



# Youth/Police Dialogues

Educate

Empower

[www.ywboston.org/youth-police](http://www.ywboston.org/youth-police)

## Repairing trust between youth and police officers, one neighborhood at a time.

Broken trust between police and residents decreases community safety and can have devastating consequences for both groups. Despite a shared goal of safer neighborhoods, improving police-community relations remains challenging, particularly for communities of color that have suffered the consequences of this mistrust for generations. YWCA Boston's Youth/Police Dialogues provides a safe, structured way for young people from these communities and police officers to come together, speak openly, and rebuild trust.

Over the course of four to six Dialogues sessions, YW Boston's trained facilitators lead a group of youth and officers in:

- Voicing and addressing negative experiences and stereotypes
- Exploring how youth-police relationships affect community safety
- Building more trusting personal relationships

YW Boston partners with youth-serving organizations such as schools, faith groups, and community centers to make the program available to middle school and high school aged youth. Partner organizations in Boston do not pay for the program.

For more information, contact Mica Warton, Youth/Police Dialogues Coordinator, at 617-585-5421 or [mwarton@ywboston.org](mailto:mwarton@ywboston.org).

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**When that kid used to see me, he would give me a look and spit on the ground. Now he says hi. To me that's progress.**

- Boston Police Officer, participant in a Jackson Square dialogue

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eliminating racism  
empowering women

**yw**  
boston

**150** years

## Bridging divides

YW Boston's Youth/Police Dialogues illuminates barriers between the two groups and has them work together to brainstorm solutions. The four to six session curriculum covers topics critical to rebuilding positive relations, including stereotypes youth and police have of each other and the "stop snitching" culture and how to change it. The Dialogues are highly interactive and structured to increase trust and build relationships, using group-generated agreements, role play activities, and 1-on-1 conversation.

### Before YPD

"I feel ok, but because of things that happened, I don't trust them fully. I have little faith in them."

7th grade participant,  
Roxbury neighborhood

### After YPD

"I feel like it has changed me. Because I've gotten to know more about cops. Also, not to judge based on one thing and to give second chances. Don't let people stereotype you, and don't judge cops based on another cop."

## Demonstrated impact

Through Youth/Police Dialogues, conflict between youth and police is reduced as understanding, trust, and cooperation increase.

Youth that participate in the Dialogues series report:

- Increased comfort in talking to police
- Increased sense of safety having police in their neighborhood
- Greater willingness to report a crime

Police officers that participate in the Dialogues series report:

- Increased consciousness of racial dynamics
- Greater effort to interact with youth outside of conflict settings
- Incorporating learning from the series into their policing

To ensure that the Dialogues program is effective in improving youth-police relations, YW Boston measures and tracks change in participants' knowledge, attitude and behavior.

### After a Dialogues series:

71%

Of police say they now approach policing differently

89%

Of youth say they would report a crime to a police officer

94%

Of youth feel comfortable when they see a police officer

## About YW Boston

YWCA Boston is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. As the first YWCA in the nation, we have been at the forefront of advancing equity for 150 years. We have remained a leader through generations by turning the support of those that envision a better Boston for all into creative, effective programs that make positive change.

We have a deep understanding of the problems of racial and gender inequity, and we know what works – engaging people and organizations at all levels. Our programs that educate + empower reach middle school girls, police officers, corporate executives, high school youth leaders, policymakers, and Boston area residents of all walks of life. Everyone we connect with learns what they can do to promote equity in their personal life, social circle, workplace, school, or neighborhood.

To learn more about our programs and how you can get involved, visit [www.ywboston.org](http://www.ywboston.org).