tools and Templates to Support Establishing a Student-Led Club.** To spark ideas and to give a helping hand, this section offers tools and templates that organizing students and their advisor can use to support each step in establishing their student-led club.

Planning Worksheet for Establishing a Student-Led Club

Sample Letter Template to Request Support

Sample Flyer

Sample Social Media Posts

Sample Agenda for Initial Club Meeting

PART 1 | How to Establish a Student-Led Club

The following steps will help you establish a student-led club that focuses on preventing violence and building community. These steps will help you

- develop the club's organization,
- get support from school administrators, and
- align the club with the community's needs and resources.

Each step includes tips to guide and support you through the process. To make the process easier, student organizers and their advisor can use a planning worksheet, such as the sample worksheet in Part 3 of this resource.

Establishing a student-led club may take between a few months and a whole school year. It will depend on the size, depth of planning, and partnership. Initially, it may be possible to start with a few student organizers and an advisor and then engage others to facilitate the remaining steps. When expanding the planning to new members, remember to share where you are, how you got there, and what flexibility you have to make changes.

STEP 1 | Establish the group's mission and objectives based on your community's needs and strengths.

Understanding the specific needs, strengths, and resources in your community will help you figure out your club's mission and objectives, ensuring that your efforts are effective.

- **Gather information from the community** by conducting surveys and interviews with students, teachers, and community members to learn about safety needs and concerns.
- **Determine a specific approach for the club that can help with preventing violence or building community**, such as mentoring, public awareness campaigns, or conflict resolution workshops tailored to local community needs and strengths. (See Part 2 of this resource for options.)
- **Draft a mission statement** that explicitly aligns with violence prevention and community safety goals, reflecting the club's commitment to preventing violence and building community.

Is there an existing club or organization already aligned with your goals? If so, consider joining the group, adopting their approach, or collaborating with related groups to strengthen your impact to avoid duplicating efforts. Aligning with established organizations can provide valuable support and resources as you work toward your shared objectives.

STEP 2 | Build support for the club.

To maximize your impact, secure broad support and ensure alignment with existing community efforts from the start.

- Directly engage other students and key partners on the scope of the club. Key partners may include school administrators, local agencies and organizations (such as local law enforcement), and community leaders.
- Navigate the approval process with a clear presentation of the club's objectives and planned activities. Highlight its role in enhancing community safety.
- Reach out to local businesses for sponsorships or partnerships. Explain how their support can benefit both the club and the community. (See the example "Request for Support" letter in Part 3 of this resource.)
- Organize events—such as open houses, workshops, or informational sessions—to raise awareness and involve the community.
- Encourage family members to participate in club events and activities. They can provide additional support and resources.

STEP 3 | Recruit members for the club.

Recruitment should focus on being inclusive and addressing how some community members experience more violence than others.

- Ensure that your group reflects the community you seek to serve. Use various channels to attract a diverse group of members. Encourage participation from students of different backgrounds to ensure a wide range of perspectives and ideas, which will strengthen the club's ability to address complex issues effectively.
- Design eye-catching flyers that clearly state the club's mission, objectives, and benefits of joining. (See the sample flyer in Part 3 of this resource.)
- Leverage platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and X to reach a broader audience. (See sample social media posts in Part 3 of this resource.)
- Conduct targeted outreach and track those who are interested.

STEP 4 | Host initial meetings and events for the club.

The initial meeting or event is essential for setting the club's tone and engaging members about the club's mission and activities.

- Prepare an agenda that introduces the club's mission and objectives, discusses upcoming activities, and shows how members can participate. (See the sample agenda in Part 3 of this resource.)

- Encourage active participation and gather feedback to improve future meetings.
- Share key information and context about preventing violence and building community to help everyone understand the importance and reason for your efforts.
- Highlight how your club's activities will enhance safety, promote well-being, and create a more supportive environment for everyone in the community.
- Be ready to address any questions or concerns to build trust and demonstrate your commitment to transparency and effectiveness.
- Plan to develop detailed agendas for future meetings to ensure that all meetings stay focused and effectively cover all essential topics.

STEP 5 | Establish leadership roles and system for the club.

To confirm who is doing what and ensure a fair distribution of responsibilities, it is important to establish leadership roles and system.

- Define clear leadership roles within the club, such as president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, each having specific responsibilities tied to activities that focus on preventing violence or building community.
- Implement a system to rotate leadership roles or hold periodic elections to maintain dynamic club governance and engage more members in leadership experiences.
- Offer training sessions for new leaders to equip them with the skills they will need to effectively manage their roles. Training sessions could include workshops on leadership, conflict resolution, and project management.



PART 2 | Choosing an Approach for Your Student-Led Club

This section includes a variety of approaches that you can choose from as students and/or advisors when establishing a club to prevent violence and build a safe school community. Each option includes specific actions that students and their advisors can take, as well resources to learn more. In addition, at the end of the section, it offers examples of student-led programs focused on different aspects of violence prevention.

As you establish your student-led club, it can be helpful to start by focusing on choosing one option to implement. As your club matures, you might want to try another approach. Also, be sure to confirm your intended impact as you select an approach. Although approaches that focus on improving individual skills are helpful, research shows how approaches that influence school and community environments achieve the greatest impact.

Collaborating to Choose an Approach

It is ideal for students and their advisor to collaborate when choosing their approach. The collaboration between students and an advisor is crucial because it combines the passion, creativity, and energy of students with the experience, guidance, and institutional knowledge of an advisor. Students bring fresh perspectives and a deep understanding of their peers' needs. An advisor helps navigate the complexities of school policies and community dynamics, ensuring that the club's efforts are sustainable and effective.

OPTION 1 | Offer workshops.

Your club could offer workshops that address a particular issue or a range of issues to inform students and build their skills. The process of raising awareness and developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence skills can help students navigate conflicts and social situations without resorting to violence. Workshops provide a structured and interactive way for students to acquire knowledge and skills, which not only benefit them personally but also contribute to a safer and more positive school environment. These workshops can effectively complement broader school-based initiatives by reinforcing the messages, skills, and behaviors that are vital for creating a culture of nonviolence and mutual respect within the school.

Student Organizer Actions

Plan workshops that focus on critical thinking, problem solving, and understanding emotions

- Identify key topics—such as conflict resolution, stress management, empathy building, and decision making—that align with the needs of your peers.
- Design interactive sessions that incorporate group discussions, role-playing, and hands-on activities to engage participants and reinforce learning.

Advisor Actions

Provide support in identifying and reaching out to potential speakers and facilitators

- Help students align their workshops and activities with messaging from the school to reinforce their approach.
- Use your network to connect student organizers with experts who can contribute valuable insights and lead the workshops.

Student Organizer Actions	Advisor Actions
Plan workshops that focus on critical thinking, problem solving, and understanding emotions	**Provide support in identifying and reaching out to potential speakers and facilitators**
• Use real-life situations or common challenges faced by students as examples during the workshops to make the content relatable and practical.	• Help students craft professional and persuasive invitations to potential speakers, outlining the benefits of participating in the workshops. • Ensure that guest speakers understand the audience's age group and educational needs so that they can tailor their presentations accordingly.
Survey classmates on interests and create fun, relevant activities	**Assist with logistical arrangements**
• Conduct surveys or informal polls to determine what specific skills or topics your peers are most interested in. • Incorporate games, icebreakers, or competitions into the workshops to make learning enjoyable and encourage active participation. • Tailor activities to different learning styles (including visual, auditory, kinesthetic) to ensure that everyone can engage meaningfully with the content.	• Help student organizers secure appropriate venues that are conducive to learning and accommodate the expected number of participants. • Arrange for any necessary materials, such as projectors, whiteboards, or handouts, to be available during the sessions. • Coordinate with school administration to ensure that all workshops occur at times that do not conflict with other important activities or events.
Invite guest speakers to enhance engagement	**Offer feedback on workshop content and delivery**
• Reach out to local professionals, educators, or alumni who have expertise in relevant fields (such as psychology, conflict resolution, or leadership). • Coordinate with guest speakers to ensure that their presentations align with the workshop's goals and are accessible to the student audience. • Provide participants with background information on the speakers and encourage them to come up with questions in advance.	• Review the planned workshop content to ensure that it aligns with educational objectives and is appropriate for the audience. • Provide constructive feedback on the structure and flow of the workshops, suggesting how to enhance engagement and clarity. • Attend the workshops, to observe and offer real-time support, ensuring that the sessions run smoothly and effectively.

OPTION 1 | Resources

The CASEL Program Guide provides a list of evidence-based and research-informed lessons and is designed to improve social-emotional learning skills, improve school connectedness and more.

The VetoViolence website contains tools, trainings, and resources that will to empower you and your partners to help reduce risks for violence and increase what protects people and communities from it.

OPTION 2 | Implement mentoring programs with caring adults.

Your club could help establish a mentoring program where students get paired up with caring adults to engage in positive activities. As they meet on a regular basis, adult mentors can provide students with guidance and support. These interactions build trust and opportunities to have enriching experiences. Mentoring can ultimately help students reduce their exposure to risky behaviors while building protective factors.

Student Organizer Actions

Plan events so that students can meet and interact with supportive adults

- Organize guest lectures, panels, or workshops so that professionals from various fields can share their experiences and offer advice.
- Arrange joint activities, such as community service projects, career days, or cultural events, in which students can work alongside supportive adults.
- Facilitate informal meet-and-greet sessions so that students can have one-on-one conversations with adults who can provide guidance and mentorship.

Advisor Actions

Provide guidance on establishing a mentorship program

- Help student organizers design a mentorship program that aligns with the school's values and addresses the specific needs of the student body.
- Assist in identifying potential mentors from the community, including alumni, local professionals, and parents who are willing to volunteer their time and expertise.
- Offer advice on best practices for matching mentors with mentees, ensuring that the pairings foster meaningful and supportive relationships.

Student Organizer Actions	Advisor Actions
Build mentorship programs	**Offer training to mentors and support to student organizers**
• Develop a structured mentorship program that pairs students with adults based on shared interests, career goals, or life experiences. • Create a clear framework for the mentorship program, including goals, expectations, and guidelines for both mentors and mentees. • Promote the program within the school and community to attract both mentors and students, emphasizing the mutual benefits of participation.	• Develop and deliver training sessions for mentors. Such training should include effective communication, setting boundaries, and supporting youth development. • Provide ongoing support to student organizers by helping them manage the logistics of the program, including scheduling meetings, tracking participation, and addressing anything that may arise. • Encourage collaboration between mentors and student organizers, facilitating open communication and ensuring that the program meets its objectives.
Foster ongoing engagement and support	**Monitor the mentoring relationships and provide support as needed**
• Organize regular check-ins, group activities, or workshops for mentors and mentees to strengthen their relationships and ensure the program's success. • Encourage students to actively participate in the mentorship program by seeking advice, sharing their progress, and setting personal goals with their mentors. • Collect feedback from both mentors and mentees to continuously improve the program and address any challenges that arise.	• Regularly check in with both mentors and mentees to assess the progress of the mentoring relationships and offer guidance where necessary. • Address any concerns or challenges that may arise, such as mismatched pairings or difficulties in communication, and work to resolve them promptly. • Recognize and celebrate the successes of the mentorship program, highlighting the positive impact on both students and mentors.

OPTION 2 | Resources

Youth.gov's Starting a Mentoring Program is a step-by-step guide for creating a mentoring program, accompanied by various programs from which to choose.

The National Mentoring Resource Center website has tools, programs, and guides for involving youth voices in practices, activities, and programs, as well as access to no-cost training and technical assistance to support mentoring.

Big Brothers Big Sisters has information on how to make meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers ("Bigs") and children ("Littles"), ages 5 through young adulthood in communities across the country.

OPTION 3 | Implement peer mentoring programs.

Your club could establish a peer mentoring program in which older students get paired up with younger students and meet on an ongoing basis. Older students can help younger students navigate the challenges of school life in a relatable way because both are students and not adults. At the same time, older students can build their leadership skills. Like adult mentoring, their interactions build trust and opportunities to have positive experiences, while reducing their exposure to risky behaviors and building protective factors. Peer mentoring also can help create a positive and interconnected school culture.

Student Organizer Actions

Start a peer mentoring program

- Identify and recruit older students who want to become mentors, focusing on those who demonstrate leadership qualities and a commitment to helping others.
- Develop a clear structure for the program, including the roles and responsibilities of both mentors and mentees, as well as the goals of the program.
- Pair mentors with mentees based on shared interests, academic needs, or personal experiences to ensure meaningful and effective relationships.

Organize regular meetings and activities

- Plan and schedule regular meetings between mentors and mentees. Provide a consistent structure that allows for relationship building and ongoing support.
- Organize group activities, workshops, or social events so that mentors and mentees can bond in a relaxed and informal setting, further strengthening their connections.
- Encourage mentors to take an active role in planning activities, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for the program's success.

Advisor Actions

Provide guidance on setting up the peer mentoring program

- Assist student organizers in designing the program, ensuring alignment with the school's values and meeting the needs of the student body.
- Offer advice on best practices for selecting and pairing mentors and mentees, considering compatibility, interests, and specific support needs.
- Help establish clear guidelines and expectations for the program, including confidentiality, communication protocols, and conflict resolution strategies.

Train peers and support the student organizer in managing the program

- Develop and deliver training sessions for mentors. Such training should include effective communication, active listening, and mentoring techniques.
- Support student organizers by helping them manage the logistics of the program, including tracking participation, scheduling meetings, and addressing any issues that arise.
- Monitor the progress of the program and offer feedback to both mentors and mentees. Help ensure that relationships are productive so that the program achieves its intended goals.

Student Organizer Actions

Promote the program and encourage participation

- Use school announcements, social media, and word of mouth to promote the peer mentoring program. Emphasize its benefits for both mentors and mentees.
- Create promotional materials that highlight success stories from the program. Showcase positive impacts on both mentors and mentees.
- Encourage mentors to share their experiences and invite their peers to join, helping grow the program and ensure its sustainability.

Advisor Actions

Evaluate and sustain the program

- Assist in gathering feedback from participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and identify areas for improvement.
- Work with student organizers to refine the program based on this feedback. Help with making adjustments to better meet the needs of both mentors and mentees.
- Help secure resources or support from the school administration to ensure the long-term sustainability of the program, including potential integration into the school's formal support structures.

OPTION 3 | Resources

The Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs in Schools: An Introductory Guide provides recommendations for coordinators of cross-age peer mentoring programs in schools, in the areas of program design; participant recruitment, screening and selection, and training; and match activities, as well as planning tools for program coordinators.

Dating Matters (soon to be rebranded) offers a free, online course available to educators, school personnel, youth mentors, and others dedicated to improving teen health.

OPTION 4 | Coordinate afterschool programs.

Your club also could identify and support a structured afterschool program that offers a safe and engaging environment for students to learn and have fun on an ongoing basis, thus reducing unsupervised time and exposure to risky behaviors. These programs provide valuable opportunities for students to explore new interests, build skills, form positive relationships, and contribute to a positive and supportive school culture.



Student Organizer Actions	Advisor Actions
Plan educational and fun afterschool activities	**Assist with the planning and organization of afterschool programs**
• Identify activities—such as academic support, creative arts, STEM projects, or sports—that cater to different interests and learning styles. • Develop a schedule that balances educational content with recreational activities. Ensure that students remain engaged and motivated to participate. • Collaborate with peers to generate ideas for new and unique activities that reflect the diverse interests of the student body.	• Provide guidance on designing a well-rounded afterschool program that includes a variety of activities that cater to different interests and needs. • Help student organizers develop a budget, manage resources, and create a feasible schedule for the afterschool activities. • Ensure that all programs comply with school policies and safety regulations, protecting the well-being of all participants.
Promote programs to encourage broader student involvement	**Provide resources such as space, materials, and guest speakers**
• Use school communication channels, including announcements, newsletters, and social media, to spread the word about afterschool programs. • Create eye-catching posters and flyers that highlight the benefits of participating in these programs, such as skill building, socializing, and having fun. • Encourage students who are already involved to bring their friends. Build a strong and inclusive community around activities.	• Secure appropriate spaces within the school for afterschool activities. Ensure that the spaces are conducive to learning and engagement. • Arrange for necessary materials, such as art supplies, sports equipment, or science kits, to support the various activities planned. • Invite guest speakers, such as professionals, artists, or educators, to lead workshops or give talks that enrich the program's offerings.
Consider a variety of activities	**Offer support to ensure that activities run smoothly and effectively**
• *Homework Help Sessions*: Organize study groups or tutoring sessions for students to get help with their homework and prepare for exams. • *Science Clubs*: Start a club focused on hands-on experiments, coding, or robotics. Allow students to explore their interests in STEM fields.	• Troubleshoot any issues that arise during afterschool activities. Provide support to student organizers and participants as needed. • Monitor attendance and participation to ensure that the programs reach a broad audience and meet their goals.

Student Organizer Actions

Consider a variety of activities

- *Arts and Crafts*: Offer workshops in drawing, painting, crafting, or other creative activities to let students express themselves artistically.
- *Sports Teams*: Coordinate intramural sports teams or fitness clubs that promote physical activity and teamwork.

Incorporate student feedback and adapt the programs

- Collect feedback from participants to understand what activities they enjoy most and how to improve them.
- Adapt program offerings based on this feedback. Introduce new activities or modify existing ones to better meet the needs and interests of all students.
- Involve students in the decision-making process for future program planning. Empower them to take ownership of the afterschool activities.

Advisor Actions

Offer support to ensure that activities run smoothly and effectively

- Encourage collaboration among student organizers, teachers, and community members to enhance the quality and impact of afterschool programs.

Encourage teachers and community members to volunteer and contribute

- Reach out to teachers and staff who may have specific skills or interests that align with the afterschool activities, inviting them to volunteer their time.
- Engage community members—for example, parents, local business owners, or professionals—who can offer their expertise or resources to support the programs.
- Recognize and celebrate the contributions of volunteers, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose in supporting student development.

OPTION 4 | Resources

The Positive Youth Development (Youth.gov) website features a variety of vetted positive youth programs.

The Search Institute's Developmental Assets Framework website features 40 research-based positive experiences and qualities that influence young people's development.

OPTION 5 | Engage students in positive activities.

Your club could offer students a variety of positive activities to engage in during the school day and after school, such as community service projects, cultural arts events, and sports activities. Such activities could engage students who may not be ready to commit or able to become a member of a club. Engaging students in positive activities can contribute to violence prevention and foster a sense of community and belonging because they allow students to build positive relationships, develop new skills, and meaningfully contribute to their community.

Student Organizer Actions

Organize community service projects

- Identify local needs and create opportunities for students to contribute, such as neighborhood cleanups, food drives, or helping at local shelters.
- Assign roles to peers based on their strengths and interests to ensure active participation.
- Promote projects through social media, school announcements, and flyers to maximize student involvement.

Host cultural arts events

- Plan events such as talent shows, art exhibitions, or cultural fairs that celebrate the diversity and creativity of the student body.
- Collaborate with local artists or cultural organizations to provide workshops or performances that inspire students and enhance their cultural awareness.
- Create opportunities for students to showcase their talents, helping them gain confidence and a sense of achievement.

Coordinate sports activities

- Organize friendly competitions, sports leagues, or intramural tournaments that encourage teamwork, discipline, and physical fitness.

Advisor Actions

Help with planning and organizing activities

- Provide logistical support, such as securing venues, managing budgets, and ensuring that all necessary materials are available.
- Help student organizers navigate any challenges that arise, offering guidance on how to overcome obstacles.
- Ensure that all activities are safe, inclusive, and aligned with the school's mission and values.

Provide resources and encourage student participation

- Connect student organizers with community partners, local businesses, or cultural organizations that can support their initiatives.
- Offer mentorship and coaching to help students develop leadership skills and confidence.
- Recognize and celebrate the achievements of students involved in these activities, fostering a culture of appreciation and encouragement.

Facilitate reflection and learning

- Organize debriefing sessions after each event so that students can reflect on their experiences, discuss what went well, and identify areas for improvement.

Student Organizer Actions	Advisor Actions
Coordinate sports activities	**Facilitate reflection and learning**
• Cater to different interests and skill levels, ensuring inclusivity. • Use sports to teach conflict resolution and fair play, reinforcing positive behavior on and off the field.	• Encourage students to document their activities and the impact they had and then share them with the wider school community or use for future planning. • Guide students in setting goals for future projects, helping them build on their successes and continue making a positive impact.

OPTION 5 | Resources

Starting, Operating, and Sustaining an Afterschool Program is a guide that provides considerations to build high-quality afterschool programs.

The Afterschool Alliance website provides information, resources, and timely resources on planning for, implementing, and funding afterschool programs.

OPTION 6 | Engage in direct community outreach.

Your club could work directly with community partners outside of school who are working to address violence prevention. Students from your school could meet with community outreach program staff and volunteers, working on joint planning and projects. Community outreach programs and campaigns that can change harmful community norms play a crucial role in reducing violence and promoting nonviolence and respect. By proactively engaging with community members to address and alter behaviors and attitudes that contribute to violence, you will foster a safer and more supportive environment.

Student Organizer Actions	Advisor Actions
Actively lead and participate in community outreach programs	**Provide support in planning and executing outreach initiatives**
• Engage with community members through outreach activities, such as door-to-door conversations, distributing informational materials, or organizing neighborhood meetings.	• Assist student organizers in developing outreach plans that are strategic, well organized, and aligned with the overall goals of the violence prevention campaign.

Student Organizer Actions	Advisor Actions
Actively lead and participate in community outreach programs	**Provide support in planning and executing outreach initiatives**
• Work with peers to develop outreach strategies that are culturally sensitive and tailored to the specific needs and concerns of the community. • Collect feedback from community members during these interactions to better understand the challenges they face and inform future outreach efforts.	• Offer logistical support, such as getting permission slips, securing permits for street outreach, arranging transportation, and coordinating with local authorities. • Ensure that students are well prepared for their outreach efforts, providing training on effective communication, cultural competence, and safety protocols.
Organize events and activities that promote nonviolence and respect within the community	**Help student organizers connect with community partners and resources**
• Plan and host community events—such as peace rallies, workshops on conflict resolution, or cultural festivals—that celebrate diversity and inclusivity. • Involve local leaders, activists, and influencers in these events to amplify the message of nonviolence and respect. • Ensure that all events are accessible and welcoming to all members of the community, regardless of age, background, or social status.	• Use your network to connect students with local community leaders, organizations, and resources that can support their outreach efforts. • Facilitate introductions and help build partnerships that enhance the effectiveness and reach of student campaigns. • Provide guidance on how to approach potential partners and negotiate collaborations that are mutually beneficial.
Create and share media content to spread positive messages	**Offer guidance on effective strategies for engaging the community and changing harmful norms**
• Develop engaging media content—including videos, social media posts, posters, and flyers—that promote messages of nonviolence, respect, and community unity. • Use social media and local community forums to disseminate this content widely to reach a broad audience. • Encourage fellow students and community members to share and interact with the content to increase its visibility and impact.	• Share insights on evidence-based approaches to community engagement and behavior change, drawing on research and best practices. • Help students design campaigns that reflect the community's unique needs and challenges. • Encourage positive, strengths-based messaging that resonates with the community and motivates change.

Student Organizer Actions

Collaborate with local organizations to maximize reach and impact

- Partner with local nonprofit organizations, community groups, and advocacy organizations to leverage their expertise and resources in your outreach efforts.
- Coordinate joint campaigns or events that draw on the strengths of each organization, ensuring a comprehensive approach to changing harmful norms.
- Build long-term relationships with these organizations to create a sustained impact on the community.

Advisor Actions

Ensure that outreach activities are well coordinated and have clear objectives

- Work with student organizers to establish clear, measurable objectives for their outreach activities. Ensure that each activity has a defined purpose and desired outcome.
- Monitor the progress of the outreach efforts. Provide feedback and support to help students stay on track and make adjustments as needed.
- Help students document their outreach activities and outcomes, creating a record of their impact to share with the community and inform future efforts.

OPTION 6 | Resources

Cure Violence is a website that features information and resources to support communities in implementing the "CeaseFire" model, one of the best-known public-health-focused programs. Many outreach initiatives follow its basic principles.

Safe Passage Community Resource Toolkit offers lesson plans and curriculum resources for educators (which can apply to student-led clubs as well) for embedding safety practices inside and outside the classroom, including strategies for reaching out to neighbors and community members to collaboratively make our spaces safer and more welcoming.



Examples of Student-Led Clubs That Focus on Preventing Violence and Building Safe School Communities

1. **Safe and Sound Student Club.** This initiative encourages high school students to lead in the enhancement of their school's safety through various projects that promote dialogue, awareness, and community engagement. The program provides a structured approach to explore safety ideas and organize actionable service projects.
2. **SAVE Promise Clubs.** Part of the Sandy Hook Promise initiative, these clubs are student led and focus on preventing violence in schools and communities. They empower students to promote safety by educating peers, advocating for policy changes, and fostering a culture of community vigilance. These clubs also host activities that encourage inclusivity and kindness, making schools safer and more connected environments.
3. **Safe Routes to School and Student Leaders.** The Safe Routes to School Leadership Initiative engages middle school students as leaders in promoting safe walking and bicycling to school. As your youth group develops into a cohesive team, they will gain new skills and take on leadership roles in planning events and activities that encourage their peers to participate in these safe commuting practices.
4. **Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.** Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America is a national initiative that mobilizes high school and college students to advocate for gun safety laws and policies. The movement gained significant momentum following the 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, where students across the country were galvanized by the lack of meaningful legislative action.
5. **Teens for Courage Clubs.** Teens for Courage are student-led groups dedicated to empowering young people to take a stand against sexual violence and harassment. These clubs provide a safe space for teens to discuss important issues related to consent, healthy relationships, and personal boundaries. Through education, advocacy, and peer support, Courage Clubs aim to foster a culture of respect and safety within schools and communities.

PART 3 | Tools and Templates for Establishing Student-Led Clubs

This section offers tools and templates organizing students and their advisor can use to support each step in establishing their student-led club that focuses on preventing violence and building safe school communities, as shared in Part 1.

- **Planning** Worksheet for Establishing a Student-Led Club
- **Sample** Social Media Posts
- **Sample** Letter Template to Request Support
- **Sample** Agenda for Initial Club Meeting
- **Sample** Flyer

Planning Worksheet for Establishing a Student-Led Club

STEP 1 | Establish the group's mission and objectives based on your community's needs and strengths.

How will you find out what your community's safety needs and strengths are (e.g., review available data, administer a survey, conduct interviews, facilitate a focus group)?

What are your community's needs?

What are your community's strengths?

What specific approach for preventing violence and building community will your club choose to address your community's needs and strengths? (See the Part 2: Choosing an Approach section of this resource for options.)

What is your group's mission statement?

Does your mission statement explicitly align with and reflect the club's commitment to violence prevention and community safety goals?

- ☐ Yes, it completely aligns.
- ☐ Yes, but we need to do more work.
- ☐ No, it does not align. We need more time to work on this.

Resources for Developing a Mission Statement

Five steps to creating an effective mission statement: A mission statement helps you create a roadmap for your club. This article explores five key steps you can take to make the process more effective.

Proclaiming Your Dream: Developing Vision and Mission Statements: Learn how to develop effective vision and mission statements to effectively communicate the work of your organization or effort.

STEP 2 | Build support for the club.

Which key partners do you plan on engaging?

Partner type[3]	Name	Position	Contact information	Notes on their related work

What information do you plan to share with potential partners? Who will contact whom?

Who else might sponsor or partner with you on this student-led club?

Sponsor or other partner	Name	Position	Contact information	Notes on their related work

What information do you plan to share with a potential sponsor or other partner? Who will contact whom?

Determine your schedule for awareness and/or community involvement events.

Who will you invite to the awareness and/or community involvement events?

[3] Partner types could include school administrators, other student groups, law enforcement, hospitals, court officials, and others.

STEP 3 | Host initial meetings and events.

Who would you like to involve in the club? How can you ensure that your club is inclusive?

Which recruitment strategy will you use?

Recruitment strategy	If yes, specify the person(s) responsible and target timeline.
☐ Flyers and posters	
☐ Social media	
☐ Information session	
☐ Peer-to-peer outreach	
☐ School media (e.g., newsletters)	
☐ Event participation (e.g., booth at fair)	
☐ Incentives for joining	

What is your anticipated outreach schedule?

What is your anticipated schedule for the club?

How will you track who is interested in joining the club during your outreach?

STEP 4 | Establish leadership roles and system for the club.

What leadership roles do you think are necessary given your chosen strategy for preventing violence or building community?

How will we select the leaders?

Will leadership roles rotate regularly? For example, while establishing the club, you might have a set of organizers. After recruiting members, you might confirm and then update annually from there.

What training will leaders need to take on their role?

After making these decisions, document the leadership information.

Leadership role	Responsibilities	Name	Contact information
President			
Vice-president			
Secretary			
Treasurer			
Event coordinator			
Membership coordinator			

STEP 5 | Host initial meetings and events.

What do you want to be sure to cover during your initial meeting? What feeling do you want participants to walk away with? How will you handle questions?

Who will facilitate the meeting (e.g., different roles for different parts of the agenda) and how (slides, interactive activities)?

What feedback do you plan to collect from the initial meeting? How will you collect it?

Sample Letter Template to Request Support

Add School Logo Here

[Your Organization's Letterhead]

[Date]

[Recipient's Name]
[Recipient's Position]
[Recipient's Organization]
[Recipient's Address]

Dear [Recipient's Name],

We are writing to extend a warm invitation to you to join us in our upcoming event, [Event Name], dedicated to advancing violence prevention efforts in our community. This event will occur on [Event Date] at [Event Location], from [Start Time] to [End Time].

Event Purpose and Goals

Violence remains a significant concern in our community, impacting the health, safety, and well-being of all residents. The [Event Name] aims to bring together community leaders, policymakers, practitioners, and residents to discuss innovative strategies and collaborative approaches to prevent violence. Our goals for this event are as follows:

- Raise awareness about the current state of violence in our community.
- Share successful interventions and best practices.
- Foster partnerships and collaboration among partners.
- Develop actionable plans to address and mitigate violence.

Why Your Participation Matters

Your expertise and commitment to [specific area of expertise or previous contributions] make you an invaluable asset to our efforts. By participating in [Event Name], you will have the opportunity to do the following:

- Engage with fellow leaders and experts in the field of violence prevention.

- Contribute your insights and experiences to shape effective strategies.
- Network with key partners.
- Play a pivotal role in creating a safer and healthier community.

RSVP

Please confirm your attendance by [RSVP Deadline] by contacting [Contact Person] at [Contact Email] or [Contact Phone Number].

We hope you will accept our invitation and join us in this crucial initiative. Together, we can make a significant impact in preventing violence and promoting a safer environment for all community members.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your positive response and participation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Your Organization]
[Contact Information]

Sample Flyer



Join us on [Date], at [Time], [Location]

Information about your club. Include your mission and goals.

Sample Social Media Posts

(CDC VetoViolence)



Sample Agenda for Initial Club Meeting

(90-minute meeting)

Amount of time	Topic
15 minutes	**Introductions** (Share name and what sparked your interest in this club.)
10 minutes	**Background Information on the Club** (Why this? Why now?)
10–15 minutes	**Prioritizing Student Voice and Other Norms for the Club** (Share overall goal and engage in activity to consider what participants want to see in this club.)
10 minutes	**Update on Initial Steps** (What needs/strengths did the organizers identify? What approach are the organizers aiming on and why?)
20–30 minutes	**Confirm Direction of the Club** (Engage in activities regarding the content and confirm initial plans for the club.)
10 minutes	**Next Steps** (Review schedule and focus of next meeting.)

Notes and Disclaimers | This document was produced by the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments supported by U.S. Department of Education 91990021A0020/91990024F0353.

These resources are provided to assist states, districts, and schools in their gun violence prevention, preparation, response, and recovery to gun violence incidents. These resources are providing information based on published findings from past school incidents; experiences of state, local, and school-based personnel, families, and students; and emerging and promising practices.

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