



Community Partners



Community Conferencing Program

What is Community Conferencing?

Safe & Sound has been involved in a collaborative relationship with the District Attorney's Community Conferencing Program for years. Community conferencing is a process in which a victim, offender and affected community members come together in a safe setting with an impartial facilitator to discuss the facts and impact of a particular crime. During this process the victim and community can ask questions and express directly to the offender how the crime impacted his or her life.

Conferencing provides a victim a greater access to and voice in the criminal justice process. Conferencing also humanizes the incident more directly for the offender so that he or she may better understand the real human consequences of his or her wrongdoing. You can also use conferencing not only for the Criminal Justice system, but as a community tool for schools, community base organizations, youth groups etc.

How does Community Conferencing Work?

Referrals to the Community Conferencing Program (CCP) may come from prosecutors, defense attorneys, victim-witness advocates, judges, law enforcement, probation officers, or from victims who wish to speak directly with the offenders. Violent crimes and cases involving guns will not normally be eligible.

After a referral is received, the offender is contacted through his/her attorney or, directly, if he or she has no attorney, to determine whether the offender is appropriate for the program. Factors to be considered when making this decision include: acceptance of responsibility for the act, the type of crime, degree of remorse, prior record and the offender's general attitude about meeting with the victim. The victim will be contacted to see whether he or she would consider participating. If the victim does not wish to participate in the community conferencing program, the conference may sometimes proceed without the victim or be processed through other criminal justice channels.

How can you get involved?:

Individuals can participate in CCP at many different levels. Becoming a community member involves a two hour training and allows you to participate in a conference, expressing your opinion and asking questions of those involved. A facilitator must undergo a two day intensive training and serve as a co-facilitator before taking on their own cases. CCP also offers opportunities such as community service with the offenders, recruiting victims or community member participants or hosting community conferences.

Safe & Sound coordinates trainings through the DA's office for community member and facilitator levels of participation. All Community Partners, and several Safe Place coordinators, are trained facilitators. Partners facilitate cases as they become available in their respective sectors and include trained Safe Place youth



and community members. Whenever possible they will choose Safe Places in proximity to where the crime occurred.

If you would like to get involved contact Safe & Sound at 414-221-6700 to get more information on current trainings and current conferencing opportunities.

What are the benefits of participation?

The benefits for offenders, victims and community members are undeniable, and many participants find the process meaningful for everyone involved.

1. Increased community involvement and ownership of their neighborhood from community members
2. Increased youth leadership development through becoming a trained community member
3. Increased peer-on-peer mentoring leading to increased accountability among peers
4. Decreased crime involvement of youth participating as community members
5. Promotion and increased participation at Safe Place (offender's awareness of opportunities)
6. 80% of offender participants do not re-offend, while victims have been overwhelmingly positive about their interactions in the CCP.

