



ARTICLE

Youth: Look closely, see the potential

Scratch the surface and you'll see there's much more to today's youth than meets the eye. Young people hold the key to our future, and we all play a part in helping them fulfill their potential. Getting them to dig deep means looking deeper – beyond your own stereotypes and perceptions. Follow these five steps to make the most of youth in your community:

1. **Stop labeling youth** and start treating them as equals. Stereotypes are hurtful and they create barriers to better communication, instead of creating connections between people.
2. **Embrace the differences.** Today's youth don't fit into one mold. They represent different races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations and demographic profiles. These differences enrich our communities. Make the most of them.
3. **Get to know them** and see them for their strengths. They're smart and they're worthy of our support. By engaging youth, we can serve as role models and help them become contributing members of society.
4. **Tap into their talents** by getting them involved in neighbourhood activities that bring people together. Ask for their opinions and ideas. Give them the support they need.
5. **Work with young people** to prevent crime and make your neighbourhood a safer, more connected place. Empower them to identify and implement solutions, such as homework clubs, community events and safety initiatives.

To find out more about making your community a more connected place, visit Crime Prevention Ottawa's Neighbourhood Toolkit at crimepreventionottawa.ca/toolkit.

Adapted from the Look Deeper campaign, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council.