

### A realistic look at crime

Today, public pressure to see bullies receive serious consequences for their actions has led to charges being laid for incidents that 20 years ago would not have warranted police attention. These incidents become part of the official crime rate, pumping up youth crime in the process.

Sensationalized media coverage can make rare incidents often appear common, making public anxiety soar and increasing pressure to treat minor incidents as criminal.

Of course, no matter how minor the violence, crime is unacceptable. But it's important to keep the word "choice" in mind. As a community, we have a wide variety of options between tolerating behaviour and criminalizing it. A wise community comes together to consider solutions that not only react to crime, but also work actively to prevent it, and to give all kids the opportunities they deserve.

# I AM STRONG.



### Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council

The Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (CPC) believes that a **connected community is a safer community**. We're dedicated to engaging the community in the task of preventing crime, increasing safety, and fostering the well-being of everyone. Join with us in building a stronger, connected community.

The Council is a unique partnership between citizens, community groups and service providers, which represent the following community sectors:

- Youth Services
- Older Adult Services
- Neighbourhoods
- Recreation
- Community Based Justice
- Child Welfare
- Citizens
- Education
- Business
- Faith
- Family Violence Prevention
- Housing
- Newcomer Settlement
- Municipal Planning
- Public Health
- Mental Health
- Addiction
- Police
- Regional Council
- Social Services

*The work of the Crime Prevention Council is enriched by community efforts with partners throughout Waterloo Region.*



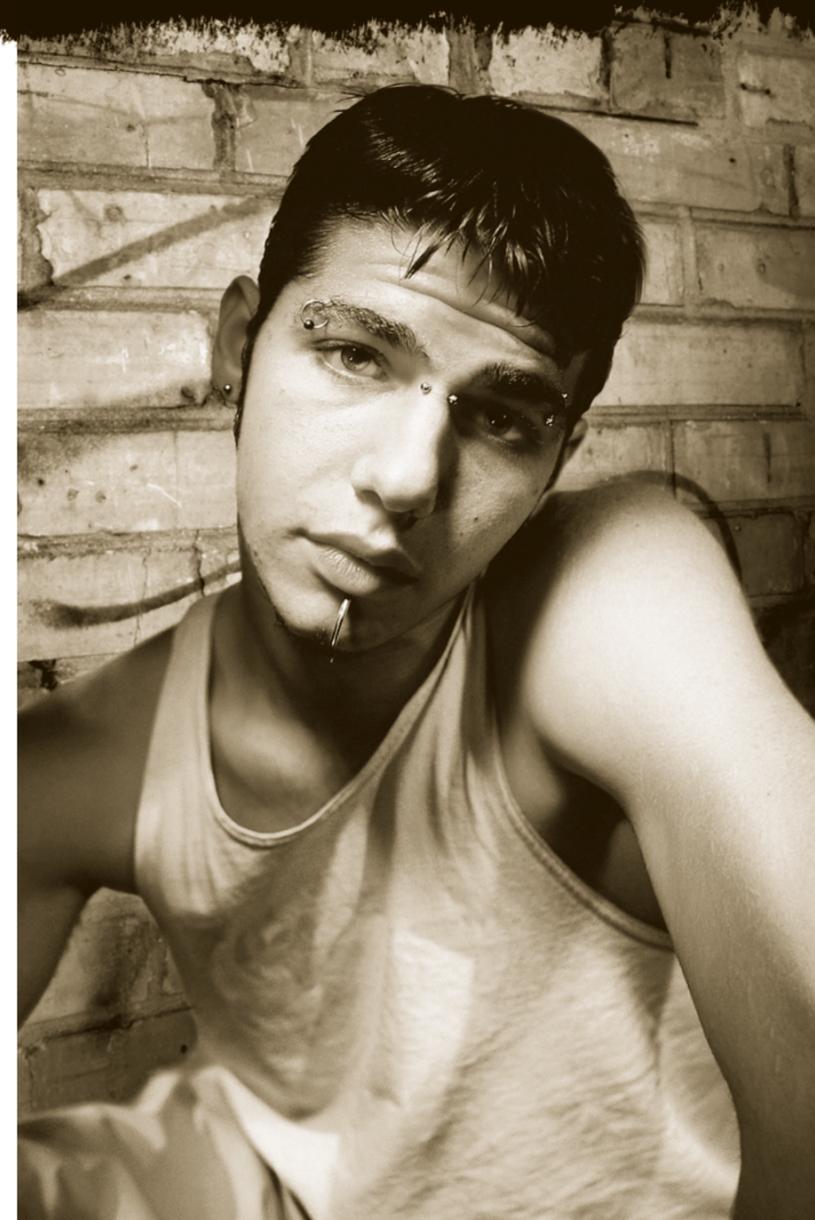
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Region of Waterloo

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# I AM WORTHY.



## Appearances are skin deep. Look deeper.

Labels hurt. They bruise self-esteem, create resentment, and block communication. And they aren't fair.

Labeling kids not only hurts our youth, but it also hurts our community. It builds barriers instead of connections between people. And it can lead to intolerance, racism, and prejudice.

Smart, strong communities ask more of their citizens. They ask for the time, understanding, and character it takes to embrace differences and open lines of communication. With a common purpose to live and react constructively and positively, we can build a better community for everyone to enjoy.

When you follow the crowd, labeling is easy. The challenge is to take a step back, think, and then choose a positive reaction. Challenge yourself to look deeper.

## The Look Deeper Campaign

Challenging a community's perceptions about youth, and then changing those perceptions. That's what the Look Deeper Campaign is all about.

Our goal? To make sure that we don't lose sight of who our children are and what they're capable of. To visibly value our children. And to ensure that public policy choices support their growth and development.

Essentially, we want you to look deeper at kids and at what people tell you about them. And we want to do our part to help them grow into contributing members of our community.

You'll recognize the familiar faces of I AM SMART, I AM STRONG, and I AM WORTHY from busboards, posters, newspaper ads, and TV.

At the Crime Prevention Council, we're working to get the message out that kids, like books, can never be judged by their covers.

## Crime prevention that works

For many communities, responding to and preventing crime has always been a priority. One of the best ways to do this is to channel energy and resources into removing the factors that contribute to crime — long before anyone becomes an offender or victim. When a crime has been committed, consequences must be meaningful and constructive — not destructive.

Like children, parents and caretakers need education and support too. When we have the right resources to work effectively with kids at risk, children become more resilient and resistant to crime.

Building a strong, smart, and caring community is our most effective crime prevention tool. This takes public investment, collective will, and an unshakable commitment to all of our children.

## How you can help

Research shows that children who grow up in hostile, punitive homes have trouble getting along with and helping others. The same is true of communities. Public anxieties about youth crime often lead to unfair and uneducated stereotypes.

You can make a difference. Get to know the youth in your neighbourhood. Join community efforts to engage their talents and opinions. Get involved in activities that show our kids that they matter.

## Make your mark



*The Look Deeper campaign has produced a series of bookmarks celebrating the diversity of youth. Contact us at 519-883-2304 to get your bookmark today.*



## Lead by example

*“Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and terrorize their teachers.” – Socrates 400 BCE*

From Ancient Greece to 21st century Canada, public anxiety about youth has always garnered unhealthy stereotypes. Although every child in our community today has skills, not all children have the resources to put these abilities to good use. To thrive, youth need to believe in themselves.

That's where adults come in. We have a special responsibility to our kids. By not allowing them to partake in the full rights of citizenship — like working full-time, accessing credit, voting, drinking, or making major life decisions — we recognize them as special citizens who require care and protection. Raising a child is a community effort.

Lead by example. Don't let fear or prejudice cloud your vision. The Look Deeper Campaign invites you to take a realistic look at your community's young people — so you can fully appreciate their accomplishments, respect their potential, and address their needs. And set an example for other community members to follow.

