“KEEPING AMERICA’S RUNAWAY, HOMELESS AND AT-RISK YOUTH SAFE AND OFF THE STREETS.”

PRESENTED BY:
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NATIONAL RUNAWAY SAFELINE
Today’s Objectives:

- Summarize national statistics and recent research on runaway and homeless youth issues.
- Identify the role National Runaway Safeline (NRS) and other resources can play in assisting youth, parents, families, and communities.
- Discuss the role education/prevention resources can play in runaway prevention and the promotion of life skills with NRS’ *Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum.*
How is my community affected?

1.6 - 2.8 million youth run away or are expelled from their homes in a year!
Top 10 Issues Identified By Callers in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Dynamics</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer/Social</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol/Drug Use</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial System</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Runaway Youth’s Self-Descriptions

- A runaway with permission
- A lost child in need of help
- Looking for a better chance
- I don’t think it’s running away; I just think it’s leaving...AWOL
- I was disowned
- A person who is just on their own, who don’t have nobody to count on
- Being put out
- Traveler
- Homeless

“When I hear the word runaway I don’t think very highly of it... it just makes the child seem like they’re a bad child.” - Youth Research Participant

Why They Run, The National Runaway Switchboard (May 2010)
Runaway or Throwaway?

- 30% of the youth explicitly described what happened as running away.
- Nearly half (48%) said they were thrown out of their homes.
- 22% described the situation as both, some combination of running away and being thrown out.

“I went to the police station and told them that my parents kicked me out. Then, they called my mom, and my mom told them that they didn’t want me there anymore.” - 17-Year Old Male Research Participant
HOW NATIONAL RUNAWAY SAFELINE CAN HELP...
National Runaway Safeline

**History:**
- Started in 1971 as Metro-Help, a crisis line in Chicago, IL and in 1974 became the federally designated national communication system for runaway and homeless youth and changed its name to the National Runaway Switchboard.
- In January 2013 became the National Runaway Safeline

**Mission:**
- To keep America’s runaway, homeless and at-risk youth safe and off the streets

**Vision:**
- NRS is the “go to” resource for America’s runaway, homeless and at-risk youth and their families, providing solution-focused support
Utilizing harm reduction and trauma informed approach to provide solution-focused intervention

Offering non-sectarian, non-directive non-judgmental support

Respecting confidentiality

Utilizing volunteers

Responding 24 hours a day

“At the beginning of the call I hear despair, at the end of the call I hear hope.” — NRS Volunteer
1-800-RUNAWAY Hotline Services

- Utilizes a trauma informed solution focused crisis intervention model
  - Confidential
  - Anonymous
  - Toll-free
  - 24/7, 365
- Information and referral
- Message relay
- Conference calls
- Home Free
Information and Referral

NRS maintains a national database of over 10,000 agencies and services including:

- Alternative schools
- Housing
- Counseling
- Residential treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Medical assistance
- Legal information
- Law enforcement
- Child protection
• Confidential
• Indirect mode of communication
• Goal...move towards a conference call
Three-Way Conference Call

- Confidential and safe
- We advocate, mediate, and articulate
- Explore agency rules and expectations
Home Free

- Reunites 12-17 year old runaways with their families
- In recognition of healthy home environments within extended families, recent expansion includes sending youth to alternative living arrangements
- Assists 18-20 year old homeless youth in stabilizing themselves with supportive family members and/or preparing for self-sufficient independent living
- Provides youth and families with local resources to help start the process of long-term positive outcomes
- Reunited over 14,000 families since 1995
- Done in collaboration with Greyhound Bus Lines, Inc.

“[without Home Free] I would probably be sleeping on the streets...cause I wouldn’t have had a way home” —Youth

“It’s just a blessing to have something like that [Home Free]. This is something in place that can help save a child’s life and lift the burden off a parent’s heart...that’s a blessing.” —Parent
Adult Callers

- Anyone who cares about runaway youth can call the National Runaway Safeline for help.
- In fact, NRS calls consist of almost equal numbers of youth and concerned adults.
- Who calls?
  - Parents
  - Teachers
  - Social Workers
  - Police Officers
  - Youth Shelters
  - Community Members
  - Any Concerned Adult
Online crisis intervention services:
- Live chat
- Crisis emails
- Bulletin board

Caller statistics
Youth & teen blog
Areas of information and tips for youth, parents, and educators
Comprehensive research
Free prevention and educational materials
Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum (RPC) is an evidenced based, interactive, 14 module life skill curriculum.

- Available to download or order at www.1800RUNAWAY.org for FREE.
- Intended Audience: Grades 5 -12 but can be modified for other age groups.
- Available in both English and Spanish.
Goals of *Let’s Talk*

- Educate youth about alternatives to running away
- Build life skills so that youth can resolve problems without resorting to running away
- Educate and encourage youth to access and seek help from trusted community members
- Increase knowledge about runaway resources and prevention
Overall, the evaluation data suggest that this evidence-based prevention program is beneficial to the youth who participate in the modules, both in increasing awareness and knowledge of how to deal with challenging life situations, as well as in reshaping the way youth think about how to overcome these obstacles in a healthy manner.
Curriculum Benefits

- **Let’s Talk** provides additional resources, worksheets, and handouts for learning, as well as pre- and post-tests to assist in determining if learning has occurred.

- **Let’s Talk** can lead to leadership opportunities for youth by allowing peer-led learning.

- **Let’s Talk** will support life skills acquisition and prevention efforts. The curriculum can be used to complement existing required curricula or other social emotional learning.

- **Let’s Talk** can be used in its entirety, by individual modules, individual activities, or to supplement other prevention strategies.

- **Let’s Talk** can be used by families.

- **Let’s Talk** can be modified to fit large groups, small groups, or in one-on-one settings.

- **Let’s Talk** is user friendly - “A runaway prevention curriculum and a companion film provides easy to use lessons with all the materials needed when teaching youth...” - *Principal Magazine, Jan/Feb 2007*
MODULE 1: COMMUNICATION AND LISTENING

MODULE ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>METHODOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Listening To Communicate And Barriers To Communication</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Discussion/Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Active Listening</td>
<td>8-10 minutes</td>
<td>Discussion/Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Communicating During A Crisis</td>
<td>5-7 minutes</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Problem-Solving Scenarios</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Discussion/Exercise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total time required: **45 minutes**

MATERIALS

- Poster paper or chalk/dry erase board
- Markers or chalk
- “Good Listener/Bad Listener” worksheet
- “Active Listening” handout
- “Listening Journal” worksheet
- “Communicating During A Crisis” handout
- Copy and cut the “Problem-Solving Scenarios” handout
- “Problem-Solving Scenario Think Sheet” worksheet

Consider showing the curriculum companion film “1-800-RUNAWAY”.

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MODULE 1: COMMUNICATION AND LISTENING

ACTIVITY 1A. LISTENING TO COMMUNICATE AND BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

15 minutes

HAVE

STATE
For the next few minutes we’re going to practice identifying when someone is not listening to us. The person who is shorter will begin by discussing his or her favorite type of music. Describe your favorite type of music with as many details as possible. Use your imagination! The partner who is not talking will be responsible for displaying some terrible listening skills.

Speakers, pay attention and see if you can identify some of these poor listening behaviors.

ALLOW 1 minute to complete the activity.

STATE
Okay, great! Now, we’re going to switch things around. The person who talked last time will now be the listener. The other partner, the one who was the terrible listener, will talk about his or her favorite book or TV show. Remember to give as much detail about the book or TV show as possible, and share why you like it. Listening partners, your job will be to display your best active listening skills!

Speakers, pay close attention to your partner’s actions because a person’s posture, gestures, and facial expressions can let you know if that person is really listening to you.

ALLOW 1 minute to complete the activity.

HAND OUT “Good Listener/Bad Listener” worksheet to each participant.

STATE
On the worksheet I just handed you, please take one minute to write down specific examples of how your partner was displaying signs of listening or not listening. For example, “My partner wasn’t looking at me when I was talking,” or “My partner was nodding his or her head while I was talking.”

Also write down how you felt when you were talking and you knew your partner was or was not listening.

ALLOW 1 minute to complete the worksheet.

STATE
Now, we’re going to share how you know that someone IS NOT listening to you. Please give me an example from your “Good Listener/Bad Listener” worksheet or from a real life situation.

WRITE

responses on a piece of poster paper or on a chalk/dry erase board.

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MODULE 1: COMMUNICATION AND LISTENING

SUMMARY

STATE
Now I’d like to summarize the key points from this session.

- Active listening is the most important communication skill we have. In addition to being completely engaged in a conversation, we make the other person feel “listened to.”

- Three tools to use in active listening are:
  - Closed-ended questions
  - Open-ended questions
  - Paraphrasing and summarizing

- Use your Listening Journal between now and our next session to practice this important skill. Remember, practice makes perfect.

- When communicating during a crisis, remember to:
  - Establish rapport
  - Explore facts and feelings
  - Focus on the main issues
  - Explore options
  - Create an action plan

- When helping someone solve problems, remember to:
  - Maintain awareness
  - Consider available resources
  - Consider the role of communication
  - Include appropriate stress management techniques

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MODULE 1: COMMUNICATION AND LISTENING

HANDOUTS AND WORKSHEETS
A. Good Listener/Bad Listener
B. Active Listening
C. Listening Journal
D. Communicating During A Crisis
E. Problem-Solving Scenarios
F. Problem-Solving Scenario Think Sheet

REFERENCES

RESOURCES
Conflict Resolution Information Source is a free service funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation as a "linking" site for conflict resolution-related resources (http://www.criinfo.org).

The National Parenting Center provides a comprehensive and responsible parenting advice to parents everywhere (http://www.npc.com/parenthelp/parentline.html).

National Runaway Switchboard is the federally-designated national communication system (hotline and website) for runaway and homeless youth. Youth and family members call 1-800-RUNAWAY or access the website to work through problems and to find local help (http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org).

Talking With Kids About Tough Issues is a national initiative by Children Now and The Kaiser Family Foundation to encourage parents to talk with their children earlier and more often about tough issues (http://www.talkingwithkids.org/local.html).

GOOD LISTENER/BAD LISTENER

How I knew my partner was listening to me: ________________________________

How it made me feel to know that my partner was listening to me: ________________

How I knew my partner wasn’t listening to me: ________________________________

How it made me feel to know that my partner wasn’t listening to me: ________________

Need to talk? Call us.
1-800-RUNAWAY
National Runaway Switchboard
www.1800RUNAWAY.org
Module 1: Communication & Listening
Youth will identify barriers to communication and utilize active listening skills in real-life scenarios. An introduction to NRS’ Crisis Intervention Model is provided.

Module 2: Adolescent Development
Youth will learn the normal aspects and challenges associated with adolescent development. Youth will create a personal identity space based on their strengths and qualities.

Module 3: Personal Influences & Decision Making
Youth identify how personal values, principles, and beliefs will impact their decision making. Youth will reflect on the role of influential others in decision making.
Directions: THINK about if you could fill a bus with the people in your life who are most important when it comes to making decisions about your life, who would be on that bus? FILL IN each “bus seat” (represented by the oval) with a person/group that is most important. PLACE a star next to those who are close to your age. PLACE an arrow next to the older or younger people on your bus who also influence your choices about your life. SHARE with a partner who you invited onto your bus.
Who’s On Your Bus?

Activity discussion questions:

• Who are the people on your bus? Who isn’t on your bus?
• Why are they important to you?
• Are there some that have more influence than others?
• Can you count on these people when you are in trouble or in need?
• Do they help you make good decisions? Always? Most of the time? Some times? Never?
• Do you feel good about the decisions they help you make?
Module 4: Peers
Youth will discuss positive and negative, direct and indirect peer pressure and characterize their current friendships and social groups.

Module 5: Families: Roles & Responsibilities
Youth will define the term “family” for themselves and will consider the roles and responsibilities each “family” member holds. Techniques to improve communication among family members and skills to resolve family challenges will be addressed.

Module 6: Runaway Reality
Youth will brainstorm reasons why young people choose to run away, questions to consider before leaving, and options other than running.
Kids Call

- The Kids Call Program allows sites nationwide to welcome NRS into their group at no charge
- Alleviate the anxiety of calling the hotline
- An NRS representative will explain and clarify our services
  - Mock call
  - Answer questions
Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum

Module 7: National Safe Connections:
Youth will identify their own personal “safe place” and learn about the National Safe Place program, which invites local businesses and agencies to provide access to immediate help and supportive resources for all young people in crisis.

Module 8: Community Response & Responsibility:
Youth will consider who in their community is affected, both directly and indirectly, by a runaway incident. Youth will learn to use their community as a resource and discover ways to contribute to their community.

Module 9: Anger Management:
Youth will identify and recognize mental and physical reactions to anger and learn positive ways to deal with these reactions.
Let’s Talk:
Runaway Prevention Curriculum

**Module 10: Stress Reduction:**
Youth will determine their individual stressors and learn problem-solving techniques, stress management skills, and resources to avert a potential crisis situation.

**Module 11: Drugs & Alcohol:**
Youth will learn facts about and reasons why people use drugs and alcohol. Some of the consequences and risks associated with drug and alcohol use will be discussed.

**Module 12: Sexuality & Sexual Orientation:**
Youth will consider the roles that sexuality and sexual orientation play in the lives of youth and those who choose to run away.
Module 13: Internet Safety & Fun:
Youth will brainstorm their current uses of the internet and ways to remain safe online. Role plays will be used to encourage internet safety.

Module 14: Future Life Planning:
Youth will discuss barriers to and facilitators of achieving the life goals they’ve identified in this module.
How to Access *Let’s Talk*

The *Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* is available in *both* English and Spanish. There are two ways to access the resource:

1) Download it for free from NRS’ website at: [http://www.1800runaway.org/educators/curriculum/](http://www.1800runaway.org/educators/curriculum/)

2) Request a CD-ROM of the curriculum by emailing [prevention@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:prevention@1800RUNAWAY.org) with your request.
# Group Demographics

We would appreciate your help in letting us know how many youth are being reached by the curriculum. Please fill out this form after each activity or module you have completed with a group/class and return it to the National Runaway Safeline (NRS). You can mail it to: National Runaway Safeline 3080 N Lincoln Avenue Chicago, IL 60657 or fax at 1-773-929-5150. If you have any questions or would like any technical assistance in implementing the curriculum please contact the NRS Prevention Specialist at Prevention@1800RUNAWAY.org or call 773-289-1723.

## Contact Information

- **Facilitator Name:**
- **Organization:**
- **Address:**
- **City:**
- **Phone Number:**
- **Fax Number:**
- **Date of Class:**
- **Number of participants in group/class:**
- **How did you hear about the curriculum?**
- **State**
- **Zip Code**
- **Email**
- **Check here if you are a Safe Place Agency**
- **Check here if you are a Safe Place Coordinator**

## Date and # of youth

- **Average age of participants:**
  - under 10
  - 10-12
  - 12-14
  - 14-16
  - 16-18
  - 18-20
  - If adults, explain... ex: parents, teachers

## Ages

- **Type of group/class:**
  - middle school class
  - high school class
  - after school program
  - juvenile justice
  - youth development

## Type of class

- **Which module was presented?**
  - Module 1: Communication And Listening
  - Module 2: Adolescent Development
  - Module 3: Personal Influences
  - Module 4: Peers
  - Module 5: Families: Roles And Responsibilities
  - Module 6: Runaway Reality
  - Module 7: National Safe Connections
  - Module 8: Community Response And Responsibility
  - Module 9: Anger Management
  - Module 10: Stress Reduction
  - Module 11: Drugs And Alcohol
  - Module 12: Sexuality And Sexual Orientation
  - Module 13: Internet Safety And Fun
  - Module 14: Future Life Planning
NRS OFFERS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ALL RPC USERS.

NRS WILL REACH OUT TO USERS TO GET FEEDBACK, ANSWER QUESTIONS, COLLECT DATA AND OFFER INCENTIVES.
Thank you for joining us!

Any questions?
Any Comments?
Contact Information

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msantarelli@1800RUNAWAY.org
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For more information on the National Runaway Safeline or to download the free Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum visit:
http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org

Find us:
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