

## *Legal rights*

### **Tying rights to responsibilities**

America's system of justice is built on a belief in the equal importance of rights and responsibilities. By the time youth have contact with juvenile justice, the focus is on responsibility. They have broken the law and need to take responsibility for their actions.

### **Taking responsibility can be empowering**

In a context of justice, to take responsibility for personal action is an act of empowerment. But many young people experience it as the opposite. They feel victimized, rather than empowered by that process and resist being held accountable. One reason some youth resist taking responsibility for their actions is that they don't know the "rights" side of the equation.

### **Experience of unfairness**

They experience unfairness as a major theme in their lives – whether at the level of family, school or society - and don't have a sense of how to change that. Their perception may be validated by the grossly disproportionate representation of poor people and people of color within the juvenile justice system. (See page 4)

### **Responsibility coupled with activism**

Ripple Effects approach is to empower youth to take personal responsibility for their actions, and to strengthen their ability to act against injustice wherever they encounter it.

## Goals of intervention

Through this intervention, youth will:

- Understand their rights in the judicial process
- Take responsibility for their actions in the context of restorative justice
- Confront injustice where they find it
- Transform hostility into constructive civic engagement

## A suggested scope and sequence

### SKILL TOPICS

#### Assertiveness

Exercising rights  
Doing democracy  
Confronting injustice  
Making a complaint

#### Social values

Responsibility  
Justice  
Restorative Justice  
Respect – showing it

### CHALLENGE TOPICS

#### Arrest

#### Probation

#### Hospitalization (mental illness)

Anger  
Authority  
Depression  
Discrimination  
Mistakes  
Unfairness

**Rights, they're what you make of them**

Basic rights: life, liberty, pursuit of happiness

The right to life

Rights are what you're due by the nature of being human, by law, or by tradition.

In the United States, basic human rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are

Rights guaranteed by law

Some rights depend on age

You must be 18 years of age to VOTE!

What are some reasons people might NOT exercise rights like voting, or being treated equally? How does that affect the...

Check out these related topics: [standing up for a belief](#), [confronting injustice](#), [fairness](#), [justice](#)

case study info how to model apply it brain got it 1 got it 3