



ARTICLE

Tips for Community Associations Concerned with Crime and Safety

If your community association has identified crime and safety as a priority but doesn't know where to start, here are some ideas to get you going.

1. **What's really going on?** Before you can address a problem, you need to know what the problem is. Do some background research to see what is actually happening. Are people reacting to a tragic event? Or is there a pattern of ongoing crime? Is this a generalized concern? Or is it very specific? Are a lot of people concerned? Or just one or two? You can find statistics for some crime types in "Crime Trends by City Ward" on the Ottawa Police Service website. Note that some crimes are never reported.
2. **Know your priorities.** Consider surveying your community to identify priorities. Are there ongoing disturbances? Are there concerns about isolated, vulnerable seniors? Different problems need different approaches. It's best to know what you are trying to prevent or address.
3. **Connect with your partners.** The people or organizations you will need to partner with to address the problem will depend on the issue. Some of the partners you will likely want to connect with include your local Community Police Officer (visit ottawapolice.ca for names and numbers), your local Community Health Resource Centre (visit coalitionottawa.ca), and your City partners through your local Councillor's office.
4. **Build community.** Think of events and projects like festivals, movies in the park and neighbourhood parties as the building blocks of community safety. Safe communities are connected communities, where neighbours get to know one another and help each other out.

5. **Beatify your environment.** A clean, graffiti-free community that people take pride in also makes for a safe community. A few ideas you can implement include projects like a community garden, a neighbourhood clean-up or adopting a park or a street. Make sure that the public spaces in your neighbourhood invite people to use them!
6. **Involve youth.** Young people are a big part of our communities. Getting them involved in neighbourhood events and activities can benefit everyone. Talk to them. After all, today's youth are tomorrow's leaders.
7. **Believe in 'people power!'** Have fun. Engage your neighbours. Encourage local leadership.
8. **Talk to Crime Prevention Ottawa.** We can offer advice or background information. Check out our website (crimepreventionottawa.ca), our online Neighbourhood Toolkit and our extensive list of publications to help you. Ask us for a Crime Prevention Ottawa presentation on building neighbourhood safety. Email us at cpo@ottawa.ca.