

# Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention

YFPI-Student Manual

*6th Edition, 2nd Printing-May 2023*



**FEMA**

FEMA/USFA/NFA  
YFPI-SM  
May 2023  
6th Edition, 2nd Printing

***Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention***



**FEMA**

# Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention

YFPI-Student Manual

*6th Edition, 2nd Printing-May 2023*



FEMA

**This Student Manual may contain material that is copyright protected. USFA has been granted a license to use this material only for NFA-sponsored course deliveries as part of the course materials, and it shall not be duplicated without consent of the copyright holder. States wishing to use these materials as part of state-sponsorship and/or third parties wishing to use these materials must obtain permission to use the copyright material(s) from the copyright holder prior to teaching the course.**

This page intentionally left blank.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Table of Contents.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	v
Course Description.....	vii
Course Goal.....	vii
Audience, Scope and Course Purpose.....	vii
Grading Methodology.....	vii
Grading Rubrics.....	ix
Schedule.....	xix
Firefighter Code of Ethics.....	xxiii
A Student Guide to End-of-Course Evaluations.....	xxv

**UNIT 1: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION..... SM 1-1**

- Appendix A: Glossary of Terms
- Appendix B: Case File Jacob Gantz, Incident Date: May 8
- Appendix C: Playing with Fire: Non-Structure Fires
- Appendix D: Playing with Fire: Structure Fires
- Appendix E: Structure Fires in Schools
- Appendix F: A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action
- Appendix G: A Brief History of Research on Youth Firesetting
- Appendix H: Table 1: Database Summary Description: Potential Sources of Youth Firesetting (and Community Risk Reduction) Related Data

**UNIT 2: WHO SETS FIRES AND WHY?..... SM 2-1**

- Appendix A: Commonly Seen Mental and Behavioral Health Conditions in Firesetting Youth
- Appendix B: Understanding Youth and Their Mental Health Diagnosis
- Appendix C: Sean’s Story: My Life Torn Apart by Firesetting
- Appendix D: ADD and Firesetting: The Connection
- Appendix E: What Are ACEs? And How Do They Relate to Toxic Stress?

**UNIT 3: COMPONENTS OF THE YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION PROCESS..... SM 3-1**

- Appendix A: Youth Fire Intervention Assessment Forms
- Appendix B: Using What We Know About Child Development To Enhance the Interviewing Process
- Appendix C: FireFactor<sup>2</sup>

**UNIT 4: ABRAXAS YOUTH CENTER..... SM 4-1**

- Appendix A: Abraxas Interview Form
- Appendix B: Abraxas a GeO Group Company, Resident Confidentiality Policy

**UNIT 5: EDUCATION AS A PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION COMPONENT..... SM 5-1**

- Appendix A: State of Minnesota Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Educational Materials
- Appendix B: FireFactor<sup>2</sup>: A Colorado Springs Fire Department Intervention Program

**UNIT 6: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION..... SM 6-1**

- Appendix A: Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Task Force
- Appendix B: Flowchart for Youth Firesetting Intervention Services
- Appendix C: Colorado Springs Fire Department Policies and Procedures
- Appendix D: Scarborough Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures
- Appendix E: Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT) Standard Operating Guidelines
- Appendix F: Local and Statewide Examples for Activity 6.1

Bibliography

Acronyms

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of any National Fire Academy (NFA) course is a complex process aimed at providing students with the best possible learning opportunity we can deliver.

There are many players in course development, each of whom plays an equally important part in its success. We want to acknowledge their participation and contribution to this effort and extend our heartfelt thanks for making this quality product.

The following people participated in the creation of this course:

Michael Weller  
Training Specialist  
U.S. Fire Administration, National Fire Academy  
Emmitsburg, Maryland

Timothy Moran  
Instructional Systems Specialist  
U.S. Fire Administration, National Fire Academy  
Emmitsburg, Maryland

Laura Billon  
Subject Matter Expert  
California

Kathy Hook  
Subject Matter Expert  
Colorado

Karla Klas  
Subject Matter Expert  
Michigan

Kathi Osmonson  
Subject Matter Expert  
Minnesota

Don Porth  
Subject Matter Expert  
Oregon

Rachel Shaw  
Instructional Systems Designer  
Maryland

This page intentionally left blank.



**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This six-day “Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention” (YFPI) (R/N0629) course provides students with knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) necessary to identify children and adolescents involved in firesetting. The course addresses how to establish programs to meet the needs of these youths and their families. KSAs essential to meet the Youth Firesetting Intervention Professional Standard are part of the current National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1035, *Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist and Youth Firesetter Program Manager Professional Qualifications* and are discussed and practiced throughout the course.

**COURSE GOAL**

The goal of this course is to provide students with the KSAs necessary to identify children and adolescents involved in firesetting. The course addresses how to establish programs to meet the needs of these youths and their families.

**AUDIENCE, SCOPE AND COURSE PURPOSE**

The target audience of the YFPI course consists of individuals with responsibilities related to functions associated with a youth firesetting intervention program for their agency and/or their community. To encourage an integrated, whole-community approach, mental and behavioral health professionals, social services staff, law enforcement, juvenile justice and probation personnel, fire investigators, health care professionals, school representatives, and educators are included in the target audience for this course.

In addition, students should have completed the following as part of their pre-course assignment prior to attending the in-person course:

- NFA Q0841: “Introduction to Strategic Community Risk Reduction” (ISCRR).
- NFA Q0843: “Introduction to Community Risk Assessment” (ICRA).
- Oklahoma State University ResourceOne one-hour self-study course.
- Read the “Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention” book by Fire Protection Publications (optional).

**GRADING METHODOLOGY**

**Course grade**

The student’s final grade will be computed as follows:

<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Points toward course total of 460</b>
Pre-Course Assignment	60
Unit 3 Writing Assignment: Simple Versus Complex Firesetting Cases	100
Unit 4: Writing Assignment: Abraxas Interview Essay	100
Unit 6: Writing Assignment: Developing a Draft Action/Evaluation Plan: Home Community Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program	100
Unit 6: Persuasive Speech — Moving Your Vision Forward	100

---

**YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

---

The required performance to successfully complete the course is attained by completing the class with a letter grade of “C” or higher.

<b>Letter grade</b>	<b>Point range</b>
A	460-414
B	413-368
C	367-322
F	321 or lower

**GRADING RUBRICS**

**PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT — SCORING RUBRIC**

**Directions:** Your pre-course assignment will be graded based on this rubric, which you may use as a guide when planning and completing that work.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Requirements met</b>	<b>Requirements not met</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Step 1: Complete two self-study courses on community risk reduction.</b>	(25 pts.) Courses were completed and certificates provided to instructor.	(0 pts.) Courses were not completed.	
<b>Step 2: Complete IFSTA self-study course.</b>	(20 pts.) Course was completed and certificate provided to instructor.	(0 pts.) Course was not completed.	
<b>Step 5: Respond to directives and add to your pre-course portfolio.</b>	(15 pts.) Written responses completed and saved in portfolio.	(0 pts.) Written responses not completed.	
<b>Total score:</b>			

This page intentionally left blank.

**ACTIVITY 3.4**

**SIMPLE VERSUS COMPLEX FIRESETTING CASES — SCORING RUBRIC**

**Directions:** Your essay will be graded based on this rubric, which you may use as a guide when planning and completing that work. Check it prior to submitting your essay.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Needs improvement</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Relevant details that lead to the identification of a "simple" firesetting case (contributing factors, typologies and motivations).</b>	(25 pts.) Clear, accurate and detailed description of contributing factors that lead to the identification of a "simple" firesetting case.	(20 pts.) Contributing factors that lead to the identification of a "simple" firesetting case are identified accurately but lack clarity and sufficient detail.	(15 pts.) Contributing factors that lead to the identification of a "simple" firesetting case are not identified OR are not well-defined and not accurate.	
<b>Application of common interventions for a "simple" firesetting case.</b>	(25 pts.) Clear, accurate and detailed description of common interventions for a "simple" firesetting case.	(20 pts.) Application of a common intervention for a "simple" firesetting case is identified accurately but lacks clarity and sufficient detail.	(15 pts.) Application of a common intervention for a "simple" firesetting case is not identified OR is not well-defined and not accurate.	
<b>Relevant details that lead to the identification of a "complex" firesetting case (contributing factors, typologies and motivations).</b>	(25 pts.) Clear, accurate and detailed description of contributing factors that lead to the identification of a "complex" firesetting case.	(20 pts.) Contributing factors that lead to the identification of a "complex" firesetting case are identified accurately but lack clarity and sufficient detail.	(15 pts.) Contributing factors that lead to the identification of a "complex" firesetting case are not identified OR are not well-defined and not accurate.	
<b>Application of common interventions for a "complex" firesetting case.</b>	(25 pts.) Clear, accurate and detailed description of common interventions for a "complex" firesetting case.	(20 pts.) Application of a common intervention for a "complex" firesetting case is identified accurately but lacks clarity and sufficient detail.	(15 pts.) Application of a common intervention for a "complex" firesetting case is not identified OR is not well-defined and not accurate.	
<b>Total score:</b>				

This page intentionally left blank.

**ACTIVITY 4.2**

**ABRAXAS INTERVIEW ESSAY — SCORING RUBRIC**

**Directions:** Your essay will be graded based on this rubric, which you may use as a guide when planning and completing that work. Check it prior to submitting your essay.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Needs improvement</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Summary of the interview and background information on youth and their family.</b>	(20 pts.) Summary was well-detailed, included thorough background on the youth and family, and provided an overview of the discoveries made throughout the interview.	(15 pts.) Summary provided background on the youth and family, as well as discoveries made throughout the interview, but lacked important details.	(10 pts.) Insufficient summary of the interview, as well as background on the youth and family.	
<b>Breakdown of firesetting history.</b>	(20 pts.) Clearly explained the firesetting history of interviewee.	(15 pts.) Satisfactorily explained the firesetting history of interviewee.	(10 pts.) Insufficiently explained the firesetting history of interviewee.	
<b>Examples supporting progression of typologies.</b>	(20 pts.) Clearly identified examples that support the progression of typologies.	(15 pts.) Satisfactorily identified examples that support the progression of typologies.	(10 pts.) Failed to identify examples that support the progression of typologies.	
<b>Identification and description of ACEs.</b>	(20 pts.) Clearly identified and described ACEs.	(15 pts.) Vaguely identified and described most or some ACEs.	(10 pts.) Failed to identify or describe some ACEs.	
<b>Identification of prevention and mitigation actions.</b>	(20 pts.) Clearly identified prevention and mitigation actions.	(15 pts.) Identified some prevention and mitigation actions.	(10 pts.) Failed to identify prevention and mitigation actions.	
<b>Total score:</b>				

This page intentionally left blank.



**ACTIVITY 6.1, PART 4**

**DEVELOPING A DRAFT ACTION/EVALUATION PLAN: HOME COMMUNITY YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM — SCORING RUBRIC**

**Directions:** Your assignment will be graded based on this rubric, which you may use as a guide when planning and completing that work. Check it prior to submitting to your instructors.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Needs improvement</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Summary of existing state of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.</b>	(10 pts.) Author clearly and thoroughly explained the condition of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program (1-2 paragraphs).	(8 pts.) Author provided a summary of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's existing state, but it lacked detail.	(6 pts.) Author did not provide a sufficient summary of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's existing state.	
<b>Development of an aspired state vision of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.</b>	(10 pts.) Author clearly and thoroughly described the aspired state vision of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.	(8 pts.) Author described the aspired state vision of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, but it lacked detail.	(6 pts.) Author did not provide a sufficient description of an aspired state vision for their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.	
<b>Identification of organization's resources as they pertain to wisdom, wealth and work (three W's).</b>	(10 pts.) Author identified and made strong connections between their organization's resources and the three W's.	(8 pts.) Author identified and made some connections between their organization's resources and the three W's.	(6 pts.) Author did not sufficiently identify nor make connections between their organization's resources and the three W's.	
<b>Identification of primary stakeholders, rationale for selection and contribution of the three W's.</b>	(15 pts.) Author identified primary stakeholders and offered strong rationale for their selection as well as their contribution of the three W's.	(10 pts.) Author identified primary stakeholders and offered some rationale for their selection and their contribution of the three W's.	(6 pts.) Author did not sufficiently identify primary stakeholders nor offer rationale for their selection and their contribution of the three W's.	

**YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

<p><b>Identification of secondary stakeholders, rationale for selection and contribution of the three W's.</b></p>	<p>(10 pts.) Author identified secondary stakeholders and offered strong rationale for their selection as well as their contribution of the three W's.</p>	<p>(8 pts.) Author identified secondary stakeholders and offered some rationale for their selection and their contribution of the three W's.</p>	<p>(6 pts.) Author did not sufficiently identify secondary stakeholders nor offer rationale for their selection and their contribution of the three W's.</p>	
<p><b>Identification of local resources and recommendations for mitigating any identified lack of resources.</b></p>	<p>(10 pts.) Author identified local resources and provided strong, logical recommendations to mitigate a lack of identified resources.</p>	<p>(8 pts.) Author identified local resources and provided some, mostly logical recommendations to mitigate a lack of identified resources.</p>	<p>(6 pts.) Author did not sufficiently identify local resources or provide recommendations to mitigate a lack of identified resources.</p>	
<p><b>Description of existing or aspired state of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components and administrative tools.</b></p>	<p>(10 pts.) Author provided a thorough, detailed description of existing or aspired state of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components and administrative tools.</p>	<p>(8 pts.) Author provided a somewhat detailed description of existing or aspired state of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components and administrative tools.</p>	<p>(6 pts.) Author did not sufficiently provide a detailed description of existing or aspired state of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components and administrative tools.</p>	
<p><b>Identification of at least 15 action items as part of planning process, which include responsible party and timeframe.</b></p>	<p>(15 pts.) Author clearly identified 15 action items as part of planning process, including responsible party and timeframe.</p>	<p>(10 pts.) Author identified fewer than 15 action items as part of planning process, including responsible party and timeframe.</p>	<p>(6 pts.) Author did not sufficiently identify action items as part of planning process, nor responsible party and timeframe.</p>	
<p><b>Identification of methods for tracking action item progress.</b></p>	<p>(10 pts.) Author clearly identified methods for tracking action item progress.</p>	<p>(8 pts.) Author satisfactorily identified methods for tracking action item progress.</p>	<p>(6 pts.) Author did not sufficiently provide methods for tracking action item progress.</p>	
<p><b>Total Score:</b></p>				

**ACTIVITY 6.2**

**PERSUASIVE SPEECH — MOVING YOUR VISION FORWARD — SCORING RUBRIC**

**Directions:** Your assignment will be graded based on this rubric. You may use this rubric as a guide when completing your work. Check it again before presenting.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Summary of existing state of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.</b>	(20 pts.) Presenter clearly and concisely explained the condition of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.	(15 pts.) Presenter provided a summary of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's existing state, which either lacked detail or was too lengthy.	(10 pts.) Presenter did not provide a sufficient summary of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's existing state.	
<b>Summary of an aspired state vision of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.</b>	(20 pts.) Presenter clearly and concisely described the aspired state vision of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.	(15 pts.) Presenter described the aspired state vision of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, which either lacked detail or was too lengthy.	(10 pts.) Presenter did not provide a sufficient description of an aspired state vision for their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.	
<b>Explanation of the importance of moving from the current state to the aspired state.</b>	(20 pts.) Presenter made a convincing argument justifying needed changes or improvements.	(15 pts.) Presenter made a reasonable argument justifying needed changes or improvements but left out key points.	(10 pts.) Presenter did not sufficiently justify needed changes or improvements.	
<b>Summary of the action plan for getting started.</b>	(20 pts.) Presenter clearly and concisely summarized their action plan for getting started.	(15 pts.) Presenter provided a summary of their action plan, which either lacked detail or was too lengthy.	(10 pts.) Presenter did not sufficiently summarize their action plan for getting started.	
<b>A conclusion that includes a request for the decision-maker.</b>	(20 pts.) Presenter included a clear and concise request for the decision-maker.	(15 pts.) Presenter included a request for the decision-maker, which either lacked clarity or was too lengthy.	(10 pts.) Presenter did not include a distinct request for the decision-maker.	
<b>Total Score:</b>				

This page intentionally left blank.

**YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

**SCHEDULE**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>DAY 2</b>
8:00 – 10:00	Introduction  Unit 1: A Strategic Approach to Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention	Recap of Day 1  Activity 2.3: Strategies for Supporting Behavioral and Mental Health Needs
10:00 – 10:15	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
10:15 – 12:00	Activity 1.1: Comparing Local Youth Firesetting Problems  Activity 1.2: Writing Your Problem Statement and Goal  Unit 1: A Strategic Approach to Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention (cont'd)	Unit 3: Components of the Youth Firesetting Intervention Process  Activity 3.1: Creating a Positive Interview/ Screening Environment  Unit 3: Components of the Youth Firesetting Intervention Process (cont'd)  Activity 3.2: Levels of Risk
12:00 – 1:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>	<i>Lunch Break</i>
1:00 – 2:00	Unit 2: Who Sets Fires and Why?  Activity 2.1: Five Common Typologies of Youth Firesetting Behavior	Unit 3: Components of the Youth Firesetting Intervention Process (cont'd)  Activity 3.3: Case Study Analysis
2:00 – 2:15	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
2:15 – 3:15	Unit 2: Who Sets Fires and Why? (cont'd)  Activity 2.2: Classifying Typologies of Youth Firesetting	Unit 3: Components of the Youth Firesetting Intervention Process (cont'd)  Activity 3.4: Simple Versus Complex Firesetting Cases
3:15 – 3:30	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
3:30 – 5:00	Unit 2: Who Sets Fires and Why? (cont'd)	Unit 3: Components of the Youth Firesetting Intervention Process (cont'd)  Activity 3.4: Simple Versus Complex Firesetting Cases (after class activity)

Note: This schedule is subject to modification by the instructors and approved by the training specialist.

**YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>DAY 4</b>
8:00 – 10:00	Recap of Day 2 Unit 5: Education as a Prevention and Intervention Component Activity 5.1: Education as Primary Prevention	Recap of Day 3 Unit 4: Abraxas Youth Center
10:00 – 10:15	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
10:15 – 12:00	Unit 5: Education as a Prevention and Intervention Component (cont'd) Activity 5.2: Comparing Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Educational Interventions	Activity 4.1: Abraxas Youth Center
12:00 – 1:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>	<i>Lunch Break</i>
1:00 – 2:00	Unit 5: Education as a Prevention and Intervention Component (cont'd) Activity 5.3: Enhancing Your Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program's Educational Interventions	Activity 4.1: Abraxas Youth Center (cont'd)
2:00 – 2:15	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
2:15 – 3:15	Unit 5: Education as a Prevention and Intervention Component (cont'd) Activity 5.4: Develop an Educational Intervention Lesson Outline	Activity 4.1: Abraxas Youth Center (cont'd)
3:15 – 3:30	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
3:30 – 5:00	Unit 5: Education as a Prevention and Intervention Component (cont'd) Activity 5.4: Develop an Educational Intervention Lesson Outline (cont'd)	Unit 4: Abraxas Youth Center (cont'd) Activity 4.2: Abraxas Interview Essay (After class activity)

**YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>DAY 5</b>	<b>DAY 6</b>
8:00 – 10:00	<p>Recap of Day 4</p> <p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation</p> <p>Activity 6.1, Part 1: Explaining Your Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program’s Existing State and Developing a Vision for the Future</p>	<p>Recap of Day 5</p> <p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation (cont’d)</p>
10:00 – 10:15	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
10:15 – 12:00	<p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation (cont’d)</p> <p>Activity 6.1, Part 2: Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Task Force Composition — Building or Enhancing Your Team</p>	<p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation (cont’d)</p>
12:00 – 1:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>	<i>Lunch Break</i>
1:00 – 2:00	<p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation (cont’d)</p>	<p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation (cont’d)</p>
2:00 – 2:15	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
2:15 – 3:15	<p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation (cont’d)</p> <p>Activity 6.1, Part 3: Evaluating and/or Proposing Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Components and Administrative Tools</p>	<p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation (cont’d)</p> <p>Activity 6.1, Part 4: Developing a Draft Action/Evaluation Plan: Home Community Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program</p>
3:15 – 3:30	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
3:30 – 5:00	<p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation (cont’d)</p> <p>Activity 6.1, Part 3: Evaluating and/or Proposing Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Components and Administrative Tools (cont’d)</p>	<p>Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation (cont’d)</p> <p>Activity 6.1, Part 4: Developing a Draft Action/Evaluation Plan: Home Community Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program (cont’d)</p> <p>Activity 6.2: Persuasive Speech — Moving Your Vision Forward</p>

This page intentionally left blank.



# FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS

## Background

The Fire Service is a noble calling, one which is founded on mutual respect and trust between firefighters and the citizens they serve. To ensure the continuing integrity of the Fire Service, the highest standards of ethical conduct must be maintained at all times.

Developed in response to the publication of the Fire Service Reputation Management White Paper, the purpose of this National Firefighter Code of Ethics is to establish criteria that encourages fire service personnel to promote a culture of ethical integrity and high standards of professionalism in our field. The broad scope of this recommended Code of Ethics is intended to mitigate and negate situations that may result in embarrassment and waning of public support for what has historically been a highly respected profession.

Ethics comes from the Greek word ethos, meaning character. Character is not necessarily defined by how a person behaves when conditions are optimal and life is good. It is easy to take the high road when the path is paved and obstacles are few or non-existent. Character is also defined by decisions made under pressure, when no one is looking, when the road contains land mines, and the way is obscured. As members of the Fire Service, we share a responsibility to project an ethical character of professionalism, integrity, compassion, loyalty and honesty in all that we do, all of the time.

We need to accept this ethics challenge and be truly willing to maintain a culture that is consistent with the expectations outlined in this document. By doing so, we can create a legacy that validates and sustains the distinguished Fire Service institution, and at the same time ensure that we leave the Fire Service in better condition than when we arrived.



# FIREFIGHTER CODE OF ETHICS

I understand that I have the responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that reflects proper ethical behavior and integrity. In so doing, I will help foster a continuing positive public perception of the fire service. Therefore, I pledge the following...

- Always conduct myself, on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively on myself, my department and the fire service in general.
- Accept responsibility for my actions and for the consequences of my actions.
- Support the concept of fairness and the value of diverse thoughts and opinions.
- Avoid situations that would adversely affect the credibility or public perception of the fire service profession.
- Be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or other dishonest acts that compromise the integrity of the fire service.
- Conduct my personal affairs in a manner that does not improperly influence the performance of my duties, or bring discredit to my organization.
- Be respectful and conscious of each member's safety and welfare.
- Recognize that I serve in a position of public trust that requires stewardship in the honest and efficient use of publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles and equipment and that these are protected from misuse and theft.
- Exercise professionalism, competence, respect and loyalty in the performance of my duties and use information, confidential or otherwise, gained by virtue of my position, only to benefit those I am entrusted to serve.
- Avoid financial investments, outside employment, outside business interests or activities that conflict with or are enhanced by my official position or have the potential to create the perception of impropriety.
- Never propose or accept personal rewards, special privileges, benefits, advancement, honors or gifts that may create a conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof.
- Never engage in activities involving alcohol or other substance use or abuse that can impair my mental state or the performance of my duties and compromise safety.
- Never discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, medical condition or handicap.
- Never harass, intimidate or threaten fellow members of the service or the public and stop or report the actions of other firefighters who engage in such behaviors.
- Responsibly use social networking, electronic communications, or other media technology opportunities in a manner that does not discredit, dishonor or embarrass my organization, the fire service and the public. I also understand that failure to resolve or report inappropriate use of this media equates to condoning this behavior.

Developed by the National Society of Executive Fire Officers

## A Student Guide to End-of-course Evaluations

**Say What You Mean ...**

### Ten Things You Can Do to Improve the National Fire Academy

The National Fire Academy takes its course evaluations very seriously. Your comments and suggestions enable us to improve your learning experience.

Unfortunately, we often get end-of-course comments like these that are vague and, therefore, not actionable. We know you are trying to keep your answers short, but the more specific you can be, the better we can respond.



Actual quotes from student evaluations:	Examples of specific, actionable comments that would help us improve the course:
1 "Update the materials."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The (ABC) fire video is out-of-date because of the dangerous tactics it demonstrates. The available (XYZ) video shows current practices.</li> <li>The student manual references building codes that are 12 years old.</li> </ul>
2 "We want an advanced class in (fill in the blank)."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We would like a class that enables us to calculate energy transfer rates resulting from exposure fires.</li> <li>We would like a class that provides one-on-one workplace harassment counseling practice exercises.</li> </ul>
3 "More activities."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An activity where students can physically measure the area of sprinkler coverage would improve understanding of the concept.</li> <li>Not all students were able to fill all ICS positions in the exercises. Add more exercises so all students can participate.</li> </ul>
4 "A longer course."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The class should be increased by one hour per day to enable all students to participate in exercises.</li> <li>The class should be increased by two days so that all group presentations can be peer evaluated and have written abstracts.</li> </ul>
5 "Readable plans."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plans should be enlarged to 11 by 17 and provided with an accurate scale.</li> <li>My plan set was blurry, which caused the dotted lines to be interpreted as solid lines.</li> </ul>
6 "Better student guide organization," "manual did not coincide with slides."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The slide sequence in Unit 4 did not align with the content in the student manual from slides 4-16 through 4-21.</li> <li>The instructor added slides in Unit 4 that were not in my student manual.</li> </ul>
7 "Dry in spots."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The instructor/activity should have used student group activities rather than lecture to explain Maslow's Hierarchy.</li> <li>Create a pre-course reading on symbiotic personal relationships rather than trying to lecture on them in class.</li> </ul>
8 "More visual aids."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The text description of V-patterns did not provide three-dimensional views. More photographs or drawings would help me imagine the pattern.</li> <li>There was a video clip on NBC News (date) that summarized the topic very well.</li> </ul>
9 "Re-evaluate pre-course assignments."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pre-course assignments were not discussed or referenced in class. Either connect them to the course content or delete them.</li> <li>The pre-course assignments on ICS could be reduced to a one-page job aid rather than a 25-page reading.</li> </ul>
10 "A better understanding of NIMS."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The instructor did not explain the connection between NIMS and ICS.</li> <li>The student manual needs an illustrated guide to NIMS.</li> </ul>

This page intentionally left blank.

# **UNIT 1: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

## **TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

*The students will be able to:*



- 1.1 *Explain why the prevention and intervention of youth firesetting demands an integrated, community-based approach.*

## **ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

*The students will be able to:*

- 1.1 *Relate the components of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program with the strategic community risk reduction process.*
  - 1.2 *Explain the appropriate usage of terminology related to youth firesetting.*
  - 1.3 *Estimate the sociological impacts associated with youth-set fires.*
  - 1.4 *Explain the national youth firesetting problem and emerging trends.*
  - 1.5 *Distinguish relevant and credible data sources for exploring the youth firesetting problem.*
  - 1.6 *Evaluate the extent of the community's youth firesetting problem given a combination of quantitative and qualitative service demand data.*
  - 1.7 *Develop a problem statement that frames your local youth firesetting problem.*
-

This page intentionally left blank.

---

**UNIT 1:  
A STRATEGIC APPROACH  
TO YOUTH FIRESETTING  
PREVENTION AND  
INTERVENTION**

Slide 1-1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

---

Explain why the prevention and intervention of youth firesetting demands an integrated, community-based approach.

Slide 1-2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

---

- Relate the components of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program with the strategic community risk reduction process.
- Explain the appropriate usage of terminology related to youth firesetting.

Slide 1-3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Estimate the sociological impacts associated with youth-set fires.
- Explain the national youth firesetting problem and emerging trends.
- Distinguish relevant and credible data sources for exploring the youth firesetting problem.

Slide 1-4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Evaluate the extent of the community's youth firesetting problem given a combination of quantitative and qualitative service demand data.
- Develop a problem statement that frames your local youth firesetting problem.

Slide 1-5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**I. REVIEW OF PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT**

**RECAP PRE-COURSE WORK**

- National Fire Academy (NFA) and International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) self-study courses.
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports and NFPA 1035, *Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist and Youth Firesetter Program Manager Professional Qualifications*.
- Research on youth firesetting.
- Case file of youth firesetting incident.
- Your youth firesetting issues/actions.

See an instructor on breaks to submit material for a grade.

Slide 1-6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A. Pre-course work Step 1.**



1. Completion of National Fire Academy’s (NFA’s) “Introduction to Strategic Community Risk Reduction” (ISCRR) online self-study course.
  2. Completion of NFA’s “Introduction to Community Risk Assessment” (ICRA) online self-study course.
- B. Pre-course work Step 2: Completion of International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA)/ ResourceOne’s introductory course on “Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention” online self-study.
- C. Pre-course work Step 3.
1. Review National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports:
    - a. “Playing with Fire: Structures.”
    - b. “Playing with Fire: Non-Structures.”
    - c. “Structure Fires in Schools.”
  2. Review of the Jacob Gantz complete youth firesetting case file.
  3. Review of “A Brief History of Research on Youth Firesetting.”
- C. Pre-course work Part 4: Evaluation of your local youth firesetting problem, what is being done to address it, and the current condition of your youth firesetting program if you have one.

**II. STRATEGIC COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION**

<p><b>STRATEGIC COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION</b></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Old reference: “pub ed.”</li><li>• Evolution to: “strategic in nature.”</li><li>• Now and future: “Whole Community Integrated Risk Management (WCIRM).”</li></ul> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Slide 1-7</p>
--

---

---

---

---

---

---

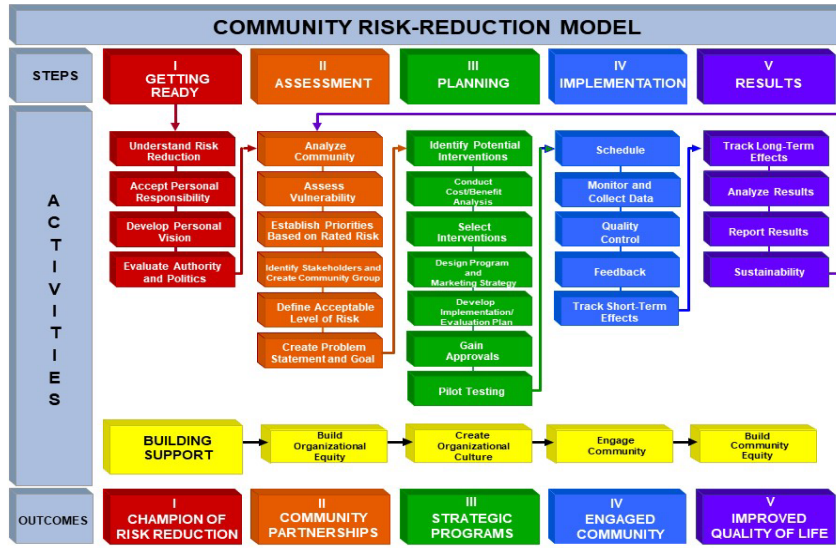
---

---

---

---

# STRATEGIC COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION (cont'd)



[Long Description](#)

Slide 1-8

What is strategic community risk reduction today?

- A. There is a considerable difference between the old term “pub ed” and the modern-day term of strategic community risk reduction.
- B. Strategic community risk reduction ties into the larger scope of Whole Community Integrated Risk Management (WCIRM). The concept of WCIRM is simple:
  1. Effective prevention and mitigation of unwanted events requires support from all facets of both public and private sectors, including the citizens that comprise a community.
  2. In summation, it takes a “village” to be successful in risk reduction.

- C. The online prerequisite course ISCRRL provided an excellent foundation to the bigger-picture process of WCIRM. For community risk reduction to be considered strategic, it must be data-driven, well-planned, focused, supported and evaluated.
- D. Now is an excellent time to connect what you have learned about the process of strategic risk reduction in general to how it applies to youth firesetting prevention and intervention.

\_\_\_\_\_

If an organization is truly practicing strategic community risk reduction, what actions will they perform and what outcomes will you likely see?

Slide 1-9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_

If an organization is truly approaching youth firesetting prevention and intervention in a strategic manner, how do each of the steps of this model apply to youth firesetting prevention and intervention?

Slide 1-10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

III. LEVELS OF PREVENTION

What are the three levels of prevention, and what is each one's purpose?

Slide 1-11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. **Primary prevention** focuses on keeping an unwanted event from occurring.
- B. **Secondary prevention** is responding to an incident that has already taken place.
- C. **Tertiary prevention** involves rehabilitating a person or rebuilding something that has been damaged by an incident.

How can each level be applied to the prevention and intervention of youth firesetting?

- Primary.
- Secondary.
- Tertiary.

Slide 1-12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- D. **Primary prevention** is all the activities designed to prevent an event from happening. Primary prevention is designed to teach individuals what to do so that an event that could cause property damage, injury or death does not happen at all.
  - 1. Examples of primary prevention are community-based education programs, engineering to prevent events or enforcement to prevent events (e.g., bans on fireworks, restricted use for certain ages, etc.).

2. For youth firesetting prevention and intervention, engineering a lighter design to lessen the chance of child activation, legislation to determine the age of purchase for ignition devices, education to youth about dangers and/or appropriate uses of fire as regular coursework.

E. **Secondary prevention** seeks to change or modify events and/or behaviors to reduce the severity of the event. Secondary prevention also targets groups that have demonstrated behaviors that place them at risk from harm. Secondary prevention provides mitigation of an event that has taken place to reduce the severity and long-term adverse effects.

Examples include:

1. Responding to an emergency incident.
2. Responding to a youth firesetting event endeavors to acknowledge the incident and intervene to prevent further firesetting behavior.

F. **Tertiary prevention** seeks to reduce the negative impact of an event over a long-term span of time. Its goal is to prevent complications and/or work with case management/rehabilitation regarding an event.

Examples include:

1. Recovery services for people displaced from a fire incident or receiving long-term care for medical or rehabilitation purposes.
2. Treatment for youth firesetting behaviors that include intensive treatment/therapies or ongoing educational and environmental consideration to ensure the behavior remains muted.

G. If the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program is focused on segments of the youth firesetting population (e.g., adjudicated youth), it may be of secondary benefit in discouraging future criminal behavior.

H. As a reactionary program (activated after a youth has set a fire), it can only expect to prevent future firesetting behavior, not to have impacted the incident that took place.

I. Youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs can be a significant aid in tertiary prevention by providing ongoing services or helping direct youth to programs to meet the youth/family needs. Long-term tertiary prevention activities involving the family unit are imperative. These can take days, weeks or months to resolve or address.

- J. The fire service can and does focus on the fire safety and consequences of fire misuse, but many other community partners must be involved in a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program for it to be successful.

#### **IV. TYPES OF PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS**

- A. As part of the online self-study course, students learned about types of prevention interventions, most known as the five E’s.
- B. While each type of intervention can function independently of the others, the most effective outcomes are realized when they are combined into an integrated strategy.

---

What are the five E’s, and why is their integrated use a best practice strategy in community risk reduction?

Slide 1-13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TYPES OF PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS**

---

- Education.
- Engineering.
- Enforcement.
- Economic incentives.
- Emergency response.

Slide 1-14

1. **Education:** This is the use of instructional methods to modify the knowledge or behavior of the person who is the target of the instruction. The knowledge gain or behavior change must be measurable to demonstrate change. This is distinctly different than public relations or awareness campaigns that can provide information but are normally not measurable.

2. **Engineering:** This is the effort made to modify an environment or device to enhance safety. Engineering is particularly useful when human behavior is difficult to overcome. Engineering can be done when an environment or device is manufactured, or after it is in use by the consumer. During this intervention, emergency escape planning can be done, as well as installing smoke alarms or removing ignition sources.
3. **Enforcement:** This utilizes compliance with laws, fire codes and other legal means to encourage and support appropriate behaviors. Enforcement can be a nonlegal process as well, such as a school suspension or withdrawal of privileges in the home. It is important that the rules of compliance be understood for this to be an effective strategy.
4. **Economic incentives:** These connect unsafe or illegal behaviors with financial (dis)incentives. Disincentives, such as fines and restitution, may require legal leverage to consistently apply. Incentives, such as rewards for appropriate behavior or assistance in achieving the level of operation (safety) expected can be more easily conducted without legal intervention.
5. **Emergency response:** This refers to an adequately staffed, equipped and trained cadre of responders to mitigate emergency incidents when they occur. Emergency response ordinarily results in greater risk before it activates, leaving persons at risk in the interim.

---

How can integration of the five E's be applied to both prevent and intervene with youth firesetting?

Slide 1-15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

C. Applying the five E's to youth firesetting:

1. **Education** is the foundation of prevention. A youth firesetting program should include school and community-based education to prevent youth firesetting incidents. As we know, knowledge is power, and we can **empower** our youths.

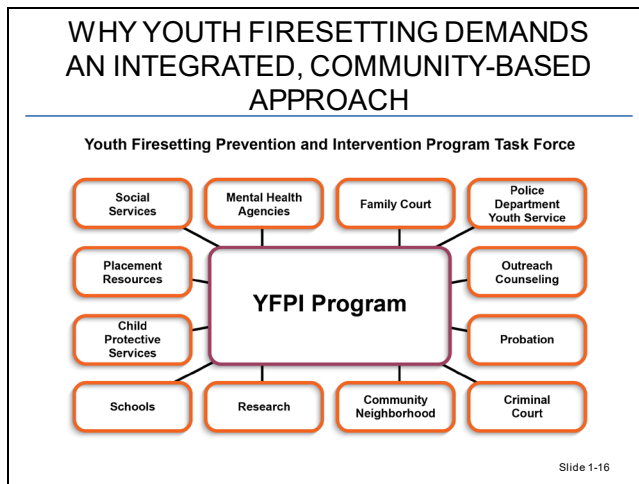
To change behavior related to a health and safety perspective, a person must be aware of and understand a risk issue; believe the threat is real and either they or their loved ones are in danger; view the risk as being at an unacceptable level; know how the risk issue develops and what they must do to prevent it; have the knowledge and resources for prevention; and receive feedback on their actions.

2. **Engineering** can include product modification (smoke alarms, child-resistant lighters, etc.) and modification to the living environment such as safe storage of ignition materials and using electric candles instead of flame-lit candles.
3. **Enforcement** actions include imposing fines, imprisonment or restitution by the courts for violating laws. Schools can also suspend or expel youth for using or carrying fire tools in the school. At home, caregivers and parents can apply and enforce rules when behavior is not in alignment with the understood rules.
4. **Economic incentives** can include monetary or material rewards for positive behavior or imposing fines for continued firesetting behavior.
5. **Emergency response** can include a timely response by interventionists to mitigate and prevent future firesetting behavior in addition to emergency fire department response to the firesetting incident itself.

**V. YOUTH FIRESETTING DEMANDS AN INTEGRATED, COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH**

- A. Using an integrated, community-based approach for youth firesetting prevention and intervention.

Just as integration of the five E's is a best practice, so is using an integrated, community-based approach to the prevention and intervention of youth firesetting.



---

---

---

---

---

---

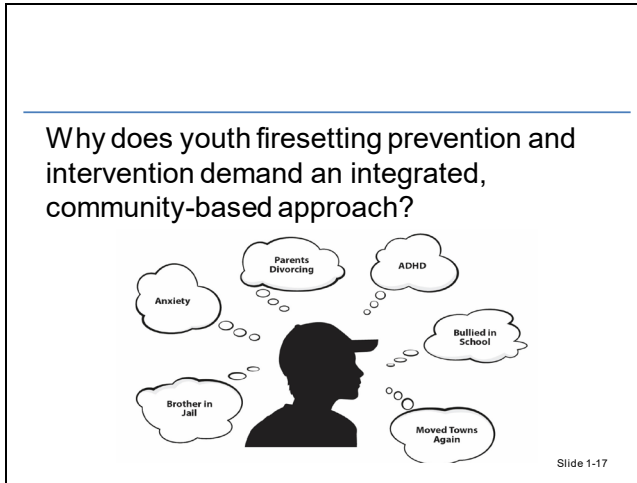
---

---

---

---





---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

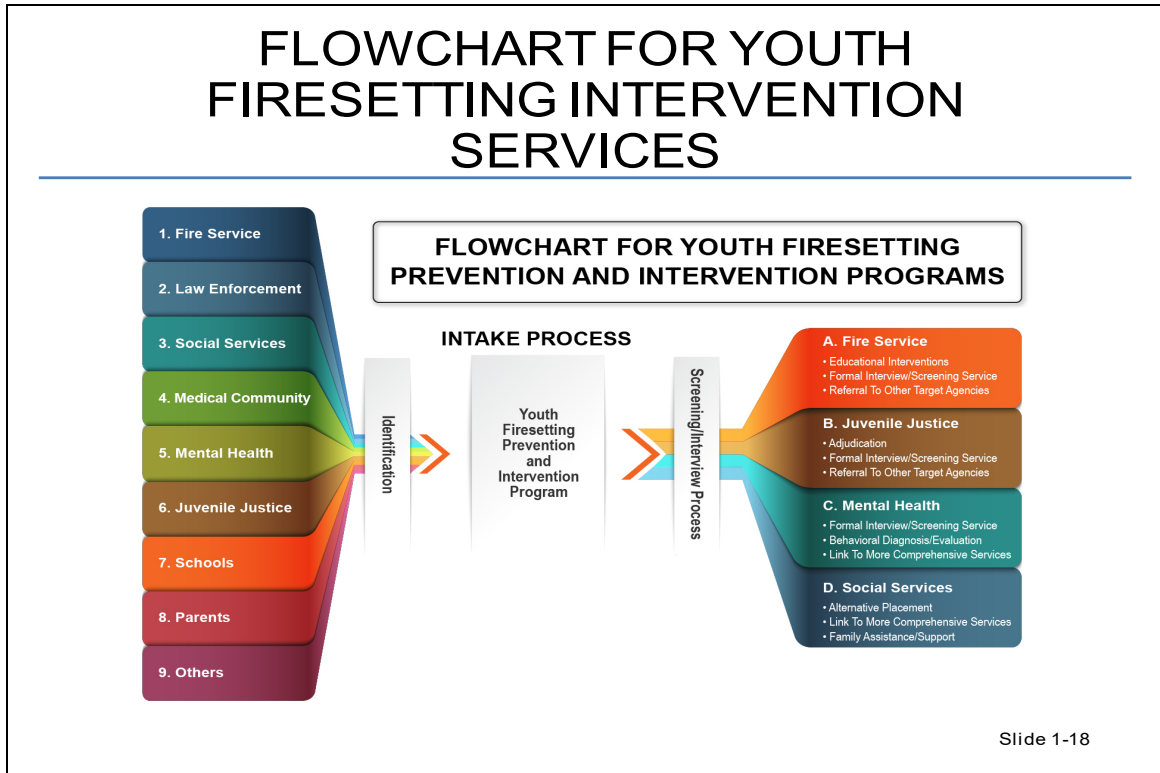
---

---

- B. Factors behind the behavior include but are not limited to:
1. Child development.
  2. Fire safety knowledge available to youth in the community.
  3. Learning/intellectual disabilities.
  4. Criminal implications.
  5. Simultaneous involvement with other problematic behaviors (criminal or behavioral).
  6. Child abuse/neglect.
  7. Family dynamics, relationships and childhood trauma.
  8. Severe pathology.
  9. Mental and behavioral health implications.
- C. Each of these require specialized skills and resources from a wide variety of community resources. No fire agency or any single agency can be expected to possess all the resources necessary to address all these needs.
- D. To effectively integrate the three levels of youth firesetting prevention and five types of interventions, the whole community-integrated approach must be employed.

- E. A youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.
  - 1. A youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force or coalition can significantly impact the design, operation and effectiveness of a program. Youth firesetting behavior is not a fire problem, it is a community problem, and it will require the support of other community-based professionals. Hence, WCIRM.
  - 2. A task force or coalition is a group of professionals assembled to address a situation or circumstance. Youth firesetting behavior can call for several professional disciplines.

VI. FLOWCHART FOR YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION SERVICES



Intervention services are usually provided by:

- A. Fire service.
- B. Social services.
- C. Mental and behavioral health services.
- D. Juvenile justice.

• What does it take to foster a successful integrated system approach to youth firesetting prevention and intervention?

• Where does the fire service fit into the big picture?

Slide 1-19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**VII. COMPARE THE JOB PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS OF A YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION SPECIALIST AND YOUTH FIRESETTING PROGRAM MANAGER ACCORDING TO NFPA STANDARD 1035**

COMPARE THE JOB PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS OF A YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION SPECIALIST AND YOUTH FIRESETTING PROGRAM MANAGER ACCORDING TO NFPA STANDARD 1035

Youth firesetting intervention specialist

Slide 1-20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. A youth firesetting intervention specialist is a practitioner who provides services at the program-delivery level.

What are some of the responsibilities of the youth firesetting intervention specialist?

Slide 1-21

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

COMPARE THE JOB PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS OF A YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION SPECIALIST AND YOUTH FIRESETTING PROGRAM MANAGER ACCORDING TO NFPA STANDARD 1035 (cont'd)

Youth firesetting program manager

Slide 1-22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

B. A youth firesetting program manager is a team member with proficiency as a youth firesetting intervention specialist and skills to develop, implement, lead and evaluate a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

What are some of the responsibilities of the youth firesetting program manager?

Slide 1-23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**VIII. ESTABLISHING PROFESSIONAL CREDIBILITY: CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR YOUTH FIRESETTING PRACTITIONERS AND PROGRAM MANAGERS**

A. Certification.

1. Certification serves as an instrument of measure to show an individual or organization has achieved a level of knowledge, skill or readiness to address specific situations they might be expected to encounter.
2. For credibility, certification is usually conducted by a separate or independent organization or agency from the one being certified or accredited.

---

- How does one typically achieve certification or accreditation?
- What are the benefits of certification or accreditation?

Slide 1-24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Achieving accreditation or certification varies by state and community. Certain agencies/organizations provide training, but certification or accreditation come from other agencies.
  - a. Some states such as Pennsylvania, Florida, Colorado and Minnesota do offer certification through National Pro-Board and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).
  - b. Certification could be via a state health department, which certifies persons in emergency medical technician (EMT) work.
4. Standards for certification or accreditation vary from agency to agency and state to state, so it is imperative to research necessary qualifications in your own jurisdictions.

B. Benefits of certification or accreditation.

1. Sets a standard to be met by youth firesetting prevention and intervention members.

2. Sets limitation on the service that can be provided (allows a measure of what a member can do or not do, much like the measure of an EMT basic limits and how it differs from an EMT paramedic).
3. Shows a level of professionalism and program development in legal situations that gives credibility to members.
4. Ensures all program members have a similar understanding of the issue, process and program elements (e.g., forms set forth by the program/coalition, data systems, etc.).
5. Demonstrates that the work requires special persons willing to invest the time and effort necessary to meet the expanded skill set to do special work.
6. Most any technical specialty in the fire service requires specialized tools, training and interests for the personnel participating.

Consider swift water rescue teams, high-angle rope rescue teams, hazardous materials teams, paramedics, and urban search and rescue teams.

7. Applying the “specialty services” example to a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program can place it in the proper perspective.

**IX. APPROPRIATE USAGE OF TERMINOLOGY RELATED TO YOUTH FIRESETTING**

---

Why should agencies working together to address a youth firesetting situation use a common language and terminology?

Slide 1-25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. Using appropriate terminology.
  1. Words carry powerful implications and can influence a person’s perception of a situation. When professional disciplines working together on a common mission use terminology or language different from one discipline to the next, this lays a foundation for confusion and mistakes that can have a critical impact on the mission’s outcome.

2. For this reason, terminology should be carefully defined and standardized across disciplines as to avoid complications for use in writing narrative reports, interagency communications and legal proceedings.

**APPROPRIATE USAGE OF  
TERMINOLOGY RELATED TO YOUTH  
FIRESETTING**

---

Terminologies should evolve in step with the community:

- “Firesetting youth,” not “firesetter.”
- “Youth,” not “juvenile.”

Slide 1-26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Terminology should evolve in step with the communities served by the agency. A prime example of evolving terminology is the use of “firesetter.” While this word may have been used appropriately in the past, we know now that it unnecessarily applies a label to a person — likely a young person — according to their behavior. This word has evolved into phrases such as “firesetting youth” or “youth who sets fire(s),” depending on context.
4. As terminology evolves, it is important that the fire service and all partner groups involved in a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force use the same language.
5. One approach for standardizing terminology is to include the appropriate terms and definitions in agency policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs)/standard operating guidelines (SOGs).
6. Using the appropriate terminology in conversation and standardizing one’s own vocabulary supports accountability within the agency as well.

B. Examples of terminology with problematic usage.

1. Delinquent.
  - a. Delinquency in the broadest sense is juvenile actions or conduct in violation of criminal law, juvenile status offenses and other juvenile misbehavior.

- b. When a term like “delinquent” is used with the caregiver of a youth, or toward the youth themselves, it can create a defensive posture that can be very difficult to overcome and can profoundly influence the intervention.
- 2. Youth versus juvenile.
  - a. “Youth” carries an inclusive character that is less age-specific and nonaccusatory.
  - b. “Juvenile” is normally associated with delinquent behavior or with adolescents and teens. It is part of justice system “jargon” as certain language was institutionalized in legal terms and descriptions, but it does not have to be used in everyday conversation.
- 3. Youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs may not be required for all participants. Everything that can be done should be done to encourage active participation. Even those that are required to attend are not required to listen, engage or care. That is up to the interventionist to create that environment. It begins with proper terminology.

---

What are some terms that, if used interchangeably, could have serious consequences?

Slide 1-27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

C. Potential legal proceedings.



\_\_\_\_\_

- Considering the reality that some youth firesetting cases will involve legal proceedings, why do terms and words matter?
- What could be the ramifications of poor use of words, terms or industry jargon?

Slide 1-28

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. As we learned in the previous section, agencies working together to address a youth firesetting situation must use common language and terminology.
2. Depending on severity, determinations and recommendations made at the investigatory stage, a youth firesetting case may rise to the level of adjudication.
3. The case may be addressed through a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, with the appropriate interventions applied and practiced.
4. Regardless of the outcome of the case, applicable partner agencies like juvenile justice, behavioral and mental health, and social services will likely produce documentation supportive of their perspective or involvement in the case such as narrative reports, evidence or other required documentation.
5. As partner agencies collaborate to provide the support and interventions determined for the youth involved, common terminology must be standardized and utilized in such a way that there is a shared understanding of the facts, signs and circumstances of the case between these groups.
  - a. If law enforcement uses “age of culpability” on a report, but they intend “age of accountability,” the next recipient of that report may misinterpret the intended usage of the phrase.
  - b. If a mental health practitioner is looking for documentation of the screening performed as part of the intake process in a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, but that documentation is marked as an interview, they may believe the screening did not happen or that documentation was misplaced, which could lead to further complications for the case.

D. Complicating factors for arson and firesetting cases.

1. Consider that “arson” and “firesetting” are often, but erroneously, used interchangeably. Continued mixing of these words across disciplines can have negative impacts.

2. Arson.

a. Note that arson is a legal term that must be proven in a court of law. The proper term for intentionally and improperly setting a fire is “incendiary fire setting.”

b. Complicating factors for an arson case:

- Age of culpability: Young offenders aged 10 to 17 (i.e., up to their 18th birthday) are classed as juvenile offenders.

-- “Culpability” is the degree of one’s “blameworthiness” in the commission of a crime or offense.

- Intent.

- Identification of first material ignited.

- Developmental or intellectual disabilities.

- Miranda rights.

- Site of fire.

- Documentation.

- Integrity of case information.

- Parental accountability.

3. Firesetting.

Complicating factors for a firesetting case:

a. Intent.

b. Precipitating circumstances (bullying, threatening, abuse, etc.).

- While there may be precipitating circumstances such as bullying, threatening or abuse, these examples (and others) do not justify or explain the firesetting behaviors.
  - c. Lack of supervision.
  - d. Neglect.
  - e. Abuse.
  - f. Access to ignition materials.
  - g. Premature assignment of responsibility (caregivers authorizing use of fire when youth are not mature enough to manage the responsibility).
  - h. Ritualistic (e.g., July Fourth activities, holiday use, birthday celebrations, religious affiliations).
  - i. Confidentiality issues.
  - j. Categories of children in the juvenile justice system:
    - Delinquent children.
    - Undisciplined children.
    - Dependent children.
    - Neglected children.
    - Abused children.
    - Status offenders.
    - A status offense is something that someone underage does that is only illegal because of their status as a minor. A delinquent act by a juvenile is a crime committed by someone underage that is always a crime no matter the age of the perpetrator. Examples include murder, rape and robbery.
4. All these factors may play into the issues surrounding legal implications and whether there will be assignment of responsibility.

5. Interventions within the juvenile justice system are considered a continuum of service, and as such, intervention of a youth until one's 21st birthday can be seen as an intervention.
6. The principles of the juvenile justice movement are based upon the premise that the state is the higher or ultimate parent, children are worth saving and should be nurtured, justice must be individualized, the needs of the child supersede criminal procedures, and the focus of the juvenile justice system is on rehabilitation.

**X. NARRATIVE REPORT WRITING AND YOUTH FIRESETTING CASE FILES**

---

- What is a narrative report?
- What is a youth firesetting case file?
- What constitutes adequate documentation of a youth firesetting case?

What did you glean from reading the Jacob Gantz case file?

Slide 1-29

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. The narrative report is the summary of the interventionist's case regarding the youth and their firesetting behaviors. Reflected in this document are details pertaining to how you were made aware of the youth, the background information regarding their home life and environment, and a summary of the information gathered from your interview/screening. This document will establish the reasons for you applying risk assessment and disposition assignments based upon your education, skill and experience in the field of youth firesetting intervention.
- B. Relatedly, case files are a collection of narrative reports from many agencies to provide practitioners with a good understanding about what partner agencies say about the youth and their given situation.
- C. With multiple professional disciplines working together on a youth firesetting case, communication becomes more important. It must be clear, concise and specific to the case and surrounding circumstances.
- D. Casual language can create confusion that will result in misunderstandings that may undermine the best efforts to serve youths and families.

- E. An excellent example of a collection of narratives that comprise a youth firesetting case file are in Appendix B: Case File Jacob Gantz, Incident Date: May 8. This example file should be reviewed as it will be referred to throughout the “Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention” (YFPI) course.

**XI. SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF YOUTH-SET FIRES**

- A. The impacts of not having an adequate youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

---

- Why may a community lack an organized youth firesetting prevention and intervention program?
  
- What are impacts that could result if no youth firesetting program existed in a community and a multifatal fire initiated by a youth occurred?

Slide 1-30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1. Communities of all sizes may find youth firesetting to be a rare occurrence. Measuring the impact of an occurrence such as youth firesetting is difficult if it rarely happens, though this does not make it any less of a community problem.
2. It may be that a youth-caused fire death or significant loss has not occurred in recent memory.
3. Some agencies fail to address the issue for that reason, only to be shocked into a reactionary approach when an incident does occur.
4. This approach rarely provides a quality intervention program, at least in the short term.

- B. Rationale for program.

1. Professionals and agencies are often asked to provide data as justification for why resources should be allocated to youth firesetting prevention and intervention. It may be helpful to utilize local fire data rather than national statistics.

2. Remember that death or injury due to fire and large numbers of youth firesetting incidents should not be the only measures of worth or community impact.
3. It is necessary to find other ways to demonstrate the negative toll youth-set fires have on families and communities.
4. The larger categories of sociological impacts of youth-set fires are human, social, economic, environmental and political.

**SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF  
YOUTH-SET FIRES**

---

Potential impacts associated with youth firesetting:

- Human.
- Social.
- Economic.
- Environmental.
- Political.

Slide 1-31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- C. Potential impacts associated with youth firesetting.
1. Human-related costs such as injuries, deaths, and physical and psychological suffering.
  2. Loss of community resources, activities, business and/or vitality.
  3. Financial losses not exclusive to property loss (e.g., impact on business or sales, time off work for youth and/or caregivers, cost of legal fees, insurance rate increases, fines and/or restitution costs, medical treatment costs, etc.).
  4. Damage to family, friend and school relationships.

**SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF YOUTH-SET FIRES (cont'd)**

- Loss of trust.
- Displacement of people from homes, apartments, multifamily dwellings, churches or places of worship, schools, businesses, etc.
- Response and intervention costs from fire department, emergency medical services (EMS), schools, juvenile justice, law enforcement, etc.

Slide 1-32

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. Loss of trust.
6. Displacement of people from homes, apartments, multifamily dwellings, churches or places of worship, schools, businesses, playgrounds or recreational areas, etc.
7. Response and intervention costs: Fire department, first responder, emergency medical services (EMS), schools, juvenile justice, law enforcement, tribal council, and/or youth firesetting specialist-incurred costs associated with staff hours, equipment wear and tear, use of scarce resources, potential delay in other responses or calls, risk of injury to others during responses, etc.

**SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF YOUTH-SET FIRES (cont'd)**

- Treatment and placement issues for youth involved in firesetting.
- Potential for juvenile justice and/or criminal history.
- Disruption of school learning environment.

Slide 1-33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

8. Treatment and placement issues for youth involved in firesetting (e.g., mental and behavioral health evaluations, treatments, ongoing therapies and medicines, outpatient/inpatient treatment facilities, detention and rehabilitation centers, etc.).
9. Potential for juvenile justice and/or criminal history.

10. Disruption of school learning environment.

**SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF YOUTH-SET FIRES (cont'd)**

- Effect on academic process, including short- and long-term impact of suspension or expulsion.
- Fear and/or threats to sense of security, well-being and safety.
- Potential for “copy-cat” incidents.

Slide 1-34

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- 11. Effect on academic progress, including short- and long-term impact of suspension or expulsion and documented school-to-prison pipeline. For example, according to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, allowing one youth to leave school for a life of crime and of drug abuse costs society \$1.7 million to \$2.3 million annually (2019).
- 12. Fear and/or threats to a sense of security and feelings of well-being and safety.
- 13. Potential for chain reaction of “copy-cat” incidents if the incident is highlighted in the news or if it received numerous “likes” and “shares” on video and social media platforms.

**XII. FRAMING AMERICA’S YOUTH FIRESETTING PROBLEM**

**FRAMING AMERICA’S YOUTH FIRESETTING PROBLEM**

- Setting fires.
- “Playing” with lighters or matches.
- Using accelerants.
- Fireworks.

Slide 1-35

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

A. Youth firesetting and misuse behaviors.



1. Youth firesetting is a term that includes a variety of fire misuse behaviors — some of them used incorrectly — mechanisms, and incidents, such as:
  - a. Setting fires.
  - b. “Playing” with lighters or matches.
  - c. Igniting aerosols.
  - d. Experimentation.
  - e. Using accelerants.
  - f. Fireworks.
  - g. Making explosive and pressure-creating devices (e.g., bottle or Drano bombs).
  - h. Arson.

---

How can we frame the problem of youth firesetting, especially since it involves so many different behaviors and mechanisms?

Slide 1-36

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Framing the problem might include discussion on:
  - a. Gathering and documenting existing data.
  - b. Establishing methods for data collection and reporting (e.g., improve existing methods, identify new sources, improve efficiency and/or accuracy, etc.).
  - c. Identifying the different mechanisms of youth firesetting occurring in your community.
  - d. Establishing the list of resources (human and materials) necessary for an agency to address youth firesetting.

- e. Identifying and gathering coalition members in the community to address youth firesetting.
- 3. The simple fact is that every collaborative partner perspective is important in providing a more complete picture of the youth firesetting issue and thereby better serving the youth and the community.
- 4. Without an organized and collaborative approach, data can be overlooked or missed, and youth firesetting might erroneously appear to be a nonissue and remain unaddressed.
- 5. Accurate data collection on youth firesetting behaviors can also be instrumental in designing, implementing or guiding primary prevention initiatives that focus on keeping youth from ever misusing fire.
- 6. The specific mechanism of youth firesetting and/or the identifying agency may determine on which data source the incident is captured (including if the incident is even correctly documented as a youth firesetting incident).

**B. Youth firesetting in America: What’s known and may be unknown.**

---

Why is the true incidence of youth firesetting in the United States difficult to determine?

Slide 1-37

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- 1. There are multiple databases that gather the data from various sources and quantify youth firesetting behavior differently and typically do not reconcile with each other. This does not represent inaccurate or “bad” data.

**FRAMING AMERICA'S YOUTH FIRESETTING PROBLEM (cont'd)**

- Understanding and interpreting data:
  - How and from what source(s) are the data collected?
  - What are the strengths and limitations of the database?
  - Is youth firesetting data an optional or voluntary data field within the database?

Slide 1-38

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Instead, it is important to understand and interpret the data reported from each data source:
  - a. How and from what source(s) are the data collected?
  - b. The strengths and limitations of the database.
  - c. Youth firesetting data as an optional or voluntary data field within the database.

**FRAMING AMERICA'S YOUTH FIRESETTING PROBLEM (cont'd)**

- Are youth firesetting data separated versus "lumped into" other categories?
- What information can be gleaned from the data available to us?

Slide 1-39

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- d. Youth firesetting data may be separated versus "lumped into" other categories.
      - e. Gleaning applicable information from the data available.
3. Program managers must determine what data is needed to support their program, request or effort and then develop it to make the point to the target audience (e.g., administration, funding source, potential task force member, etc.).

4. In Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation, we will further explore how the use of data supports a youth firesetting intervention program.
- C. Here are some common youth firesetting and misuse examples and potential data sources:

1. Scenario 1.

A child finds a lighter and ignites toys in a bedroom causing a fire in the home. Data sources:

- a. National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and/or the data/incident/records management system used by the local fire department if the fire department was notified or responded.
- b. Local or regional fire department systems may contain more data than NFIRS will provide.
- c. Police report if law enforcement was the first responding agency.
- d. Hospital emergency department and/or burn center registry data if child or other person in the home sustained a burn injury (or, conversely, the treating medical facility may not be aware of the importance of specifically identifying this injury as a youth firesetting incident, and therefore, the behavior is not documented or properly addressed).
- e. Parents, family members, close relatives and friends can be sources of data as well.

2. Scenario 2.

A teen brings a container of fireworks and gasoline to school to show his friends the “experiment” that he saw in a video shared online the night before. Data sources:

- a. NFIRS and/or fire department reporting system if the fire department was notified or responded.
- b. School resource officer or other law enforcement report (Law Enforcement Data System (LEDS)).
- c. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives’ (ATF) U.S. Bomb Data Center (USBDC)/Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS).

- d. Hospital emergency department and/or trauma center registry if teen or bystanders sustained blast or other trauma injury, and/or burn center registry if teen or bystanders sustained a burn injury.
- e. FBI’s criminal history record information if teen is arrested and/or charged with arson.
- f. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) since the consumer products of fireworks and gasoline were involved.
- g. State-level departments of education if the incident was appropriately reported.

D. As part of your pre-course assignment, you read these three NFPA reports:

- 1. Appendix C: Playing with Fire: Non-Structure Fires.
- 2. Appendix D: Playing with Fire: Structure Fires.
- 3. Appendix E: Structure Fires in Schools.
- 4. Take a few moments to refamiliarize yourself with the content of each report and consider these questions:

- In general, what does the report indicate regarding youth-set fires occurring in structures, non-structures and schools?
- What data sources did you see credited in the report?
- Based on your experience at the local level, do you feel the results are accurate? Why or why not?
- What “national-level” trends do you expect in the future?

Slide 1-40

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**XIII. YOUTH FIRESETTING DATA PATTERNS AND EMERGING TRENDS**

- A. National emerging trends in youth firesetting.
  - 1. Many emerging trends in youth firesetting appear on social media platforms, online “challenges” and video posting sites. You may hear about it in the news, or students may discuss within their friend network.

2. Unfortunately, sometimes these emerging trends are not accurately captured in real-time databases and reports.
  3. An emerging trend in one part of the country might not be occurring in others.
  4. Trends in urban settings may not be represented in rural communities.
  5. Any trend should be checked against the local experience to determine how or if it should be addressed.
  6. An example of an emerging trend that was observed in a regional youth firesetting prevention and intervention program just prior to COVID-19 pandemic closures were instituted in early 2020:
    - a. In unpublished 2019-2020 data from the University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center, nearly 75% of referral cases over a six-month period were youth firesetting incidents that occurred at schools.
    - b. Of those, 100% involved bullying/teasing as contributing factors.
  7. Appendix H: Table 1: Database Summary Description: Potential Sources of Youth Firesetting (and Community Risk Reduction) Related Data offers multiple examples of vetted data sources that might be helpful to you in understanding and framing the youth firesetting issue in your community.
  8. Exploring and understanding the current national statistics on youth firesetting will lead you to acknowledge that your local program data may have similarities and differences when compared to the national trends. You may also appreciate the importance of building collaborative relationships or partnerships with other agencies and multidisciplinary professionals to compile a more comprehensive picture of the youth firesetting problem.
- B. School fires — an often unreported or misreported event.
1. Youth firesetting incidents can frequently occur in school buildings and on school property (including buses).
  2. Intentionally set fires are the leading cause of school structure fires, with lavatories and locker rooms being the most common origin (NFPA, n.d.).
  3. Thankfully, these incidents rarely cause fatalities. According to the NFPA, there were eight school fires (grades K through 12) in U.S. history that had 10 or more deaths, with the most recent one occurring in 1958 (NFPA, n.d.).

4. It is very important that the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program personnel have a good working relationship with the schools and school district(s) in their community.
5. Without establishing mutual trust, the school personnel will likely be reluctant to contact the youth firesetting intervention program staff, the fire department and/or law enforcement when a youth firesetting incident occurs at the school.
6. There is information on school fires in Appendix H. Although it is comprehensive, it is isolated to school structure fires, so other fires occurring on school property are not included. The data only include fires that the school reported and/or that had a fire department response.

C. Fireworks.

1. Youth firesetting incidents involving fireworks occur in many ways, such as: setting off bottle rockets in a school gym to scare or “prank” people; adding gunpowder, aerosol sprays, gasoline, starting fluid or other accelerants; etc.
2. Many fireworks-related injuries are caused by fireworks that are legal in most states, and more than one-third of the victims of fireworks-related injuries are under the age of 15.
3. The American Pyrotechnics Association maintains a map of state fireworks laws; also consult with or check your state fire marshal website.

Review Appendix H for data on fireworks from the NFPA and CPSC.

D. Might youth-set fires be underreported?

1. New organizations trying to start a new intervention program where none has existed can encounter this problem. In some cases, the local problem may be best understood through the combined effort of many agencies. This is the value of a coalition or task force. When the fire service, law enforcement, schools, child welfare and juvenile justice sit down together to discuss their experiences with youth firesetting behavior, a larger story may unfold.
2. By establishing a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, this acknowledges that there is a need for increased awareness of youth firesetting activity in the community and not necessarily because the number of youth-set fires has increased or that there is a significant problem.

3. However, the establishment of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program can be the catalyst for a phenomenon that causes confusion or angst among agencies.
4. Previously, they may have viewed youth-set fires in their communities as a minor problem.
5. Establishing a program may amplify that minor problem or give the impression that the number of youth-set fire incidents has increased. This is not the case.
6. When there is no mechanism for recognizing and acknowledging youth firesetting, the incidents are not counted or considered.
7. When a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program is developed, there is greater awareness and better documentation of the behavior as it occurs, giving the impression the problem has grown. The only thing that has grown is awareness.
8. The increased awareness gives proper context to the youth firesetting problem with other fire causes in the community (i.e., community risk analysis) and allowed the resources necessary to address it.
9. Newly developed programs or those reestablishing their efforts and outreach should prepare for this awareness phenomenon to occur.



## ACTIVITY 1.1

### Comparing Local Youth Firesetting Problems

#### Purpose

Compare youth firesetting problems in students' local communities with their peers.

#### Directions

1. The instructor will divide the class into four groups.
2. Working individually, locate and review the information you collected as part of your pre-course assignment.
3. In each table group, compare your pre-course data with that of your peers. You should also compare your data with national statistics presented earlier in this unit.

Your table groups should compare:

- a. The similarities and differences of your youth firesetting problem.
  - b. Community demographics.
  - c. Number of youth firesetting incidents and their locations.
  - d. Ignition sources.
  - e. Types of fires (e.g., residential, commercial, schools, fireworks, outside, etc.).
  - f. Common age groups/genders of youths who set fires.
  - g. Number of youth arson arrests.
  - h. State's age of accountability law.
  - i. Number of injuries/deaths and property loss from youth-set fires.
  - j. Emerging local trends.
4. Each table group will have 20 minutes to note similarities and differences that were discovered among the peer exchanges. Your small group should be prepared to share this information with the class.
  5. Upon reconvening as a class, each group will be given two minutes to summarize the similarities and differences that were discovered among the groups.

This page intentionally left blank.

**XIV. DEVELOPING A PROBLEM STATEMENT AND GOAL**

A. A well-defined problem is a problem half-solved.

\_\_\_\_\_

“With respect to youth firesetting in the local community, a well-defined problem is a problem half-solved.”

What does this statement mean?

Slide 1-43

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. The results of a good community risk assessment will create a foundation for writing a problem statement.

C. A clear and concise problem statement provides the rationale for why the selected risk should be addressed. It also promotes ownership of the risk, which can be used to create a sense of urgency to act. A problem statement is usually no more than one or two sentences.

**DEVELOPING A PROBLEM STATEMENT**

- Guidelines for problem statements:
  - Identifies one risk issue.
  - Single sentence.
  - Does not offer solutions.
  - Who/what is being impacted.
  - Why, where and when the issue is occurring.
  - Creates a sense of urgency for acting.

Slide 1-44

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

D. Guidelines for creating a problem statement:

1. Identify one risk only.
2. Preferably a single-sentence statement.

3. Do not offer a solution for prevention or mitigation of the risk issue.
4. Identify who/what is impacted by the risk issue.
5. Identify why, where and when the risk issue occurs.
6. Create a sense of urgency for acting.

### DEVELOPING A PROBLEM STATEMENT (cont'd)

- Common issues with problem statements:
  - Addressing more than one issue.
  - Wordiness.
  - Potential solutions in the problem statement.
  - Failure to identify target groups/areas.
  - Failure to create a sense of urgency.

Slide 1-45

E. Common issues with problem statements.

1. Addressing more than one issue.
2. Wordiness.
3. Putting potential solutions in the problem statement.
4. Failure to identify target groups/areas.
5. Failing to create a sense of urgency.

### DEVELOPING A PROBLEM STATEMENT (cont'd)

- Start by listing the facts in groups.
- Example:
  - The problem: unattended cooking.
  - The target group: low-income rental properties.
  - Sense of urgency: leading cause of residential structure fires.
  - Location: Station 25 service area.

Slide 1-46

6. When developing a problem statement, consider listing the facts in groups. Here is an example of how to frame a problem involving cooking fires in low-income rental properties occurring in a specific area.
  - a. The problem: unattended cooking.
  - b. The target group: low-income rental properties.
  - c. Sense of urgency: leading cause of residential structure fires.
  - d. Location: Station 25 service area.

**DEVELOPING A PROBLEM STATEMENT (cont'd)**

---

- The problem is that unattended cooking in low-income rental properties is the leading cause of residential structure fires in the response area of Station 25.

Slide 1-47

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

7. Here are the facts framed into a problem statement: The problem is that unattended cooking in low-income rental properties is the leading cause of residential structure fires in the service area of Station 25.
8. Being as specific as possible helps clearly define the issue, who is impacted, where it's occurring and why it needs attention.

**DEVELOPING A PROBLEM STATEMENT (cont'd)**

---

- The problem is ground-level falls in owner-occupied single-family homes is the leading cause of injury among older adults, age 65 and older, residing in Station 25's service area.

Slide 1-48

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

9. Here is an example of ground-level falls: The problem is ground level falls in owner-occupied single-family homes is the leading cause of injury among older adults, age 65 and older, residing in Station 25's service area.
10. Notice how specific it is, whereby it clarifies ground-level falls occurring in owner-occupied single-family homes. It also states the problem is the leading cause of injury to adults aged 65 and older in Station 25's service area.

### DEVELOPING A GOAL

---

**Goal**

- Broad and general statement showing what is to be accomplished.
- Objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant/Realistic and Time-bound (SMART).
- No units of measurement in goal.

Slide 1-49

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- F. Develop a goal.
  1. A goal is a broad statement showing what is to be accomplished.
  2. What makes a goal different from an objective is that goals are broad and general, whereby objectives are **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant/Realistic and Time-bound (SMART)**.
  3. No units of measurement should appear in the goal.
- G. Example related to unattended cooking fires: The goal is to reduce the occurrence of unattended cooking in rental properties leading to residential structure fires in Station 25's response area.
- H. Example related to the older adult fall problem: The goal is to reduce the occurrence of ground-level falls in owner-occupied single-family homes inhabited by older adults, age 65 and older, residing in Station 25's service area.

## ACTIVITY 1.2

### Writing Your Problem Statement and Goal

#### Purpose

Summarize the youth firesetting problem in the students' communities.



#### Directions

1. Using your pre-course homework assignment, develop a problem statement for the youth firesetting issue in your community.
2. Follow the process discussed in class to “build” your statement based on facts.
3. Make sure the problem statement includes as many of the following facts as possible/applicable:
  - a. Identifies youth firesetting as the risk issue.
  - b. Is preferably a single-sentence statement.
  - c. Does not offer a solution for prevention or mitigation of the youth firesetting issue.
  - d. Identifies who/what is impacted by the youth firesetting issue.
  - e. Identifies why, where and when the youth firesetting is occurring.
  - f. Creates a sense of urgency for acting on the issue.
4. Next, develop a broad and general goal for addressing the youth firesetting problem. The goal should be a single sentence.
5. Finally, share your problem statement and goal with the instructor.

This page intentionally left blank.



XV. SUMMARY

 **FEMA**  U.S. Fire Administration

### SUMMARY

- Strategic community risk reduction is a process beneath the umbrella of WCIRM.
- Youth firesetting prevention and intervention demands an integrated, community-based approach.
- Job performance requirements (JPRs) of youth firesetting intervention specialist and program manager.

Slide 1-52

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

 **FEMA**  U.S. Fire Administration

### SUMMARY (cont'd)

- Estimated the sociological impacts associated with youth-set fires.
- Explained the national youth firesetting problem and emerging trends.
- Distinguished relevant and credible data sources for exploring the youth firesetting problem.

Slide 1-53

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

 **FEMA**  U.S. Fire Administration

### SUMMARY (cont'd)

- Evaluated the extent of the community's youth firesetting problem given a combination of quantitative and qualitative service demand data.
- Developed a problem statement and goal to address the local youth firesetting issue.

Slide 1-54

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

 **FEMA** **AFTER CLASS WORK** 

---

Peruse the Glossary of Terms.

Slide 1-55

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# **APPENDIX A**

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

This page intentionally left blank.

## Glossary of Terms

**Note:** This glossary remains under development. Terms will be added, and definitions refined as needed.

**Adverse childhood experience:** Traumatic events and environment aspects that impact the safety, stability and bonding that occur during childhood.

**Age of culpability/accountability:** The age threshold for the commission of a crime. This can vary from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It typically represents the age below which a youth cannot formulate intent to commit a criminal act.

**Arson:** The willful or malicious burning of property, especially with criminal or fraudulent intent.

**Assessment:** A process by which a professional will consider the psychological symptoms, the demands an illness or disability impose on a family, and understanding the positive or negative experiences during the time periods in question.

**Behavioral and mental health conditions:** Conditions that influence the firesetting behavior. It may not indicate a specific diagnosis. Programs or providers trained in psychology, behavior and mental health may provide services for youth/families in need.

**Capability:** The ability or qualities in a youth necessary to do what is taught, demonstrated or expected.

**Caregivers:** Person(s) responsible for the care and well-being of a youth.

**Certification:** A formal acknowledgement of training or achievement of competency, typically by an objective authority or certifying body.

**Child development:** The physical, intellectual and social development of a youth and how it influences their capacity to learn.

**Child welfare:** Services, typically provided by states and counties, to support or intervene when child safety and welfare is a concern. Services can be voluntary or mandated under child protective service protocols.

**Coalition partners:** See “task force.”

**Community risk reduction:** The identification and prioritization of risks followed by the coordinated application of resources to minimize the probability or occurrence and/or the impact of unwanted events. It does not mean that all risks may be mitigated by one mechanism or another.

**Confabulation:** This is an error in memory where the subject unintentionally omits or distorts elements of a memory, changing (in their mind) what the actual outcome was.

**Criminal mischief:** This typically involves damage or vandalism of another person's property without permission of that owner.

**Data elements:** Specific points of data collection, such as gender, age, last name, etc.

**Educational intervention:** A strategy to stop firesetting behavior that addresses fire safety and fire science to meet the learning needs of the youth.

**Empathy:** The impact on the emotions of others.

**Etiological:** Cause for or a contribution to the development of a condition.

**Evidence:** Something that leads to a conclusion about an act, particularly in the context of crime. It is not necessarily proof.

**Experimentation:** Action of trying out new activity or behavior.

**Explosive/pressure-creating devices:** Explosive devices are objects, such as fireworks or other homemade devices, that use the combustion process to create burning processes or combustion pressure to rupture a vessel containing the combustion, such as a firecracker. Pressure devices essentially do the same, except they use chemical reactions to create pressure.

**Firesetting:** A term used to describe the behavior of setting a fire. This term is useful for identifying the act of a youth setting a fire without labeling the child.

**Foundational components of youth firesetting prevention and intervention:** The basic components of a program necessary to meet best practices and provide a chain of events leading a youth from entry into a program-to-program completion.

- **Identification method:** The intervention program component that recognizes firesetting behavior and directs it toward the intake component of an intervention program.
- **Intake process:** The intervention program component that begins the chain of accountability for a youth entering an intervention program.
- **Screening/interview process:** The intervention program component that entails use of a formal interview, using a specialized form or series of questions, specific to firesetting behavior. The protocol includes use of forms, scoring systems and the assignment of a firesetting typology to guide intervention services on behalf of the youth.
- **Intervention services:** The intervention program component that aligns services to meet the extended needs of a youth to reduce or eliminate the firesetting behaviors. Intervention services may also target underlying problems that motivate firesetting, such as child abuse, neglect or other conditions that cause stress or crisis in the youth's life, prompting acting-out behaviors such as firesetting. Intervention services may include but are not limited to:
  - Education.
  - Behavioral/mental health.
  - Child welfare/social services.

- Juvenile justice.
- Medical.
- **Evaluation and follow-up:** The intervention program component that remains in contact with graduates of youth firesetting intervention programs to determine future behavioral considerations, program performance and recidivism.

**Implicit bias:** Unconscious application of stereotypes and assumptions that can often lead to discriminatory behaviors.

**Institutionalize:** To make something a part of the fabric or operational plan of an agency. This usually requires some level of documentation, policy provision or inclusion in operational guidelines.

**Intellectual disabilities:** A developmental condition that is characterized by significant deficits in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, including conceptual, social and practical skills (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Schalock et al., 2010).

**Juvenile:** A term used to refer to youth. Juvenile is generally more applicable in connection with legal definitions.

**Juvenile justice:** The legal system designed to address criminal activity among persons under the age of 18. This can include prosecution, defense, sentencing, counseling and diversion.

**Mandatory reporting:** The legal requirement for those working in jobs that must make report of certain circumstances to the proper authority when a circumstance meeting the criteria is discovered. Laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and should be reviewed locally for specifics.

**Mission statement:** A written statement or plan that identifies the effort, the intended audience and why it exists. It is commonly followed by objectives that specify the intended benchmarks of change. These should be measurable and will form the basis for evaluation measures, such as impacts and outcomes of a program or effort.

**Misuse of fire:** The improper, unsanctioned or unsupervised use of fire by youth, creating danger to the youth, the family or the community.

**Motivations:** The general categories that explain the nature of youth firesetting behavior. These categories can help the youth firesetting intervention specialist understand what intervention services may be needed to prevent future firesetting behavior.

**Need:** A lack of something requisite, desirable or useful.

**Operational guidelines:** Also referred to as SOPs, SOGs will contain and document the key features of a program, including the program mission, description, processes, chain of authority, membership and other relevant details.

**Pathology:** Pathological behavior is behavior that may be considered extreme or beyond normal, perhaps indicating an intellectual or perception deficiency or defect.

**Preferred methods of communication:** Identification of how subject would like to be contacted (e.g., phone, email, etc.).

**Primary prevention:** Prevention strategies, such as education or engineering, that can prevent the occurrence of an event or action.

**Program evaluation:** Formative, process, impact and outcome measures employed and operated on through the life of a program.

**Proof:** This is the demonstration of something that shows responsibility, sometimes in a criminal sense. It is more substantial than evidence, which may lead to proof.

**Qualification:** A quality or accomplishment that makes someone suitable for specific work.

**Qualitative:** Descriptive data that can be observed first-hand such as interviews, testimonials, questionnaires, etc.

**Quantitative:** Data measured in quantities and numbers.

**Recidivism:** The continued or repeated firesetting behavior.

**Reckless burning:** The intentional setting of a fire. It may cause damage but will not be set with malicious intent.

**Reckless endangerment:** Actions that are criminal in nature and carry a significant risk of physical harm to other persons. This charge can be used when there is a disregard for the potential consequences of the action.

**Risk:** The possibility of loss or injury.

**Screening/interview scoring system:** Part of the screening/interview process is the scoring of the forms to develop a rating score for the behavior. Different forms utilize different terms to represent the scoring result. Terms are assigned by different forms for various scoring outcomes. The terms do not indicate a typology or motivation of firesetting behavior, simply a term associated with the final score.

**Screening/interview process:** The process of utilizing specific forms and processes to meet with a youth and caregivers to gather information about the circumstances of the firesetting incident. After populating the screening/interview form, a scoring outcome will guide the interventionist in choosing the appropriate intervention service.



**Secondary prevention:** Secondary prevention entails intervention immediately or shortly after an incident has occurred. Examples include emergency response to an incident in progress or immediate/timely intervention after a firesetting incident has occurred.

**Stakeholders:** Agencies or community organizations with a vested interest in the existence and success of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

**Task force:** Community service agencies and people who support the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. Their combined efforts are beneficial for addressing the community problem of youth firesetting behavior. Each brings the skills of their discipline to the group, benefiting the collective understanding and capability of the task force. A youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force is sometimes referred to as allied agencies, coalition, etc.

**Tertiary prevention:** Tertiary prevention is longer-term interventions designed to reduce a negative impact or improve quality of life after an event. For example, long-term treatment of burn injuries or the rebuilding of a home after it was destroyed by a fire.

**Thinking errors:** Thinking errors are reasoning or thoughts that are not accurate or appropriate, often due to lack of understanding, information or guidance.

**Typology:** A systematic classification of different categories or study of types. Determining the typology of firesetting behavior helps characterize the behavior, so it can be aligned with necessary intervention services.

**Youth:** A person under the age of 18 or who is considered a dependent of an adult or a state authority. It is also used interchangeably to describe children, a child, kids, teenagers and adolescents.

**Youth fire misuse:** Improper interaction or behavior of a person under the age of 18 (generally) in relation to fire and fire tools.

**Youth firesetting prevention and intervention:** The term used for a comprehensive effort to address youth firesetting behavior in the community. It is most often used to describe the overall process of addressing youth firesetting behavior.

**Youth firesetting intervention program:** A term used to collectively describe all elements of an intervention program to include the major program components, program operational elements and other aspects of the program and how it operates.

This page intentionally left blank.

## **APPENDIX B**

**CASE FILE JACOB GANTZ, INCIDENT DATE:  
MAY 8**

This page intentionally left blank.

**FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT FROM  
MASSEY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE  
SERVICES FIRE MARSHAL**

MASSEY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES OFFICE OF FIRE INVESTIGATION

On May 8<sup>th</sup> 20\_\_\_, at 05:06 hours I was summoned at request of Battalion Chief Three to investigate a house fire at 812 Oak Road in Maryville, Michigan. I arrived on scene at 05:38, observing the fire to be primarily extinguished with overhaul operations conducted by firefighters.

The residence presented as a two-story wooden frame home with a detached garage to the rear of the structure. I photographed all sides of the structure and documented fire operations prior to conferring with the incident commander.

Upon contacting the incident commander, they advised that on fire department arrival, flames were visible on the C Charlie (rear) side of the structure and two teenage occupants were in need of rescue from a second-floor window on the A Alpha (front) side of the house. Firefighters utilized a ground ladder to rescue the two teenagers and fire attack crews suppressed most flames within five minutes.

Prior to entering the structure, I interviewed the four firefighters who initially entered the structure to suppress the fire. They advised the front door to the home was open as they approached the building, and an adult female was outside by the door screaming about two teenagers being trapped on the second floor. They assured the woman other firefighters were rescuing the teenagers and asked the woman where the fire was in the house. She stated, "All the way back on the first floor in the recreation area." The firefighter told me that while crawling to that area, they encountered thick smoke and significant heat from the fire. Once locating the room that was significantly involved in fire, they commenced extinguishment efforts. When asked where they saw the most fire, the lead firefighter said, "The back of the room in the left corner and above us across the ceiling."

Upon receiving clearance to enter the building, and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, I examined the interior of the home, working in sequential order from the areas of least damage to the room which displayed the greatest fire damage. That room was, in fact, the room described by the firefighters as the one to be on fire. Photographic documentation was taken of all areas.

Upon entering the apparent room of the fire's origin, I discovered clear lines of smoke and flame demarcation indicating the greatest amount of direct flame damage supported the firefighter's statement of fire in the back-left corner of the room. Discovered by firefighters, and in the place where they located it, was the remains of a two-pound propane torch. Also in the remains was a portion of wood paneling with what appeared to be some sort of flame generated etching of a name. These items were photographed, secured for future processing, and locked in the evidence carrier located in my response vehicle.

MASSEY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES OFFICE OF FIRE INVESTIGATION

As part of performing a thorough examination of the apparent area of origin, I estimated the point of fire origin to be approximately two feet off the floor in the southwest corner of the room. There were no portable heating sources found in the room. There was a television located in the front right side of the room with some types of electronic gaming devices extending to a small table located in the center of the room. The television was not connected to an electrical outlet. The only light sources to the room appeared to be ceiling lights.

I returned to the outside of the structure to locate adult members of the household. In the kitchen of a neighbor's home, I was introduced to Ms. Donna Gantz. Ms. Gantz advised she and her husband William Gantz own the home and it was occupied by them and their five children. She noted the family was blended from two previous marriages and includes a two-year-old male, seven-year-old male, twelve-year-old male, and two thirteen-year-old girls. When asked who was at home when the fire was discovered, Ms. Gantz said, "Everyone but my husband who works two jobs and one's night shift." When asked who discovered the fire, she said "My twelve-year-old son Jacob." When asked if she had any idea how the fire might have started, she said "I think Jacob did it."

Upon stating she believed Jacob was involved with the fire's origin, Ms. Gantz became emotional and started sobbing. She advised that Jacob is an exceptionally smart child but he "has issues," When asked what she meant, Ms. Gantz said Jacob has a mild form of Asperger's Syndrome and tends to get to the point of near obsession with things. Lately it has been electricity and fire. She said he also exhibits mood swings which include bursts of anger. He has a sleep disorder and routinely "gets up and tinkers around the house at all hours of the night." She also said, "He despises his two step-sisters and he and his step-father fight a lot."

When I asked if Jacob receives treatment for his condition(s), she indicated it was sporadic and that she and her husband routinely argue about whether Jacob should be on medicines prescribed by their primary care physician. She also said that Mr. Gantz's two teenage daughters from a previous marriage hate Jacob and wish he would "go away." When I asked if her husband has engaged in physical altercations with Jacob, she put her head down and nodded to indicate "yes."

I asked Ms. Gantz if she and I could speak with Jacob together about what happened, and she agreed. I accompanied Ms. Gantz to the neighbor's living room where the five children were located. Of interest, four of the children were in their bed clothing and Jacob was fully dressed in daytime wear.

Ms. Gantz, Jacob, and I returned to the kitchen area where I observed him to be of normal physical development for his age. After I explained who I was and why I was there, Jacob immediately became fidgety in the chair where he was seated.

When I asked Jacob to explain what he was doing when the fire started, he said he was awake and on the first floor of the home. When I asked what he was doing of the first floor of the

MASSEY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES OFFICE OF FIRE INVESTIGATION

house in the early morning hours, he answered, “just messing around like I do when I can’t sleep.” When I asked him to explain in greater detail what “just messing around” meant, he became agitated and said, “just making the house mine.”

I continued the interview with Jacob and asked him to explain how he became aware that a fire was happening in the home. He said he heard a popping sounding coming from the recreation room and went there from the kitchen to investigate. He said when he got to the door of the recreation room, he saw a fire burning in the corner of the room. When asked to explain what part of the room he saw on fire, he described the back left corner. When asked what he did when he saw the fire, he said “I went and woke up Mom.”

After a pause, I asked Jacob to explain what he thought may have started the fire. He said that the fire was likely caused by the gaming equipment the family had in the room. When I reminded Jacob that he saw the fire in the left corner of the room and the gaming equipment was on the opposite side of the room, he immediately broke eye contact with me and started fidgeting in the chair. He also added that he didn’t want to talk any more about the fire.

During the conversation with Jacob I noticed he not only smelled strongly of smoke, but his short sleeve shirt was discolored from what appeared to be smoke. The hair around his forehead appeared singed. Of particular concern were the presence of multiple small bruises on his upper arms and on the left side of his face. Also evident were multiple straight-line cut marks on his left forearm and wrist. There also appeared to be a small burn on his right hand.

When asked about these observations, and if he had hurt himself lately, Jacob focused his stare toward the floor, assumed a tense demeanor and remained silent. I noticed a slight twitching motion on his lips as well.

At this point I asked Jacob and Ms. Gantz if they would mind if I went outside to get something. Both indicated they did not mind and would wait for me to return. I went to my response vehicle and retrieved the piece of wooden paneling that had been placed in an evidence bag and secured. I took the clear sealed bag with the wood into the kitchen and sat back down at the kitchen table. I told Jacob that I had found this piece of wood in the area where I thought the fire started and asked if he could explain what it might be and how I could have found it near where the fire might have started.

Upon looking at the piece of wood paneling in the bag, Jacob became angry and stated, “Yes, I did it! Are you happy now?” When I asked, “Did what?”, he said “I started the fire.” When I asked him what he had been doing that started the fire, he said, “I made a stencil with my name on it and was burning my name into the wood wall.” When asked why he did it, he said “I want my named burned into this house, so everyone knows I’m part of this family.”

After pausing for a few moments, I asked Jacob if he was trying to burn down the house. He said, “Of course not. I was making a statement.” When asked if he realized that both he and his



MASSEY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES OFFICE OF FIRE INVESTIGATION

family could have been hurt badly or killed because of his actions, he said "I guess so." When asked a second time if he tried to put out the fire before going to get his mother, he said "Yes." I thanked Jacob for his honesty. His mother and I accompanied him back to the living room.

Ms. Gantz and I returned to the kitchen where she asked me "What do we do now?" I asked her if she believed Jacob clearly knew the difference between right and wrong behavior. She answered with an emphatic "Yes, he is a very smart kid."

I told her there are several things that must occur:

1. The fire was serious, lives were endangered, and Jacob had an "intent" to make a "statement." That alone demands the attention of Michigan youth justice officials. I told Ms. Gantz that I would be in contact with the agency to initiate referral of the case for investigation and potential legal actions.
2. In addition to the fire, and because I observed obvious cuts, bruises, and a burn on Jacob, I must report the findings to the Michigan Department of Social Service Child Welfare and Protection Unit. I explain this action was not only part of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention protocol, it was the law. I added that this action must occur immediately, and I would be doing so upon clearing the incident scene.
3. Since Jacob has a prior diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, coupled with a sleep disorder and anger issues, it is prudent the family contacts their primary care physician to seek advice.
4. Finally, because the community has an outstanding youth firesetting prevention and intervention taskforce, I would be submitting a referral to one of my partners, who serves as the chairperson of the group. A representative of the taskforce would contact Ms. Gantz within 24 hours. I told Ms. Gantz that all the allied agencies work closely together on youth firesetting cases with very successful outcomes.

I assured Ms. Gantz that these combined actions were part of the fire department's standard response to a situation like this fire incident. Ms. Gantz thanked me for my concern about her son and began sobbing again, saying "My husband will fight any mental health involvement because he does not believe in counseling or medications." "He is old school and believes strict rules backed up by corporal punishment is what will fix Jacob."

I told Ms. Gantz that an immediate combined approach to the situation would be helpful, and she readily agreed. I added that due to the urgency of the situation members of the YFS taskforce would be reaching out to her today. I then introduced Ms. Gantz to two representatives from the American Red Cross who had arrived at the scene.

I departed the incident scene at 07:51.

MASSEY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES OFFICE OF FIRE INVESTIGATION

/s/ Sara Smith

Fire Investigator, Massey County Fire and Rescue Services

Office of Fire Investigation

**DOCUMENTATION FROM MASSEY  
COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES  
INTERVENTION SPECIALIST**

**FIRE DEPARTMENT INTERVENTION SPECIALIST-SCREENING NARRATIVE**  
(Screening assessment documents to accompany this narrative)

Date/Time: May 11, 20xx 0930. Conducted in the Fire Department Headquarters Prevention Conference Room  
Family participants: Biological Mother Donna Gantz with 12yr old son Jacob A. Gantz  
Massey County Fire Intervention Specialist Carrie Barton conducted the screening assisted by Lt. Gabe Huron

**INCIDENT OVERVIEW:** Early morning (approx. 5am) of May 8<sup>th</sup> 20xx the Massey County Fire Dept responded to a significant structure fire at a single-family residence (detached garage) address: 812 Oak Road. Two teen occupants of the residence were rescued (ladder rescue) from 2<sup>nd</sup> floor by fire department. Initial investigation shows fire origin in family recreation room on 1<sup>st</sup> floor. There are seven family members of a blended family living in the home: two married adults and five children ranging from two-yrs. to 13-yrs old. No injuries but home appears to be a substantial loss (damage estimate not currently available). Investigator did find a propane torch and wood paneling burned by said torch which was later noted to be used in starting the fire. (*See Investigator comprehensive fire report for further details*).

**PARENT DISCUSSION:**

Bio mother Donna Gantz had noted to Massey County Fire Investigator at fire scene the morning of May 8<sup>th</sup> that she thought her 12-yr old son Jacob had started the fire. Jacob is the biological son of Donna Gantz and was adopted by William Gantz when he and Donna married 7 years ago. During the parent interview section of the risk screening, Ms. Gantz was forthright and her narrative of the fire incident was consistent with what she relayed on scene. She and her husband William have suspected intense fire interest and possible prior fire misuse (smell of smoke) from Jacob but no definitive evidence and when asked Jacob would deny having any part of prior smoke/fire incidents. When asked in further detail about these incidents Ms. Gantz noted that Jacob "is a handful" and both she and her husband just "let it drop" rather than press for details as they are both so busy. Mr. Gantz works two jobs and is rarely home. She also noted that her husband often exhibits "rage" towards Jacob and was extremely angry about the fire. Ms. Gantz was open in sharing that Jacob has been formally diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder, sleep apnea, is bi-polar, and exhibits intermittent explosive disorder. Ms. Gantz also stated that while Jacob has been prescribed medications for these issues, he currently is not taking any of the prescribed medications. Jacob also is no longer receiving any mental/behavioral treatment as he has received in the past; when questioned why she noted that her husband William "does not believe in therapy" and he does not think medications are appropriate for Jacob. The only outside assistance Jacob does see is the family primary care physician. In-school counseling is available through the school Jacob attends. However, Jacob does well academically so she has not sought counseling through school nor elsewhere. When asked about family dynamics, Ms. Gantz noted that Jacob does not get along well with any of his siblings (bio or otherwise) but in particular "hates" his sisters (twins). Ms. Gantz used the term "shun" to describe how Jacob's sisters treated him. The parental section of the interview concluded with Ms. Gantz expressing how "overwhelmed" she felt with the family stresses and Jacobs increasingly difficult behavior. When asked about the fire service sending a referral for both Jacob and the family in its entirety to a mental/behavioral health agency, Ms. Gantz was quite open to the idea but expressed concern that her husband might show resistance as he has shown in the past. Referral paperwork was provided at this time and completed by Donna Gantz.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT INTERVENTION SPECIALIST-SCREENING NARRATIVE**  
(Screening assessment documents to accompany this narrative)

**YOUTH DISCUSSION:**

Jacob was forthright and quite open to answering questions during the screening. He is surprisingly well-spoken for a 12-yr. old. He did not deny involvement in the fire but seemed to “check out” when discussing what consequences could have happened from this fire incident. When asked about how he feels about school Jacob responded with “Meh.” He likes science, but all his classmates are “idiots.” When asked about friends, in school or outside, Jacob mentioned that he has one friend, Tyler, whom he met earlier in the week. Tyler is his only friend. Jacob completely shut down when asked about his relationships with his siblings. Jacob noted that the family most often “hangs out” in the recreation room, but that he hates that room as he is “invisible” in there. Jacob was open about his prior fire misuse. When asked how many times he has misused fire prior to this incident he stated, “lots of times- too many to count.” When asked specially about this fire, Jacob admitted that he hid a blowtorch that his dad kept in the garage in his bedroom for about two weeks prior to “practice” lighting it. Jacob woke up early the morning of May 8<sup>th</sup> (he was the only one awake in the house), he got dressed, ate some cereal, and it was then he decided to etch his name on a wall to “prove” he really was a member of this family. Jacob repeated several times that he did not want to hurt anyone nor burn the house down. He wanted to “be noticed.” However, when pressed about his understanding of what could have happened that morning Jacob refused to discuss. When asked (several times) if Jacob would do something different the morning of May 8<sup>th</sup>, he did not answer.

**INTERVENTION PROCESS:**

The May 11<sup>th</sup> screening with both Jacob and his biological mother Donna Gantz was uneventful. However, from the screening interview there appears to be significant issues which need to be addressed which most likely contributed to the fire incident on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

- \* Immediate referral to partnering mental/behavioral health treatment agency is needed.
- \* If compliance to receive treatment is resisted, intervention from Dept of Human Services will be needed. There appears to be, at best, a lack of home supervision-boarding on negligence, from the parents.
- \* Fire safety education is needed for the entire family.
- \* An *In Lieu of Citation* would be appropriate to ensure compliance with the above recommendations.

The Risk Assessment concluded at 11:05am. From the Risk Assessment, Jacob is a DEFINITE (boarding on EXTREME) fire risk and above recommended follow-up should be immediate.

Carrie Barton  
Massey County Fire Intervention Specialist



Youth Fire Intervention (Form #1)  
INTAKE INFORMATION

Youth Information:

Date: May 9, 20xx

Name - First: JACOB Middle: A. Last: GANTZ

Gender: MALE DOB: SEPT. 11, 20xx Age at time of incident: 12

Address: 812 OAK ROAD

City: MASSEY GROVE State: OK Zip: 73101 Phone: 405-378-3778

Is the youth a smoker? Yes  No

What is the youth's primary language? ENGLISH

Race: WHITE Ethnicity: NON HISPANIC

School attending: FRANKLIN MS Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

What types of social media does the youth use? SNAPCHAT, TIKTOK, INSTAGRAM

Referred by: (Fire Investigator - Massey County) Address: (2324 WELLER DRIVE)

Youth Medical History:

Does the child have any medical or mental health conditions? Yes  No

If yes, what? ASPERGERS, OCD, SLEEP APNEA, Bi-POLAR, EXPLOSIVE DISORDER

Is the youth receiving treatment for those conditions? Yes  No

If yes, what? (INTERMITTANT - IN PAST; HAS BEEN FORMALLY DIAGNOSED BUT NO FOLLOW-UP TREATMENT)

Is the child on medication? Yes  No

If yes, what? NOTE: PRESCRIBED, BUT NO COMPLIANCE TREATMENT

Other agencies working with the family? FAMILY PCP, NO SPECIFIC MENTAL / BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT

Has there been a stressful event in the youth's life over the last six months? \_\_\_\_\_

BLENDED FAMILY w/ ONGOING STRESSFUL FAMILY DYNAMICS

**Caregiver Information:**

Family type (Birth parents, single parent, divorced, adopted, etc.): BIRTH Mom & ADOPTIVE DAD

Responsible Adult #1: Lives with child?  Yes  No Relationship: BIO Mom

Name: DONNA GANTZ

Address: 812 OAK ROAD

City: MASSEY GROVE State: OK Zip: 73101 Phone: 405-378-3778

Email: dgantz@gmail.com Highest level of education: HIGH SCHOOL GED

Responsible Adult #2: Lives with child?  Yes  No Relationship: DAD (ADOPTED BY)

Name: WILLIAM GANTZ

Address: 812 OAK ROAD

City: MASSEY GROVE State: OK Zip: 73101 Phone: 405-378-8773

Email: billygantz@gmail.com Highest level of education: ASSOCIATED DEGREE

**Youth / Family Residence Information:**

Number of children in primary residence: 7 ~~includes~~ 5 children + 2 parents

Name of sibling: ANASTASIA Gender: Female Age: 13 (step) <sup>William</sup>

Name of sibling: IZZY Gender: Female Age: 13 (step) <sup>William</sup>

Name of sibling: ~~HENRY~~ JACOB Gender: Male Age: 12 (Danna-8.0)

Name of sibling: GABE Gender: Male Age: 7 <sup>William</sup>

Does youth participate in free lunch program? Yes  No  <sup>William</sup> <sup>Danna</sup>

Smokers in the household? Yes  No

Type of residence (Single family home, apartment, etc.): SINGLE FAMILY  
(detached garage)

**Fire Scene Information:**

Date of Fire: May 8, 2014 Time: 0500 Run Number: 71758

Did the child or anyone else sustain any injuries? Yes  No  (minor singed hair)

If yes, what type? \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Fire: FIRST FLOOR, RECREATION ROOM OF FAMILY HOME - (SOUTHWEST CORNER)

If location was a structure, was it occupied?  Yes  No

Type of Fire: STRUCTURE (RESIDENCE)

Ignition Device: PROPANE TORCH Novelty lighter? Yes  No

Dollar Loss: Undetermined @ this time Flammable Liquids? Yes  No

Other Details:

*Residence is not inhabitable - significant smoke damage throughout*

Accomplice(s): *None known @ this time*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Information:**





**Youth Fire Intervention** (After assessment is complete)  
**INTERVIEWERS OBSERVATIONS**

Does parent appear indifferent or unconcerned about the firesetting?  Yes\*  No  
 Does child appear neglected or abused? *potentially neglected*  Yes\*  No  
 Is residence sloppy?  Yes\*  No

Youth behavior and mannerisms:  nervous  stubborn  good eye contact  shy  
 open  polite

Youth mood:  angry  sad  happy  calm  depressed  excited

Youth way of thinking:  rational  appropriate  scattered  logical  illogical

Parent(s) behavior and mannerisms:  fidgety  nervous  stubborn  
 good eye contact  shy  open  polite

Parent(s) mood:  angry <sup>Dad</sup>  sad <sup>Mom</sup>  happy  calm  depressed <sup>Mom</sup>  excited  defensive <sup>Dad</sup>

Parent(s) way of thinking:  rational  appropriate  scattered  logical  illogical

Characteristics:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 Age appropriate Assertive, low self-esteem Defiant, fights, unfeeling

Family environment:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 Two parents, concerned Inattentive parents / Single parent, inattentive

School experiences:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 No problems *Academically* Learning problems Problems, suspended

Circumstances of fire:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 At home, matches/lighter Outside, for attention Malicious, flammables

Motivation for firesetting:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 Accidental Peer pressure Anger, peer pressure

Age:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 3 to 10 years 5 to 13 years 10 to 17 years

Overall rating:  Some risk  Moderate risk  High risk



## Youth Fire Intervention Class Agreement (Learning level / age 10+)

I, JACOB GANTZ agree to the following:  
(print youth's name)

1. I agree to be completely honest about my fire setting offense and accept full responsibility for my actions.
2. I will actively participate in group and individual sessions to the satisfaction of staff and other group members.
3. I will not talk about any information regarding another class member outside of this program.
4. I will show respect to instructors and other class members and follow the rules of the program.
5. I understand that if I break this agreement I can be sent home and all costs of the class will be forfeited.

May 11, 2011  
Date

Jacob Gantz  
Youth

May 11, 2011  
Date

Dana Gantz  
Parent or Guardian

### PARENT CHECKLIST

Youth Name JACOB GANTZ Date of birth: 9/11/01 xy

Your name Donna GANTZ Relationship to youth Bi, mom

My child takes medication for a behavioral problem. Y  N

Are there smokers in the home? Y  N

Please check if any of the following statements are true for your child.

- | Yes                                 | No                                  | Sometimes                           |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| —                                   | —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | My child has set fire or played with fire tools more than once. <i>Suspected</i> |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | My child has set fires outside of the home before.                               |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | Other people in the home have set fires.   |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | My child is fascinated by fire (for example, often stares at flames).            |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | My child has altered or misused fireworks.                                       |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | My child has easy access to lighters and/or matches.                             |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | There is a wood stove, fireplace, candles or incense frequently in use at home.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | —                                   | My child fights with brothers and sisters.                                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | —                                   | My child argues with <sup>Dr</sup> parents/caregivers.                           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | —                                   | My child has witnessed parents arguing.  |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | My child spends as much time as desired with father/male caregiver.              |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | My child spends as much time as desired with mother/female caregiver.            |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | There has been a traumatic event in my child's life or family in the last year.  |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | There has been physical or sexual abuse in the family.                           |
| —                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | —                                   | My family moves frequently.  |

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

- — My child has been suspended from school.
- — My child has few friends.
- — My child is often picked on or bullies by others.
- — My child has friends who are a bad influence. *NO FRIENDS*
- — My child has a history of lying.
- — My child has stolen or shoplifted.
- — My child destroys their own possessions.
- — My child has special needs.
- — My child has been in counseling. *in past*
- — My child is physically aggressive or hurts others. *Siblings*
- — My child has intentionally harmed or injured an animal.
- — I feel like I have no control over my child.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

### PARENT INTERVIEW

Youth Name JACOB GANTZ Date May 11, 20<sup>xx</sup>

Interviewer Name CARRIE BARTON Score 22

**Instructions:** Place a check mark next to the scoring level that best describes the situation for this youth. Expand the questions as you feel necessary to complete the interview with confidence. Use the comment line for anything that seems out of the ordinary or supports your impressions.

A. What was the parents' or caregivers' response to the fire?

Suggested Questions:

**Mom, Dad, what was your reaction to the fire?**

Scoring

1 The reaction of the parents to the fire was immediate and appropriate response, with concern for any victims.

2 The reaction of the parents to the fire was one that appears too lax or too punitive.

3 The reaction of the parents to the fire was either nonexistent or was an immediate and overly punitive response (such as burning the youth's hands).

Comments: Dad- William- extremely angry about incident; rage towards Jacob

B. Is there a family history with fire?

Suggested questions:

**Did anybody else in the family ever play with fire or get burned from a fire that got out of control?**

**Have you ever had a house fire?**

Scoring:

1 There is no traceable history of fire in the family.

2 There is some history in the family that the youth has or may have heard about.

There is a fire history about which the youth has direct knowledge.

Comments:

William & Donna suspected post-fire misuse (would smell smoke) but no definitive evidence

C. Does the youth have a history of fire play or firesetting?

Suggested questions:

**How many other times has your child lit matches, played with a lighter or burned things of little or no value?**

**Do you know if he has ever threatened anybody with fire or if he/she has been hurt by fire himself/herself?**

Scoring:

- 1 This is the first known incidence of unauthorized use of fire for the youth.
- 2 The youth has a sporadic history of unauthorized use of fire. There was little or no damage from previous.
- 3 Family members have used fire inappropriately. The youth's home is not fire safe.

Comments:

Again - just suspected misuse of fire

D. What kind of modeling is going on in the home? How did the parents/caregivers teach their youth about fire? What kinds of fire safety practices occur in the home? Are there any cultural or traditional ways the family uses fire?

Suggested questions:

**How did you teach your child about fire?**

**Do you have a working smoke detector?**

**Do you have candles or a woodstove? How do you store matches and lighters?**

**How does your family use fire?**

**Are there smokers in the home?**

Scoring:

- 1 Appropriate fire safety is observed in the home. Smoke detectors work, woodstoves are safely installed. Parents, siblings or other family members avoid modeling fire play.
- 2 There is modeling of using fire for fun at home and fire safety is only moderately observed by parents and siblings.
- 3 Family members have used fire inappropriately. The youth's home is not fire safe.

Comments:

No direct family fire misuse; but clearly lack of time/attention to teach w/ fire (or anything else)

E. How is the youth supervised?

Suggested questions:

**When you are not at home, who takes care of the child?**

Scoring:

- 1 The youth has good, continual parental and/or caregiver supervision.
- 2 The youth has some supervision, but the supervision is often sporadic.
- 3 The youth has minimal supervision.

Comments:

Appearance bordering on neglect - Unsupervised much of time

F. Does the youth have any problems in school?

Suggested questions:

**Is the youth having any problems in school?**

**Does your child have any learning problems?**

**Is your child in any special classrooms or programs?**

Scoring:

- 1 The youth has minimal problems in school.
- 2 The youth gets some school referrals.
- 2 The youth receives special education services.
- 3 The youth has been suspended or expelled from school.

Comments:

William (Dad) has not approved any in-school counseling, especially since Jacob does well academically

G. Has the youth ever been in counseling?

Suggested questions:

**Has your child ever seen the school counselor or other mental health provider for problems?**

Scoring:

- 1 The youth has never been in counseling.
- 2 The youth has been in counseling in the past.
- 3 The youth is currently in counseling or has been referred for counseling.

Comments:

Formal diagnosis were made by mental professionals but not followed up on.

H. How would you describe your youth's friends?

Suggested questions:

**Do you like your kid's friends?**

**Are they a positive influence on your child?**

Scoring:

- 1 The youth has a healthy, supportive peer group.
- 2 The youth has some peer support, but his/her behavior is influenced by peers (bad friends).
- 3 The youth has little or no peer support, is shunned by peers and is isolated and withdrawn.

Comments:

Even family appears to "shun" Jacob -  
certainly siblings do

I. Has any kind of crisis or traumatic event happened within your family? Please describe.

Scoring:

- 1 There has not been a traumatic family experience in the past year. — > 1 yr - but not resolved
- 2 There has been a major traumatic family experience in the past year.
- 3 There has been a major traumatic family event in the past that may be influencing the youth's behavior.

Comments:

"Trauma" a strong term - but lots of stressful family dynamics w/ this lg blended family

J. Would you be willing to seek additional help for your child such as taking him/her to counseling?

Scoring:

- 1 The youth's family acknowledges the seriousness of the firesetting and seeks help appropriately.
- 2 The family protects the child, seeks to blame others and denies their own and the child's responsibility for the fire.
- 3 The family doesn't seem to take the behavior seriously and simply wants the fire department to "fix" the youth and/or doesn't see the need for other services.

Comments:

Dad - William does not believe counseling/therapy is effective, especially since Jacob is academically gifted. Also will not comply w/ Rx prescribed.



## SCORING AND REFERRAL PROCEDURE

Add the face value of the checked responses for both the youth and the parent interview. Enter the total on the lines provided below:

Total Score: (Youth Interview) \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent Interview) 22

**If youth questions D, J and / or L were scored with a 3 response, consider referring this youth for a crisis evaluation.**

**If the total number for the youth interview is from 14-19 then:** The fire behavior appears to be basically experimental in nature. This youth does not have a history of fire behavior. The intervention for this category is fire education for the youth and the family. There are numerous fire education intervention curricula available to use with this child. The family should set clear rules about fire use in the home and practice home fire safety. YFPI Specialists should emphasize the importance of working smoke alarms and home escape planning for these families. Younger firesetters do not understand the consequences of their actions so it is important that parents/caregivers increase their knowledge of fire safe practices.

**If the total number for the youth interview is 20-42 then:** The youth has a sporadic history of firesetting and needs to be referred to other community agencies that serve children and their families. Many of these youths will require a more comprehensive mental health evaluation to determine the motives for his/her behavior. Youth who score in this range are setting fires as a cry for attention, as a response to a crisis event, to express anger or to defy authority. Many youth use fire because they are seeking power and control. The firesetting in this case is often a symptom of other family, school or peer group problems.

In addition to referring the family for further evaluation, YFPI Specialists need to provide fire science education. Families often do not understand the power of fire and need to increase their knowledge of home fire safety practices. Again, emphasizing the importance of working smoke alarms and practicing home escape planning. Helping educate the youth about how their firesetting behavior affected the community and the risk involved is another way YFPI Specialists can provide a service to the youth and their family and hold youth accountable for their behavior. Curricula for educating adolescent are available.

**If the total number for the parent interview is from 10-15 provide fire safety education to the youth and family.**

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*



## Youth Fire Intervention (Form #2)

### PARTICIPATION RELEASE AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

The Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT) uses the youth firesetting assessment tool that was developed by the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office. This tool evaluates a child's involvement in fire activity.

The assessment evaluates the firesetting behavior by reviewing six types of individual characteristics: demographic, physical, cognitive, emotional, motivation and psychiatric.

Based on the results of the evaluation, your child's tendencies will place him/her in one of the following areas of concern:

- Some concern** Needs educational intervention.
- Moderate concern** Needs referral for evaluation by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist and educational intervention.
- High concern** Needs immediate referral for evaluation by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist and educational intervention counseling.

If educational intervention is indicated, the YFIT will offer further educational activity for your child. Participation in the program is not a guarantee that firesetting behavior will stop.

Depending on the individual case, the school your child attends, local law enforcement, social services, mental health or other agencies may become involved.

Upon request, the questions asked in this evaluation may be viewed prior to signing this release.

I, Donna Garte, have read the previous statement and do hereby grant permission for my child, Jacob Garte, to participate in the Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention program. Although I understand that YFIT does everything in its power to protect juvenile information, I authorize release of information regarding my child to such other governmental entities and agencies as may be deemed appropriate by the intervention specialist.

Donna Garte  
Parent / Guardian signature

May 11 2020  
Date / Time

Jacob Garte  
Youth signature

[Signature]  
Witness signature



Youth Fire Intervention (Form #3)  
RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Youth's name: JACOB GANTZ Case #: 71758

**Authorization for Release and Receipt of Confidential Information**

By signing below, I agree to the terms of the release form.

I understand that the Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT) includes representatives of fire and police departments, the juvenile justice and probation systems, public and private mental health facilities and their associates, public and private children-and-youth social services, the state mental health care consultant and the local school system.

I hereby authorize YFIT, including all of the agencies listed above, to receive any and all information deemed necessary from the sources listed below:

- \*Referral/admission information
- \*Education reports
- \*Comprehensive evaluation reports
- \*Fire/police/probation reports
- \*Psychiatric assessment
- \*Progress notes
- \*Individual education plan
- \*Assessment interview
- \*Psychological testing
- \*Social history
- \*Discharge summary

For the purposes of:

- \*Planning intervention
- \*Reporting problems/concerns
- \*Coordinating services

I hereby authorize YFIT to provide the following types of information to agencies deemed appropriate:

- \*Referral information
- \*Intervention plan assessment
- \*Progress notes
- \*Case reports

Furthermore, I hereby release YFIT and its authorized agents from any and all legal responsibility or liability stemming from the release of information indicated and authorized herein.

Information released with this authorization will not be given, sold, transferred, or in any way be relayed to any other person or agency not specified above, without written consent.

I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time by submitting a written request to the ~~Minnesota~~ Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program.

Counseling provider name: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist name: SUNNY HILLARD

Address: 2550 Happy Trails Loop Phone: 405-963-8780

Ronna Gantz  
Parent / Guardian

May 11, 20xx  
Date



**Youth Fire Intervention** (After assessment is complete)  
**YOUTH FIRE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

Youth Name: JACOB GANTZ Interviewer: CARRIE BARTON

Date: May 11, 20<sup>xx</sup> Start Time: 1300 End Time: 1430

Location of assessment: MASSEY FIRE HEADQUARTERS

People present: Big Mom (Diana), YOUTH JACOB GANTZ

Classification: Curiosity Delinquent Thrill Seeking Crisis Special Problem

Pre-test Score:      Family Risk Score 22 Child Risk Score 32 *Cry for attention*

- Action Plan:
- No need for further action
  - Fire Education Class
  - Community Impact Report
  - Education one on one
  - Follow up (to be completed 3 months after initial interview)
  - Homework assignment
  - Refer to other agency (see below)
  - Sent to Police for charging
  - Business card given
  - Other:

Referred to: HAPPY TRAILS THERAPY  
Agency

SWANNY HILLARD 405-963-8780  
Contact name Telephone number

Will file be transferred to referred agency?  Yes  No  
**If yes, release of confidential information form must be completed!**

Summary of assessment- start with summary of parent information, then juvenile information, finish with overall summary and recommendation. (use additional pages)

      
*(attached)*

**YOUTH INTERVIEW**

Youth Name JACOB GANTZ Date May 11, 20<sup>XX</sup>

Interviewer Name CARRIE BARTON Score 32

**Instructions:** Place a check mark next to the scoring level that best describes the situation for this youth. Expand the questions as you feel necessary to complete the interview with confidence. Use the comment line for anything that seems out of the ordinary or supports your impressions.

**A. Is the youth experiencing any school problems?**

Suggested questions:

*How's school? Meh*

*What do you like about school? Science*

*What don't you like? Do you get in trouble at school? Not turning in homework*

*Do you have lots of friends at school? 0*

*Who is your best friend? - Tyler - met him this week*

**Scoring:**

- 1 The youth likes school and has minimal problems.
- 2 The youth has some trouble in school either socially or academically.
- 3 The youth has frequently been in trouble at school, hates the teachers, doesn't like the classes, has been expelled or suspended, etc.

**Comments:**

*Academically does well. little/no social interacting @ school*

**B. How does the youth get along with the others in the neighborhood?**

Suggested questions:

*Do you have any friends in the neighborhood that you hang out with?*

*Do you like them?*

*Do they like you?*

*Do you ever get picked on by the kids in the neighborhood?*

**Scoring:**

- 1 The youth has friends in the neighborhood.
- 2 The youth gets into fights frequently or has few friends. The youth may get bullied.
- 3 The youth is involved in a gang or hanging out with others involved in delinquent or criminal behavior.

**Comments:**

*Neighborhood kids "bug no". Classmates are "idiots"*

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

C. What was set on fire? Was there anything significant about the object?

Suggested questions:

*Tell me about what was burned? - wall (wood paneling)*

*Tell me about the fire.*

*I wonder why you wanted to burn?*

*Have you ever burned this before? NO*

*What other types of things have you burned? - Lots of items "too many to count"*

*Whose stuff did you burn?*

Scoring:

- \_1 The object that was burned had little emotional significance for the youth. (i.e. toilet paper, leaves or trash).
- \_2 The object that was burned had some emotional significance for the youth (i.e. plastic army figures, other person's possessions).
- X3 The object that was burned had emotional significance for the youth or someone else (i.e. sibling's crib or favorite toy, a parent's or caregiver's possession).

Comments:

*Jacob readily admitted to "etching" his name on wall to "prove" he's a part of this family*

D. Where was the fire set? Was there significance to that location?

Suggested questions:

*Where did the fire start? Recreation room*

*If at home: What room were you in or were you outside? Inside*

*If not at home: Do you go to this place often? Do you like it there?*

Scoring:

- \_1 The fire was started in a place where the youth plays such as his/her bedroom, a closet, a fort, a hiding place.
- X2 The fire was started in a place with community significance i.e. church, a school, a park, in the forest.
- \_3 The fire was set in a building occupied with people with the intent to place people at risk.

Comments:

*The recreation room is where the family "hangs out" - Jacob hates that room as he stated "I am invisible in there"*

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

E. How much planning was done prior to the fire?

Suggested questions:

- Tell me what you were doing right before the fire?**
- Did you think about how you were going to start the fire?**
- Where did you get the things that were burned?**
- What was used to light the fire? Where did it come from?**

**Scoring:**

- 1 The fire was started using available materials; the act of firesetting was spontaneous and done without planning. Matches and lighters were readily available.
- 2 There was some pre-planning for the fire and some gathering of materials; however, the fire was not especially thought out.
- 3 There was definite planning for the fire, materials were sought out, and matches and lighters were stashed and/or hidden at the site beforehand. Accelerants may have been used.

Comments: *Jacob hid the blow torch in his room for about 2 weeks prior to used - "produced" lightning & putting out*

F. Who was with the youth at the time of fire?

Suggested questions:

- Was anyone with you when the fire started?**
- If yes, who?**
- What did they say about the fire?**
- Did the person with you do anything as the fire started burning?**

**Scoring:**

- 1 The youth was with many peers/siblings when the fire was set.
- 2 The youth was with other peers/siblings and this youth might have instigated the fire.
- 3 The youth was alone when the fire was set.

Comments: *Jacob was the only family member awake @ time of fire.*

G. What was the youth's response to the fire?

Suggested questions:

- What was the first thing you did when the fire started to burn?**
- What was the next thing?**
- Did you tell someone (an adult) about the fire?**
- If so, who was it: When was it?**

**Scoring:**

- 1 The youth tried to extinguish the fire and called for help.
- 1 The youth engaged in match or lighter play.
- 2 The youth may have made some attempts to extinguish the fire, but called for help only after others discovered the fire.
- 3 The youth ignored the fire, did not call for help, stayed to watch, or left the fire scene.

Comments: *Jacob stated he didn't want anyone hurt - just wanted to be "noticed"*

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

H. How did the youth feel after the fire?

Suggested questions:

**What did your caregiver say about the fire?**

**Was anyone angry with you about the fire?**

**Do you care what others think of you after starting the fire?**

**Do you feel like you did something bad or did the fire scare you?**

**Did you think you would get into trouble?**

**Scoring**

1 The youth shows remorse for the fire.

2 The youth showed interest in how others reacted.

3 The youth is unconcerned about others' reactions or is pleased with the fire.

Comments:

Why asked if Jacob understood the consequence of what might have happened. Jacob seemed to "check out"

I. Was the youth supervised when the fire occurred?

Suggested questions:

**When you were playing around with the matches and lighters, where was mom or dad?**

**Was anybody at home at the time? Who was taking care of you?**

**Scoring:**

1 Parents or caregivers were home at the time or youth was under appropriate supervision.

2 Parents or caregivers were home but unavailable or not directly supervised.

3 The youth was left alone or with younger children.

Comments:

Early morning hours - everyone but Jacob was sleeping

J. How knowledgeable is the youth about fire? How much does the youth understand about the dangers of fire? Does the youth use fire for power or control?

Suggested questions:

**Did you think that the fire could get out of control and get really big?**

**Do you feel you can control a fire that you start?**

**Can you determine how big the fire will get? How?**

**What did you want to have happen when you started the fire?**

**Scoring:**

1 The youth is knowledgeable about some aspects of fire survival but is unaware of the destructiveness or speed of fire.

2 The youth may indicate some concern about the dangers and risk of firesetting but thinks they can control it

3 The youth does have an understanding of fire and uses it to defy authority, gain attention or express anger

Comments:

Clearly fire set in a attempt to be noticed in a house with complicated dynamics

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*



**K.** Has the family experienced any kind of crisis in the past six months?

Suggested questions:

Tell me about home

Do you like being at home? *No!*

Is there anything about home that you don't like? *My sisters are "evil"*

Has anything happened at home in the last six months that upset you?

Is there anything different about home lately?

**Scoring:**

1 There has been no major crisis in the family in the last six months.

2 There have been some changes in the family structure in the last six months, ie: divorce, death, moving, etc.

3 The family is in a state of crisis or chaos.

Comments:

*Family not in crisis, but Jacob is crisis*

**L.** Does the youth have a fire history?

Suggested questions:

*Tell me the other times you have burned things?*

*What was the smallest fire? What was the largest fire?*

*Have you ever used an accelerant like gasoline or lighter fluid?*

*How about fireworks? Have you ever altered fireworks?*

*needs attention & family support*

**Scoring:**

1 This is the first known incidence of firesetting.

2 The youth admitted to setting from 2—5 fires.

3 The youth has started more than 5 unsupervised fires.

Comments:

*As noted above, Jacob has set "too many" to*

**M.** Has the youth ever been burned?

Suggested questions.

*Have you ever been hurt by fire?*

*Tell me what happened?*

*Where did it happen? Who was involved?*

*count" - prior fires*

**Scoring:**

The youth has never been burned.

The youth has been burned unintentionally.

The youth has been burned by another person and may have scars from this burn.

Comments:

*Remarkably, Jacob has sustained 0 injuries despite multiple & fire misused*

N. How concerned was the youth for accepting responsibility for the fire?

Suggested questions:

*Now the fire is out and you have had a chance to think about what has happened, would you do it again? - No response*

*Tell me your reasons or why this fire occurred?*

Scoring:

\_1 The youth acknowledges the seriousness of the firesetting and accepts help appropriately.

2 The youth acknowledges the seriousness of the firesetting but seeks to blame others and denies his/her own responsibility.

\_3 The youth denies the seriousness of the firesetting and his/her own responsibility for it or takes full responsibility for it because he/she intended to cause destruction or injury.

Comments:

*Deep-set anger towards family (namely step-sister)*

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN  
SERVICES CENTRALIZED INTAKE;  
REPORT OF ACTUAL OR SUSPECTED  
CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

**A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**



USED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

XXXXXXXXXX  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF XXXXXXXX  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
CENTRALIZED INTAKE

XXXXXXXXXX  
DIRECTOR

06/14/202X

Fire Inspector Sara Smith  
Massey County Fire & Rescue  
12345 Main Street  
Maryville, MI 12345

Intake ID: ABCDE123  
Complaint Date: 05/08/202X  
Date of Disposition: 05/08/202X

Thank you for the report you made to the Centralized Intake unit of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). The Children's Protective Services Centralized Intake unit has carefully reviewed the complaint you made to MDHHS. This is to notify you that a Children's Protective Services investigation is not required, based on one or more of the following factors:

- The complaint did not meet one of the legal and policy criteria for investigation.
- The family is already working with Children's Protective Services and the information you reported was provided to the assigned worker.
- Information you reported should be investigated by an agency or department other than Children's Protective Services and your report was transferred accordingly.

MDHHS is unable to provide any further details because the information is confidential in accordance with Section 722.627, Sec.7 of the Child Protection Law.

If you have concerns or questions about the action taken in response to your complaint of suspected child abuse or neglect, please contact the Mandated Reporter Hotline at 1-877-xxx-xxxx or you may e-mail [xxxxxxxx@state.gov](mailto:xxxxxxxx@state.gov). Please refer to the Intake ID listed above on this letter.

We appreciate your efforts to report child abuse or neglect. If you obtain additional information and believe another report should be made, please call 855-444-3911.

Thank you.

Department of Health and Human Services  
12345 Main Street, Capitol City, MI 48100

**A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

**REPORT OF ACTUAL OR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Was Complaint Phoned to MDHHS? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    ▶ If yes, Intake ID # <u>ABCDE123</u> ▶ If no, contact Centralized Intake (855-444-3911) immediately				
<b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> REPORTING PERSON: Complete items 1-19 (20-28 should be completed by medical personnel, if applicable). Send to Centralized Intake at the address listed on page 2.				1. Date <b>05/08/202X</b>
2. List of Child(ren) Suspected of Being Abused or Neglected. <b>To insert additional rows, tab at the end of last row to create a new row.</b>				
<b>NAME</b>	<b>BIRTH DATE</b>	<b>SOCIAL SECURITY #</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>RACE</b>
Jacob A. Gantz	01/14/200X		Male	White and Black or African American
3. Mother's Name Donna Gantz	06/02/198X		Female	White
4. Father's Name Biological father George Williams is deceased	Unknown		Male	Black
5. Child(ren)'s Address (No. & Street) 812 Oak Road (where fire occurred)	6. City Maryville	7. County Massey	8. Phone No. 313-000-0001	
9. Name of Alleged Perpetrator of Abuse or Neglect William Gantz	10. Relationship to Child(ren) Step-father and adoptive father			
11. Person(s) The Child(ren) Living With When Abuse/Neglect Occurred Donna & William Gantz & 4 siblings/step-sibs	12. Address, City & Zip Code Where Abuse/Neglect Occurred 812 Oak Road, Maryville, 12345			
13. Describe Injury or Conditions and Reason for Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect Observed multiple dark purplish contusions on Jacob's right upper inner arm and on the left side of his face; also noted multiple lacerations on his left forearm and wrist that were approximately 1-2 inches in length and in varying stages of healing (some were open with oozing blood and others with a crust/scab present) and an approximately 0.5 inch circular burn mark on his right hand. Mother stated "he [Jacob] despises his two step-sisters and he and his step-father fight a lot." When Mother was directly asked if William Gantz has had physical altercations with Jacob, she nodded her head yes. Jacob involved in starting a fire in their home because "I want my named burned into this house, so everyone knows I'm part of this family...I was making a statement." Previous firesetting incidents suspected to be started by Jacob have occurred, indicating ongoing unsafe home environment and inadequate supervision. Mother reports that Step-Father refuses medical treatment for Jacob for known diagnosed mental health conditions.				
14. Source of Complaint (Add reporter code below)				
01 Private Physician/Physician's Assistant	11 School Nurse	42 MDHHS Facility Social Worker		
02 Hosp/Clinic Physician/Physician's Assistant	12 Teacher	43 DMH Facility Social Worker		
03 Coroner/Medical Examiner	13 School Administrator	44 Other Public Social Worker		
04 Dentist/Register Dental Hygienist	14 School Counselor	45 Private Agency Social Worker		
05 Audiologist	21 Law Enforcement	46 Court Social Worker		
06 Nurse (Not School)	22 Domestic Violence Providers	47 Other Social Worker		
07 Paramedic/EMT	23 Friend of the Court	48 FIS/ES Worker/Supervisor		
08 Psychologist	25 Clergy	49 Social Services Specialist/Manager (CPS, FC, etc.)		
09 Marriage/Family Therapist	31 Child Care Provider	56 Court Personnel		
10 Licensed Counselor	41 Hospital/Clinic Social Worker			
15. Reporting Person's Name Fire Investigator Sara Smith	Report Code (see above) 07	15a. Name of Reporting Organization (school, hospital, etc.) Massey County Fire & Rescue		
15b. Address (No. & Street) 12345 Main Street	15c. City Maryville	15d. State MI	15e. Zip Code 12345	15f. Phone Number 313-000-1234
16. Reporting Person's Name	Report Code (see above)	16a. Name of Reporting Organization (school, hospital, etc.)		
16b. Address (No. & Street)	16c. City	16d. State	16e. Zip Code	16f. Phone Number
17. Reporting Person's Name	Report Code (see above)	17a. Name of Reporting Organization (school, hospital, etc.)		
17b. Address (No. & Street)	17c. City	17d. State	17e. Zip Code	17f. Phone Number

**A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

18. Reporting Person's Name		Report Code (see above)	18a. Name of Reporting Organization (school, hospital, etc.)			
18b. Address (No. & Street)		18c. City	18d. State	18e. Zip Code	18f. Phone Number	
19. Reporting Person's Name		Report Code (see above)	19a. Name of Reporting Organization (school, hospital, etc.)			
19b. Address (No. & Street)		19c. City	19d. State	19e. Zip Code	19f. Phone Number	
<b>TO BE COMPLETED BY MEDICAL PERSONNEL WHEN PHYSICAL EXAMINATION HAS BEEN DONE</b>						
20. Summary Report and Conclusions of Physical Examination (Attach Medical Documentation)						
21. Laboratory Report			22. X-Ray			
23. Other (specify)			24. History or Physical Signs of Previous Abuse/Neglect <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
25. Prior Hospitalization or Medical Examination for This Child						
<b>DATES</b>			<b>PLACES</b>			
26. Physician's Signature			27. Date	28. Hospital (if applicable)		
The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) does not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, genetic information, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political beliefs or disability.				AUTHORITY: P.A. 238 of 1975. COMPLETION: Mandatory. PENALTY: None.		

**INSTRUCTIONS**

---

## A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

---

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

This form is to be completed as the written follow-up to the oral report (as required in Sec. 3 (1) of 1975 PA 238, as amended) and mailed to Centralized Intake for Abuse & Neglect. Indicate if this report was phoned into MDHHS as a report of suspected CA/N. If so, indicate the Log # (if known). The reporting person is to fill out as completely as possible items 1-19. Only medical personnel should complete items 20-28.

Mail this form to:

Centralized Intake for Abuse & Neglect  
5321 28<sup>th</sup> Street Court, SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

OR

Fax this form to 616-977-8900 or 616-977-8050 or 616-977-1158 or 616-977-1154

OR

email this form to MDHHS-CPS-CIGroup@michigan.gov

1. Date – Enter the date the form is being completed.
2. List child(ren) suspected of being abused or neglected – Enter available information for the child(ren) believed to be abused or neglected. Indicate if child has a disability that may need accommodation.
3. Mother's name – Enter mother's name (or mother substitute) and other available information. Indicate if mother has a disability that may need accommodation.
4. Father's name – Enter father's name (or father substitute) and other available information. Indicate if father has a disability that may need accommodation.
- 5.-7. Child(ren)'s address – Enter the address of the child(ren).
8. Phone Number – Enter phone number of the household where child(ren) resides.
9. Name of alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect – Indicate person(s) suspected or presumed to be responsible for the alleged abuse or neglect.
10. Relationship to child(ren) – Indicate the relationship to the child(ren) of the alleged perpetrator of neglect or abuse, e.g., parent, grandparent, babysitter.
11. Person(s) child(ren) living with when abuse/neglect occurred – Enter name(s). Indicate if individuals have a disability that may need accommodation.
12. Address where abuse / neglect occurred.
13. Describe injury or conditions and reason of suspicion of abuse or neglect – Indicate the basis for making a report and the information available about the abuse or neglect.
14. Source of complaint – Check appropriate box noting professional group or appropriate category.

**Note:** If abuse or neglect is suspected in a hospital, also check hospital.

15.-19 - Reporting person's name - Enter the name and address of person(s) reporting this matter.

This page intentionally left blank.



**DOCUMENTATION FROM MASSEY  
COUNTY OFFICE OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF  
JUVENILE JUSTICE  
JUVENILE JUSTICE PROBATION  
OFFICE**

Massey County Office of Health and Human Services  
Division of Juvenile Justice  
Juvenile Justice Probation Office

I received the file of Jacob Gantz (12 y.o.), 812 Oak Road, Maryville, MI, from the Office of the Fire Marshal, Massey County Fire and Rescue, on May 13, 20xx. The file detailed an investigation of a residential house fire at the aforementioned address in which Jacob readily confessed to igniting the fire by utilizing a propane torch to etch his name into the wood paneling on the wall. He stated that he was not intending to burn the house down, but rather he was attempting to make a statement that he was part of the family as there is extreme discord within the home.

Jacob's mother shared that he was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome (no longer isolated in the DSM, but part of the Autism spectrum diagnosis) and is exceptionally intelligent but becomes "obsessed" with things. Recently he has become obsessed with fire and electricity, and upon knowledge of the fire, she immediately thought he was culpable and responsible. It is unclear if he has set previous fires.

Mrs. Gantz emphatically stated that her husband is opposed to mental health involvement and does not believe in medications or counseling of any kind. She stated that her son suffers from a sleep disorder and experiences mood swings, often including bursts of anger. She said that Jacob absolutely understands right versus wrong.

In reviewing the intake documentation in the file, the following information, obtained from interviews with the parents, Jacob, and the fire marshal is critical to understanding him, interrupting his firesetting behaviors, and the likelihood of recidivism:

- Mrs. Gantz immediately believed that Jacob had set the fire, stating that he had recently been obsessed with fire and electricity.
- Jacob has known mental health challenges such as a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome (Autism), mood swings accompanied by bursts of anger, and suffers from insomnia.
- Jacob's treatment for his challenges has been sporadic at best, and Mrs. Gantz and her husband cannot agree on whether he should take his prescribed medications from his primary care physicians.
- At the time of the fire incident, at 0538 in the morning, while all the occupants in the home were still in pajamas, Jacob was fully clothed.
- There is significant dysfunction in the home with children from multiple marriages and extreme strife between siblings.

- After lying multiple times about his knowledge and presence at the fire, Jacob confessed to the fire investigator that he set the fire and admitted that he was aware that his family members could have been injured or killed.
- Discussions with the fire marshal did not reveal any prior firesetting, however, as reported by the U.S. Fire Administration, as few as 10% of fires set by those under the age of 18 are ever reported (U.S. Fire Administration, 2014).
- There have been no prior criminal charges brought against Jacob Gantz.
- Law enforcement and Juvenile Justice were notified by the Office of the Fire Marshal regarding this incident.
- Jacob does not currently have legal representation.
- There is an allegation of child abuse against Jacob perpetrated by Mr. Gantz and acknowledged by Mrs. Gantz.
- A previous psychological evaluation was conducted.

As with all jurisdictions across the country, arson in Massey County is a felony. However, to prove that the crime of arson took place, one must be able to prove unequivocally that the action took place willfully and maliciously. During his interview with the fire investigator, Jacob stated that he was not trying to burn his house down, was only trying to make a statement, and attempted to put out the fire before notifying his mother. This information will assist in looking at Jacob's motivations and intent as required by the juvenile justice system. While Jacob claims that he was not endeavoring to burn down the house or harm anyone, he was also non-committal when asked if he was aware of the danger of his actions and answered, "I guess." This creates a conundrum for our juvenile justice group as youths who set fires are often excused as children playing with matches and are unaware of the dangers associated with their actions. Jacob is an adolescent and self-professes to an awareness for his actions, going so far as to initially deny setting the fire. Though the evidence gathered at the scene clearly showed that the fire was incendiary in nature, based upon the information from the fire marshal, the willful and malicious elements necessary for the charge of arson are lacking in this situation.

After a thorough review of the case, Jacob's age, and mental state, it is the decision of Juvenile Justice Probation to charge Jacob Gantz with juvenile delinquency and reckless endangerment. Juvenile delinquency specifically refers to the antisocial or criminal activity of the child (below 16 years of age for boys and 18 years for girls) which violates the law. Thus, that same activity would have been a crime if it were committed by an adult. Reckless endangerment is a crime consisting of acts that create a substantial risk of serious physical injury to another person, and while Jacob did not necessarily intend the resulting or potential harm, he acted in a way that showed a blatant disregard for the foreseeable consequences of his actions.

It is the recommendation of this office that the predisposition report be the result of a multi-disciplinary assessment of the youth's prioritized needs, an individualized plan for treatment of said needs, utilize the balanced restorative justice model for rehabilitation to include but not be limited to, behavioral and mental health services and fire safety education, and a recommendation of the most appropriate placement to meet the youth's and that of his family's needs in a setting that provides a level of security sufficient to ensure public safety.

J. Smith, Probation Officer  
Juvenile Justice, MCOHH

# DOCUMENTATION FROM PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION

PSYCHIATRIC OUTPATIENT CLINIC

123 Main Street  
Maryville, MI, 48040

Complete Evaluation: Psychiatrist

Date of Exam: 5/30/\_\_\_

Time of Exam: 5:22:37 PM

Patient Name: Gantz, Jacob

Patient Number: 100001043248

History: Mr. Jacob Gantz is a 12-year-old boy who lives in a blended family. His 2- and 7-year-old brothers and their two 13-year-old stepsisters live with them.

The following information was provided by:

Mr. Jacob Gantz

Mr. Gantz has previously been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (formerly called Asperger's syndrome) and has anger issues. Mr. Gantz describes symptoms of a depressive disorder. He reports that there is a precipitant for his depression. Mr. Gantz's current depressive symptoms are attributed to living with two 13-year-old girls who bully him.

"I tell people and they don't believe me. Mom says to man-up and her husband says that his daughters can do nothing wrong."

Current Symptoms: He reports that his appetite is decreased. Some weight loss has occurred. He reports a weight loss of more than five pounds. He reports that he gets so angry about being picked on that sometimes he cannot breathe. He reports strong interest about fire and electricity, and difficulty sleeping. Insomnia is reported.

Suicidality: He denies suicidal ideas or intentions. Denial is convincing.

Prior Depressive /Manic Episodes: He reports that there have been no prior depressive episodes. Mr. Gantz does not have a history of manic or hypomanic episodes.

Severity/ Complexity: Based on the risk of morbidity without treatment and his description of interference with functioning, classification of disorder is estimated to be severe.

Mr. Gantz has symptoms of anxiety. Anxiety symptoms have been present for months. Anxiety symptoms are occurring daily. He reports occurrences of difficulty concentrating. Feelings of restlessness are described. Difficulty sleeping is occurring. There is difficulty falling asleep. He produces an exaggerated startle response. He routinely wakes in the middle of the night, fully dresses, and "tinkers" with fire and electrical experiments.

Problem Pertinent Review of Symptoms/Associated Signs and Symptoms: Obsessive, intrusive, and persistent thoughts or compulsive, ritualistic acts are reported around his fascination with electricity and fire. No hallucinations, delusions, or other symptoms of psychotic process were reported by him.

Past Psychiatric History:

Previous diagnosis of Autism Spectrum disorder.

**Withdrawal History:**

There is no history of Mr. Gantz ever having experienced withdrawal from any substance.

**Psychiatric Hospitalization:**

Mr. Gantz has never been psychiatrically hospitalized.

**Outpatient Treatment:**

Mr. Gantz received outpatient mental health treatment for autism spectrum disorder and trouble controlling his anger approximately two years ago. Stepfather is unsupportive of ongoing outpatient treatment, including therapeutic medication.

**Addiction/Use History:**

Mr. Gantz denies any history of substance abuse. Mother and stepfather also deny history of substance abuse.

**Psychotropic Medication History:**

Psychotropic medications have been subscribed for Mr. Gantz. His stepfather will not allow him to take his medications.

Past psychiatric history is sporadic.

**Social/Developmental History:**

Mr. Gantz is a 12-year-old boy in middle school. He has few friends and seems to prefer to be by himself.

**Barriers to Treatment:**

Mr. Gantz's stepfather is opposed to treatment. Given the firesetting incident, mental health treatment and fire intervention services are recommended.

**Emotional:**

Emotional or psychological problems are a barrier to treatment success: Emotional problems will be addressed via the treatment plan. (Profound depression, obsession with fire and electricity.)

**Client's Goals:**

"I just want to feel better."

**Family History:**

Biological father, recently deceased, known to have anxiety.

Biological brother thought to have bipolar disorder.

Family psychiatric history is otherwise negative. There is no other history of psychiatric disorders, psychiatric treatment or hospitalization, suicidal behaviors, or substance abuse in closely related family members.

**Medical History:**

Adverse Drug Reactions: List of Adverse Drug Reactions:

(1) Added ADR to Penicillin, Reaction(s) = Respiratory Distress, Status = Active

**Allergies:**

There are no known allergies.

**Compliance:**

Mr. Gantz reports good compliance with medical instructions including medication orders.

**Exam:**

Mr. Gantz presents as inattentive, disheveled, with facial muscles tensed and a scowling expression. He exhibits speech that is normal in rate, volume, and articulation is coherent and spontaneous. Language skills are intact. There are signs of severe depression. He appears downcast. Body posture and attitude convey an underlying depressive mood. Facial expression and general demeanor reveal depressed mood. Noted multiple straight-line cut marks on left forearm and wrist. Physical abuse or self-harm denied. Suicidal ideation is denied. Homicidal ideation is denied. His affect is congruent with mood. Associations are intact and logical. There are no apparent signs of hallucinations, delusions, bizarre behaviors, or other indicators of psychotic process. Associations are intact, thinking is logical, and thought content appears appropriate. Cognitive functioning is intact and age appropriate, within the normal range. Short- and long-term memory are intact. This patient is fully oriented.

Insight into problems appears fair. Judgment appears fair. There are signs of anxiety.

\*Irritability

\*Fidgety

**Diagnoses:**

Adjustment disorder with depressed mood, DSM-5 (Active)

Autism Spectrum disorder, DSM-5 (Active – pre-existing)

Borderline personality disorder, DMS-5 (Active)

**Instructions / Recommendations / Plan:**

A clinic or outpatient treatment setting is recommended because patient is impaired to the degree that there is severe interference with interpersonal functioning. Sessions with the entire blended family will be required.

Psychopharmacology

Supportive Therapy

Start Celexa 20 mg PO QAM x30days # 30 (thirty) None refills (Depression)

Start Klonopin 0.25 mg PO TID x30days # 90 (ninety) None refills (Anxiety)



Start Ambien CR 6.25 mg PO QHS PRN x30days # 30 (thirty) None refills (Insomnia)

**Notes & Risk Factors:**

Acute Grief: Death of biological father 2/2/\_\_\_

99203PI (Office / Outpt, New)

Joyce Coleman, MD

Electronically Signed

By: Joyce Coleman, MD

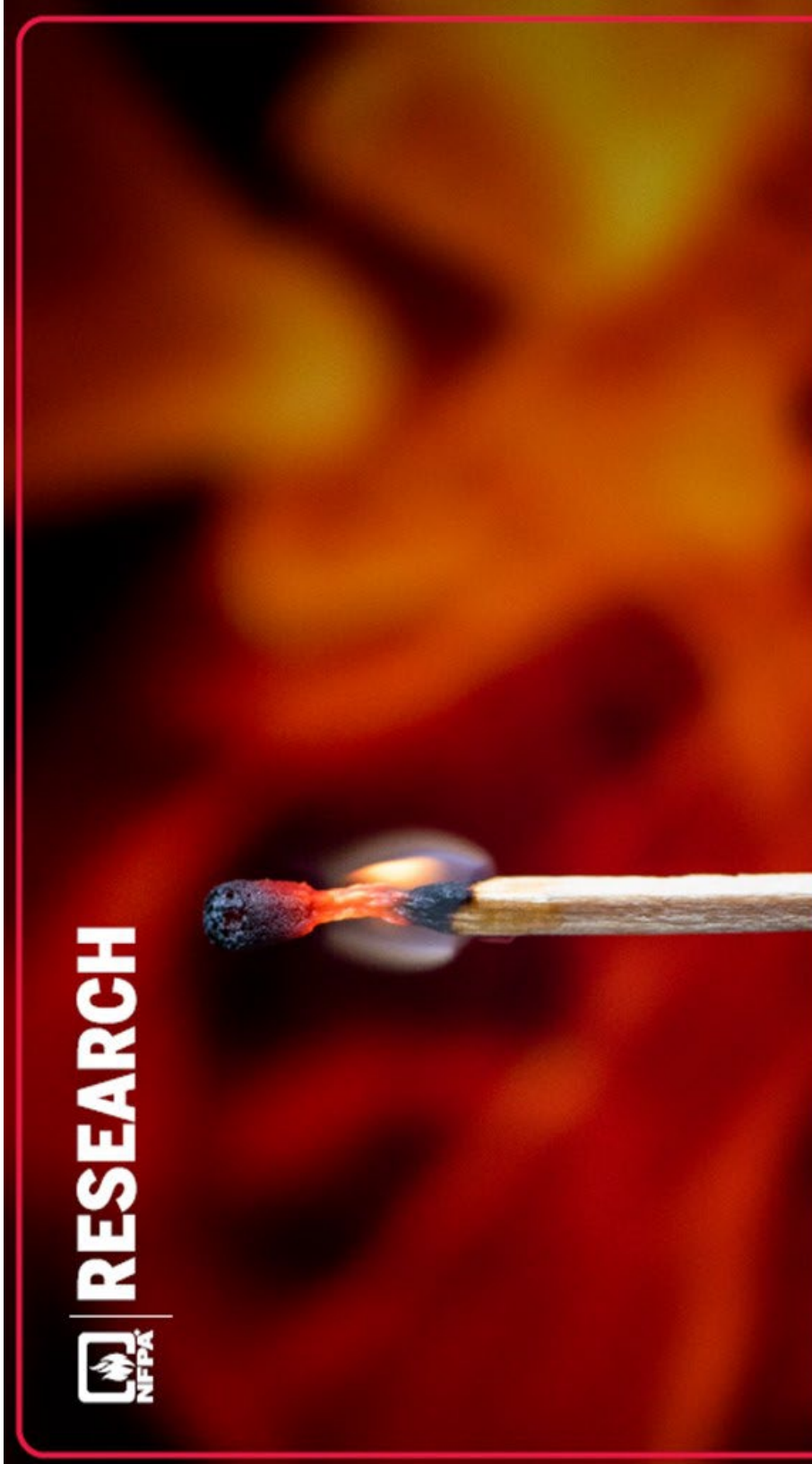
On: 6/8/5:23:38 P

This page intentionally left blank.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **PLAYING WITH FIRE: NON-STRUCTURE FIRES**

This page intentionally left blank.



 **RESEARCH**

# Playing with Fire: Non-Structure Fires

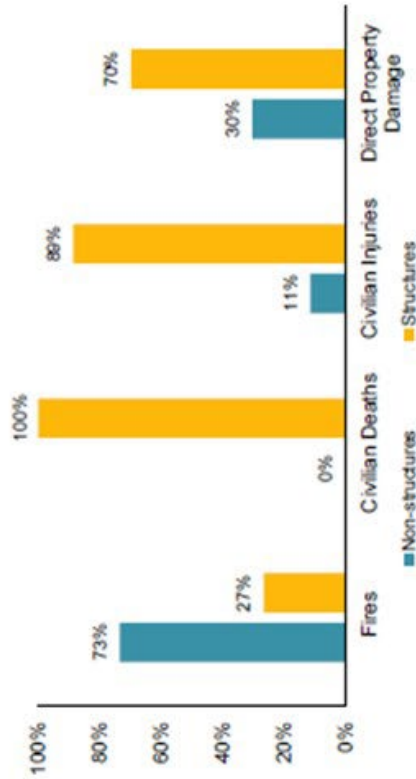
Richard Campbell  
May 2021

Copyright © 2021 National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®)

**Overview: Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Municipal fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 30,460 fires caused by playing with fire in 2014–2018. These fires resulted in an estimated 50 deaths, 510 injuries, and \$205 million in direct property damage each year. The vast majority of these fires were incidents that did not involve structures, including outside or unclassified fires, outside trash or rubbish fires, and vehicle fires. Structure fires accounted for the largest shares of the losses, including all of the deaths, nearly three-quarters of the fires caused by playing with fire were non-structure fires, as shown in Figure 1. Additional information is available in Table 1 in the accompanying tables document.

**Figure 1. Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Incident Type: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**

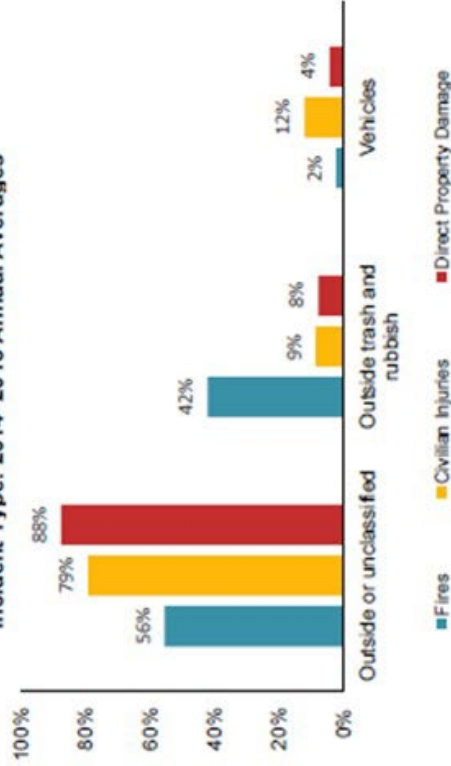


**Non-Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire: 2014–2018**

This report examines **non-structure fires** caused by playing with fire. Structure fires caused by fire play are examined in a separate report. In the five-year period from 2014–2018, playing with fire was the cause of an estimated 22,350 non-structure fires each year. These fires resulted in an estimated 60 civilian injuries and \$62 million in direct property damage each year.

Nearly three in five of the non-structure fires and even greater shares of the losses involved outside or unclassified fires, as shown in Figure 2. Outside trash or rubbish fires accounted for just over two in five fires, but those fires resulted in much smaller shares of the injuries and direct property damage. Vehicle fires caused by playing with fire accounted for just 2 percent of the non-structure fires, but they caused 12 percent of the injuries.

**Figure 2. Non-Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Incident Type: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



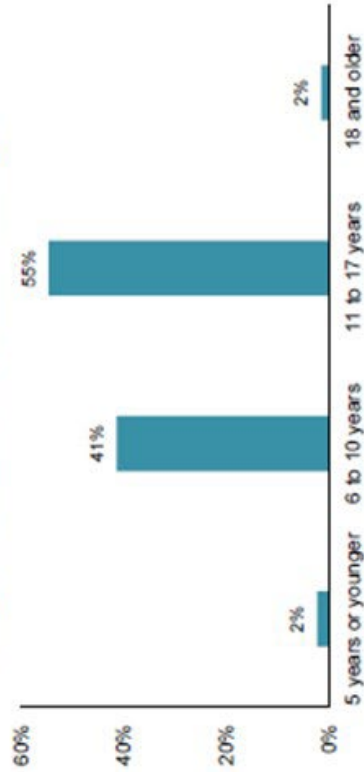
**I. Outside or Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Outside or unclassified fires caused by playing with fire resulted in an estimated 50 civilian injuries and \$54 million in direct property damage each year in the five-year period from 2014–2018.

**Age and Sex of Fire Setters**

Males were the fire setters in nine out of ten of the outside or unclassified fires caused by playing with fire. Over half (55 percent) of the fire setters were 11 to 17 years old, as shown in Figure 3. Just 2 percent of the fire setters were 5 years old or younger. The age distribution of fire setters in outside and unclassified fires differs substantially from home structure fires caused by playing with fire, where 36 percent of fires were set by children 5 years old or younger and one-fifth were aged 11 to 17 years. The older ages of fire setters in fires outside the home is likely to reflect the greater independence of older children and opportunities to spend more time outside the home.

**Figure 3. Outside and Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Age of Fire Setter: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**

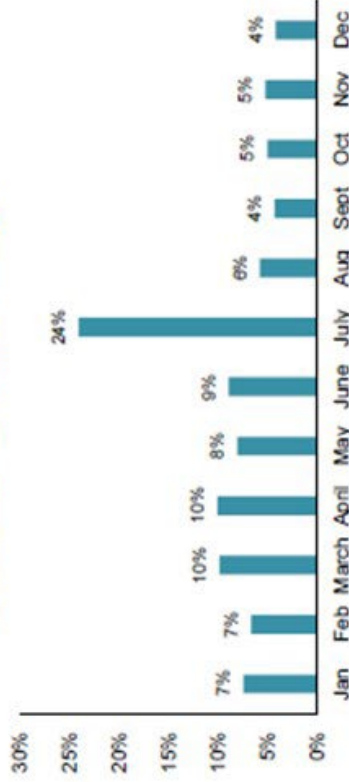


**Outside and Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month**

One-quarter (24 percent) of the outside and unclassified fires caused by playing with fire occurred in July, which coincides with school vacation for most fire setters. However, the other summer months of August and September experienced far fewer fires caused by fire play, so the magnitude of the July peak merits further exploration.

These fires were less common from October through December, as shown in Figure 4.

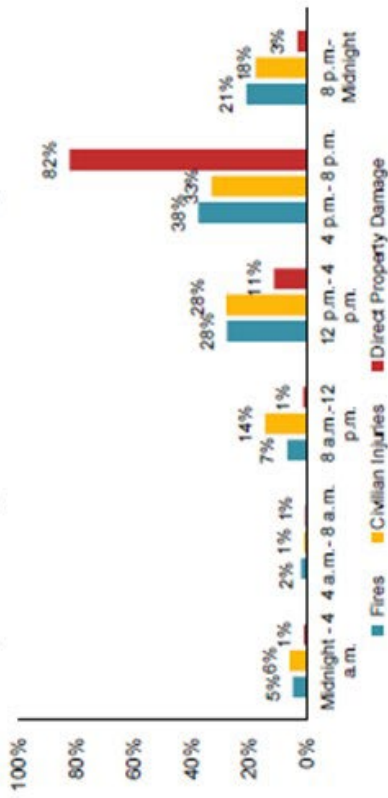
**Figure 4. Outside and Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Outside and Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day**

Approximately two in five of these fires occurred in the eight-hour period from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., and they accounted for the greatest share of direct property damage, as shown in Figure 5. Half of the remaining fires occurred in the hours from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. (28 percent) or 8 p.m. to midnight (21 percent). Only a small share of the fires occurred in the overnight hours from midnight to 8 a.m.

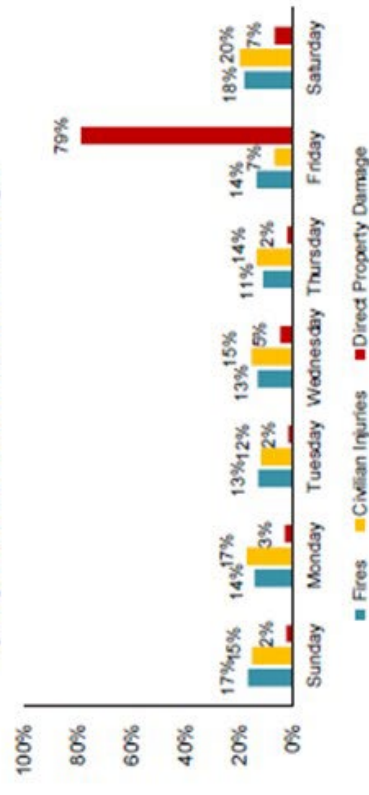
**Figure 5. Outside and Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Outside and Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of Week**

Slightly more than one-third of the outdoor and unclassified fires started by playing with fire occurred on the weekend (18 percent on Saturday and 17 percent on Sunday), with little variation among the remaining days of the week. See Figure 6.

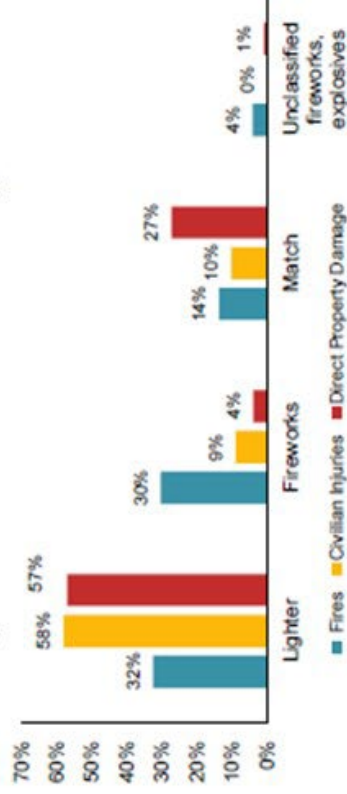
**Figure 6. Outside and Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of Week: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Outside and Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Heat Source**

Most of the outdoor and unclassified fires caused by playing with fire were ignited by lighters, matches, or some type of fireworks or explosives, as indicated in Figure 7. The fires that were ignited by lighters were responsible for disproportionately large shares of the injuries and direct property damage. Fires ignited by matches also caused a substantial share of direct property damage.

**Figure 7. Outside and Unclassified Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Heat Source: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**II. Outside Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

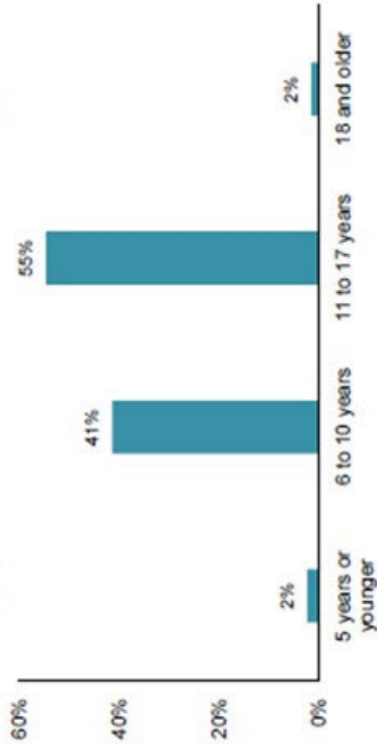
There were an estimated 9,440 outside trash or rubbish fires each year in the five-year period from 2014–2018 that were caused by playing with fire. These fires resulted in an estimated five civilian injuries and direct property damage of \$5 million each year. There were no reported fatalities.

**Age and Sex of Fire Setters**

Most fire setters (88 percent) of outside trash or rubbish fires caused by playing with fire were males. As shown in Figure 8, the age distribution of fire setters was similar to that of outside and unclassified fires. Most fire setters were 11 to 17 years old (55 percent) or 6 to 10 years old (41 percent).



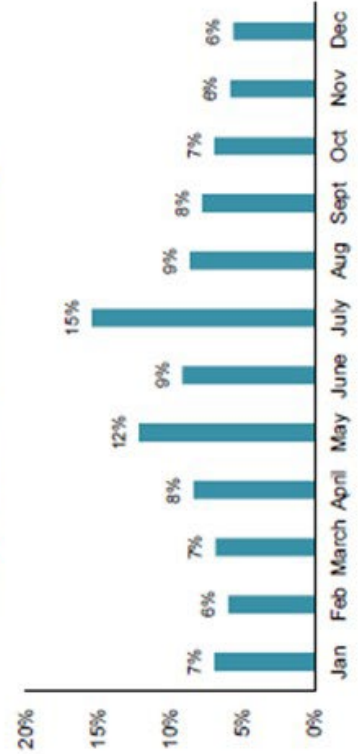
**Figure 8. Outside Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Age of Fire Setter: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Outside and Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month**

As with outside and unclassified fires, July was the peak month for outside trash or rubbish fires started by playing with fire, accounting for 15 percent of the annual total. Other than the month of May, which accounted for 12 percent of the fires, outside and trash and rubbish fires in all the remaining months ranged from 6 to 9 percent of the annual total, as shown in Figure 9.

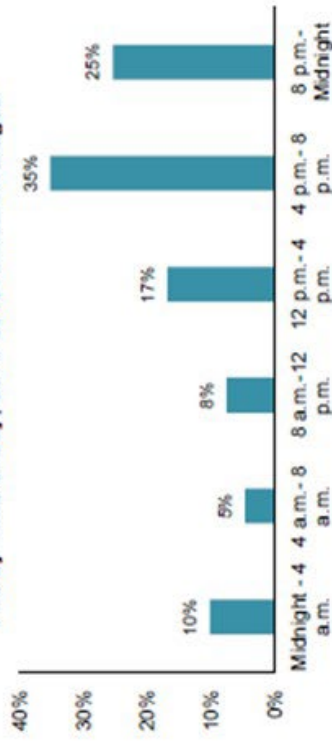
**Figure 9. Outside Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Outside Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day**

Outside trash or rubbish fires caused by playing with fire most often occurred between 4 p.m. and midnight, as indicated in Figure 10. As expected, fires caused by fire play were least likely to occur between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m.

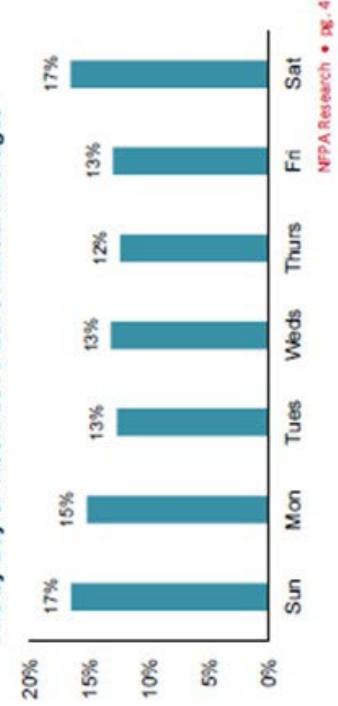
**Figure 10. Outside Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Outside Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of the Week**

Outside trash or rubbish fires caused by playing with fire were somewhat more likely to occur on weekends, accounting for approximately one-third of the fires. There was little variation in the distribution of these fires during the remaining days of the week.

**Figure 11. Outside Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of Week: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**

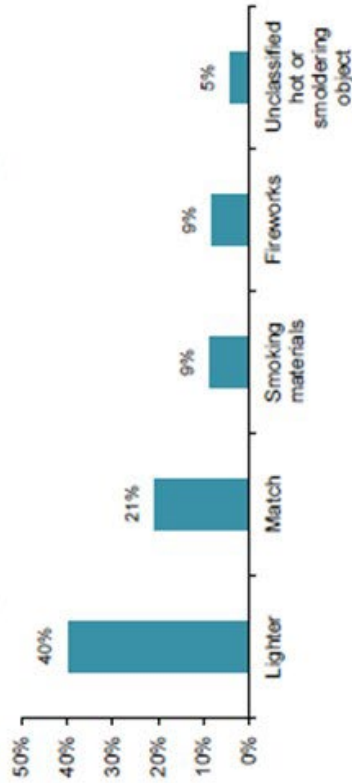


NFPA Research • DK. 4

**Outside Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Heat Source**

Outside trash or rubbish fires caused by playing with fire were most often ignited by lighters or matches, which together served as the heat source in three of five of the fires. Smoking materials and fireworks each accounted for almost one in ten fires, as shown in Figure 12.

**Figure 12. Outside Trash or Rubbish Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Heat Source: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**III. Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Playing with fire was the cause of an estimated 510 vehicle fires per year in the five-year period from 2014 through 2018. These fires resulted in an estimated 10 civilian injuries and \$3 million in direct property damage each year. No fatalities were reported as a result of these fires.

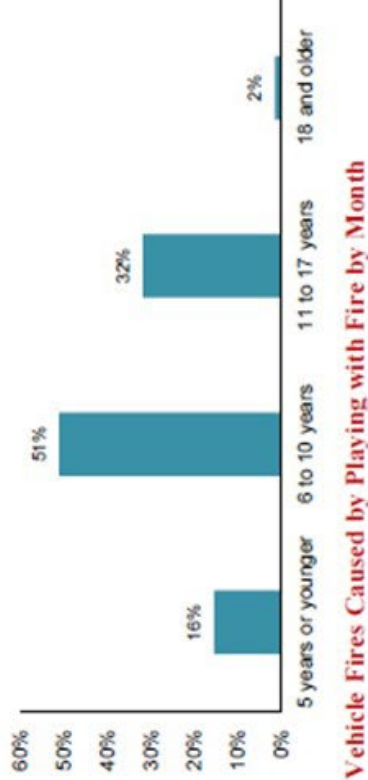
**Age and Sex of Fire Setters**

As with other fire incidents caused by playing with fire, males were the fire setters in the vast majority (88 percent) of the vehicle fires involving fire play.

Children in the youngest age groups were more likely to be the fire setters in vehicle fires than in outside fires. Just over half of the vehicle fires (51 percent) were started by children 6 to 10 years old, while two in five outdoor fires were started by children in this age group. Children 5 years

old or younger started 16 percent of the vehicle fires, compared to just 2 percent of fire setters in outdoor fires. It may be that vehicles were at the home, while outside fires may have taken place away from the home, where older children may have engaged in fire play.

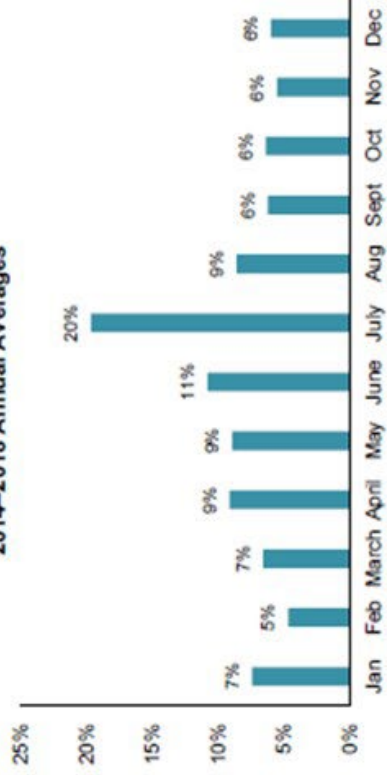
**Figure 13. Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Age of Fire Setter: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month**

The peak months for vehicle fires caused by playing with fire were July, with one-fifth of the fires, and June, which accounted for just over one in ten fires. Vehicle fires caused by fire play were generally lower in the colder weather months, as indicated in Figure 14.

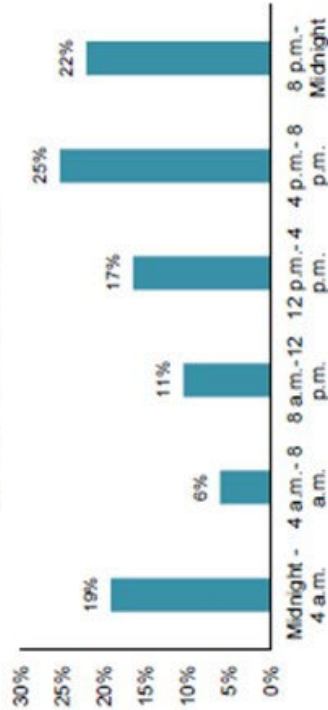
**Figure 14. Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day**

The peak time period for vehicle fires caused by playing with fire was the four-hour period from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., followed by the period from 8 p.m. to midnight. Only a small share of the fires occurred between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m., as shown in Figure 15.

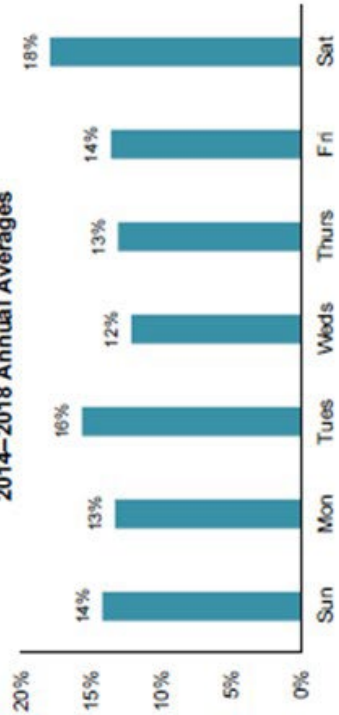
**Figure 15. Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of the Week**

Nearly one-fifth of the fires (18 percent) occurred on Saturdays, as shown in Figure 16. Fires during the remaining days of the week showed little variation, with Tuesdays recording 16 percent of the fires, but fires caused by fire play otherwise ranging between 12 and 14 percent of the weekly total.

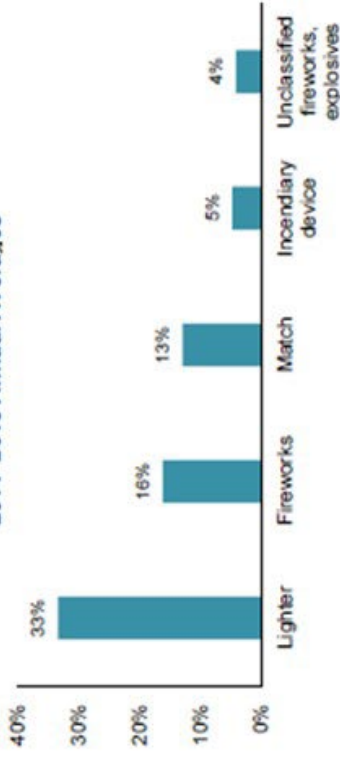
**Figure 16. Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of Week: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Heat Source**

Almost half of the vehicle fires caused by playing with fire were ignited by either a lighter or a match. Fireworks and incendiary devices or explosives were the other leading heat sources for these fires. See Figure 17.

**Figure 17. Vehicle Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Heat Source: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Safety Tips to Prevent Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

There are a number of fire safety practices that adults can follow in order to reduce the risk of fires caused by playing with fire. These include:

- Store matches and lighters out of the reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Never use lighters or matches as a source of amusement for children since they may try to imitate such behavior.
- Only use lighters that are designed with child-resistant features.
- Teach children to tell an adult if they see matches or lighters in a readily accessible location.
- Never leave matches or lighters in a bedroom or any place children may go without permission.
- Get help if you suspect your child is unduly fascinated with fire or engages in fire play. Local fire departments, schools, or community counseling agencies can facilitate access to train experts.

Additional information is available at *Children and Fire Safety*.

### **Acknowledgments**

The National Fire Protection Association thanks all the fire departments and state fire authorities who participate in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and the annual NFPA fire experience survey. These firefighters are the original sources of the detailed data that makes this analysis possible. Their contributions allow us to estimate the size of the fire problem.

We are also grateful to the US Fire Administration for its work in developing, coordinating, and maintaining NFIRS.

To learn more about research at NFPA visit [nfpa.org/research](http://nfpa.org/research).

E-mail: [research@nfpa.org](mailto:research@nfpa.org).

NFPA No. USS17NS

## **APPENDIX D**

### **PLAYING WITH FIRE: STRUCTURE FIRES**

This page intentionally left blank.



 **RESEARCH**

# Playing with Fire: Structure Fires

Richard Campbell  
May 2021

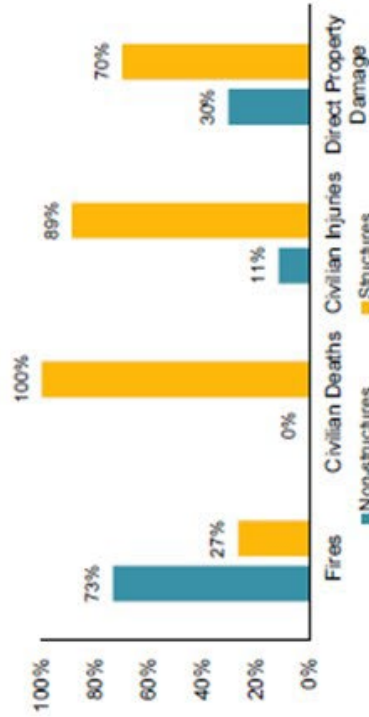
Copyright © 2021 National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®)

**Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Municipal fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 30,460 fires caused by playing with fire in 2014–2018. These fires resulted in an estimated 50 deaths, 510 injuries, and \$205 million in direct property damage each year. The vast majority of these fires were incidents that did not involve structures; these incidents included outside or unclassified fires, outside trash or rubbish fires, and vehicle fires. Structure fires accounted for the largest shares of the losses from the fires caused by fire play, including all of the deaths, nearly three-quarters of the fires caused by playing with fire were non-structure fires, as shown in Figure 1.

This report focuses on fires in **homes and non-home structures** caused by playing with fire. Non-structure fires are the subject of a separate report.

**Figure 1. Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Incident Type: 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



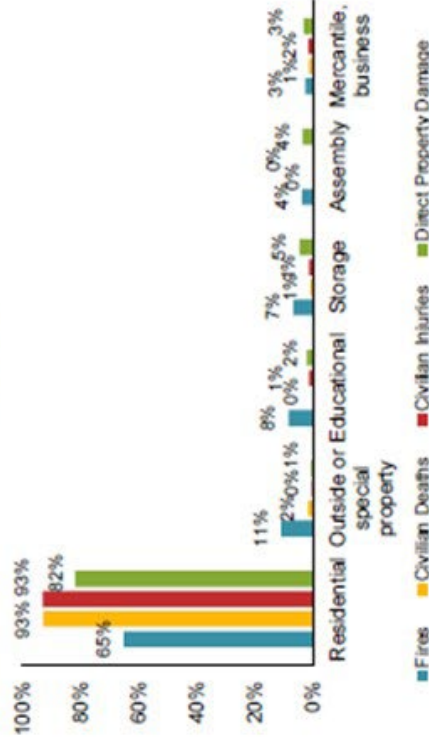
**Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

In 2014–2018, municipal fire departments in the US responded to an estimated 8,100 structure fires each year that were caused by playing with fire. These fires resulted in an estimated 50 civilian deaths, 450 civilian injuries, and \$143 million in direct property damage each year. Children

were responsible for the vast majority of the incidents that involved playing with fire.

As shown in Figure 1, more than three in five structure fires caused by playing with fire in 2014–2018 occurred in residential properties. These fires accounted for even greater shares of the civilian deaths, injuries, and direct property damage associated with fires due to fire play, as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Property Use: 2014–2018**



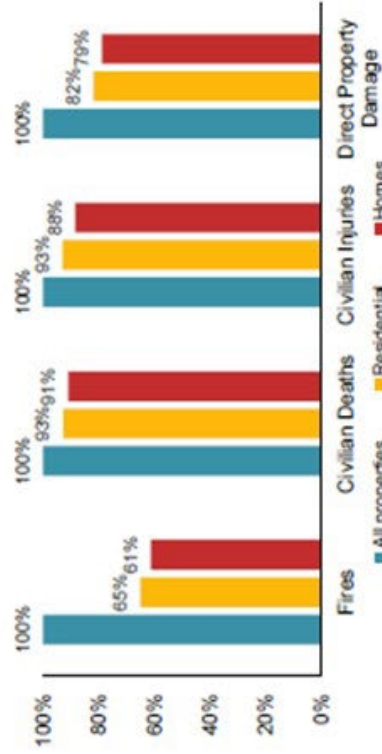
Outside or special properties were the second leading site of fires caused by playing with fire, accounting for approximately one in ten fires, but minimal losses. Educational properties and storage properties were the next leading locations and were also associated with minimal losses, although storage properties accounted for the second-highest share of direct property damage in fires due to fire play.



### Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire

Of the residential properties that account for the greatest share of the structure fires caused by playing with fire, the vast majority of these involve homes, as shown in Figure 3.<sup>1</sup> In 2014–2018, playing with fire is estimated to have caused 4,960 home structure fires each year. These fires caused an estimated 50 civilian deaths, 400 civilian injuries, and \$112 in direct property damage each year. The predominance of homes as venues for fires caused by fire play is not a new phenomenon, and it represents a finding consistent with earlier versions of this report.

**Figure 3. Home Fires as a Share of Residential Fires Caused by Playing with Fire: 1990–2018**

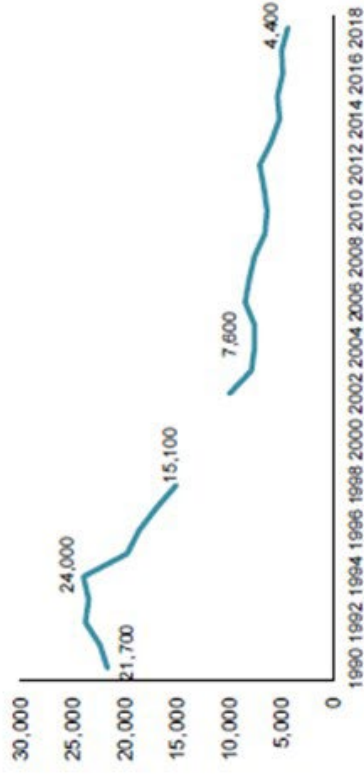


The number of home fires caused by playing with fire has fallen dramatically over the past 30 years. Since 1990, home fires caused by playing with fire have fallen by 80 percent, from nearly 22,000 fires in 1990 to an estimated 4,400 fires in 2018. See Figure 4.

The losses associated with these fires have also shown a substantial decline over the past three decades. Civilian deaths have fallen by 85 percent, from 330 deaths in 1990 to 50 deaths in 2018. Injuries have

fallen from an estimated 2,250 injuries in 1990 to 480 injuries in 2018, a 79 percent decrease. Direct property losses, adjusted for inflation, have fallen by 69 percent, from \$396 million (in 2018 dollars) in 1990 to \$122 million in 2018. Research has shown that a safety standard requiring disposable cigarette lighters to be child-resistant has been instrumental in reducing fire deaths, injuries, and direct property damage since it came into effect in 1994. More detailed information on these fires by year is available in Table 1 of the accompanying tables.

**Figure 4. Home Fires Caused by Playing with Fire: 1990–2018**



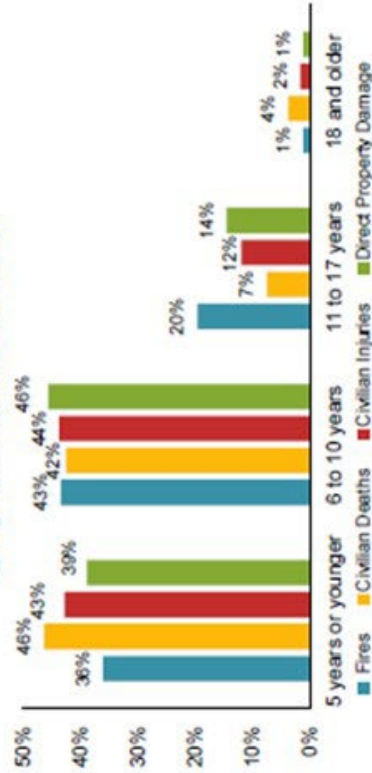
Due to the uncertainty of estimates during the transition to NFIRS 5.0 in 1999–2001, estimates for these years are not shown.

### Age of Fire Setters in Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire

Most fires caused by playing with fire are started by children, many under the age of 10, as indicated in Figure 5. Adults (18 years and older) were responsible for just 1 percent of the home structure fires caused by playing with fire. Fires that were started by children 5 years old or younger accounted for a disproportionate share of the deaths, although the fire setters were not necessarily the victims in these fires.

<sup>1</sup> Residential properties that are not homes include such properties as residential board and care facilities, dormitories, hotels and motels, and barracks.

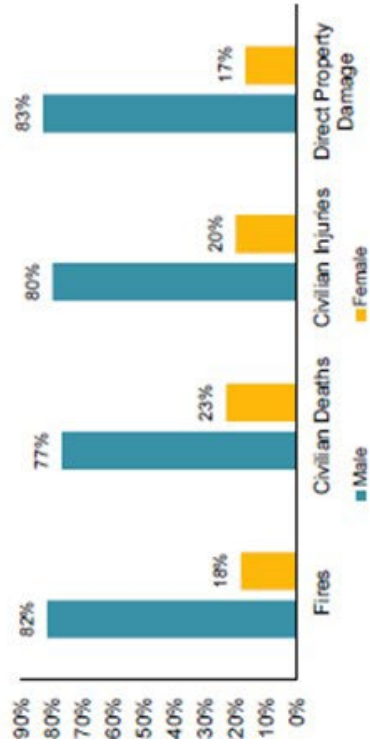
**Figure 5. Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Age of Fire Setter: 2014–2018**



**Sex of Fire Setters in Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Approximately four out of five home structure fires caused by playing with fire were started by boys, as shown in Figure 6. Losses in these fires were generally proportional to the share of fires.

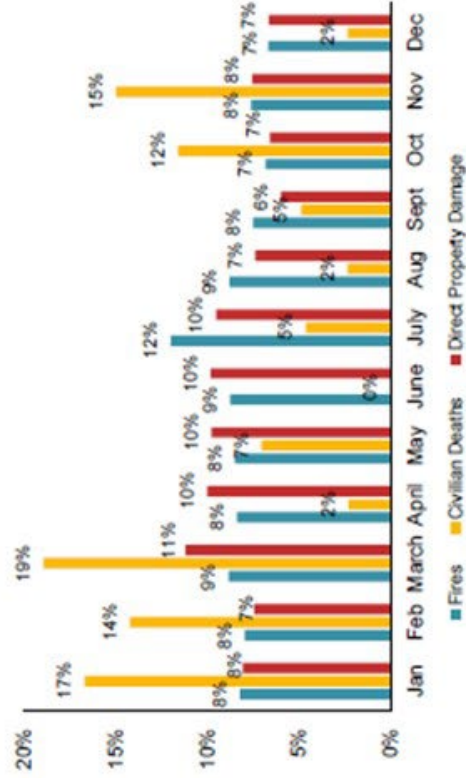
**Figure 6. Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Sex of Fire Setter: 2014–2018**



**Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month**

Fires caused by playing with fire were highest during the school vacation months of June, July, and August, as well as in March, as shown in Figure 7. Children have more opportunities to play with fire when they have fewer structured activities and spend more time at home. Although one-quarter of the home fires caused by playing with fire occurred in the cold weather months of January, February, and March, these fires accounted for half of the civilian deaths. The share of deaths was also nearly double the share of fires in October and November, though not in December.

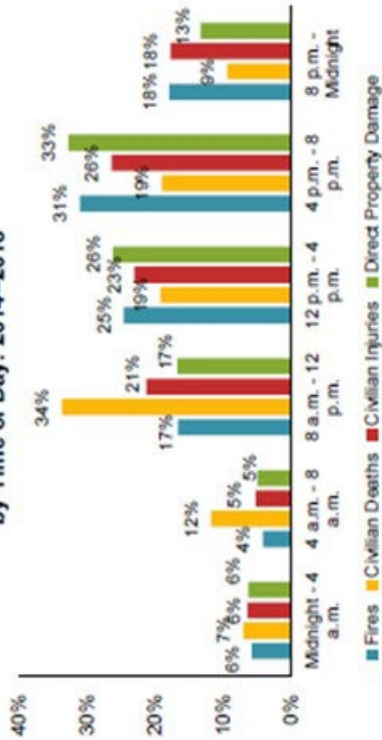
**Figure 7. Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month: 2014–2018**



**Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day**

Three in ten of the home structure fires caused by playing with fire occurred between the hours of 4:00 p.m. to 8 p.m., the peak period for these fires. The 12 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. period accounted for another one-quarter of the fires. A disproportionately high share of the deaths occurred in fires that took place between 8 a.m. and noon, as shown in Figure 8.

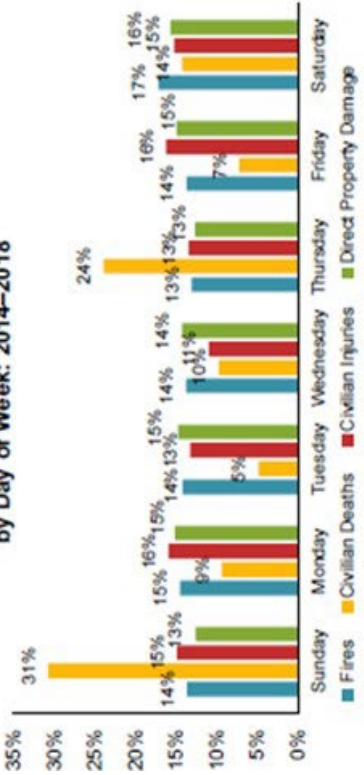
**Figure 8. Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day: 2014–2018**



**Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of the Week**

A slightly higher share of home fires caused by playing with fire occurred on Saturdays (17 percent), but there is otherwise little variation in the number of home fires caused by playing with fire by day of the week. A disproportionate share of the deaths was associated with fires occurring on Sundays. Although this is only a small difference, it may reflect a tendency for adults to sleep later on Sundays, leaving younger children unsupervised, which underscores the importance of keeping sources of ignition away from children.

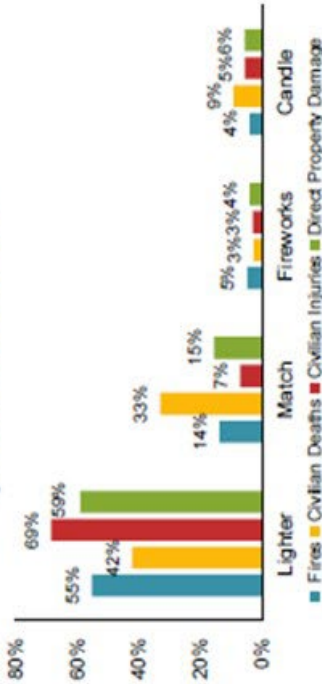
**Figure 9. Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of Week: 2014–2018**



**Heat Sources Involved in Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

The overwhelming majority of the home fires caused by playing with fire involved lighters, accounting for well over half (55 percent) of these fires. The fires involving lighters also accounted for seven out of ten injuries associated with fires caused by playing with fire in the home. Other leading heat sources for home fires involving fire play include matches, fireworks, and candles. The fires involving matches (14 percent) accounted for a disproportionate share of the deaths (33 percent). See Figure 10.

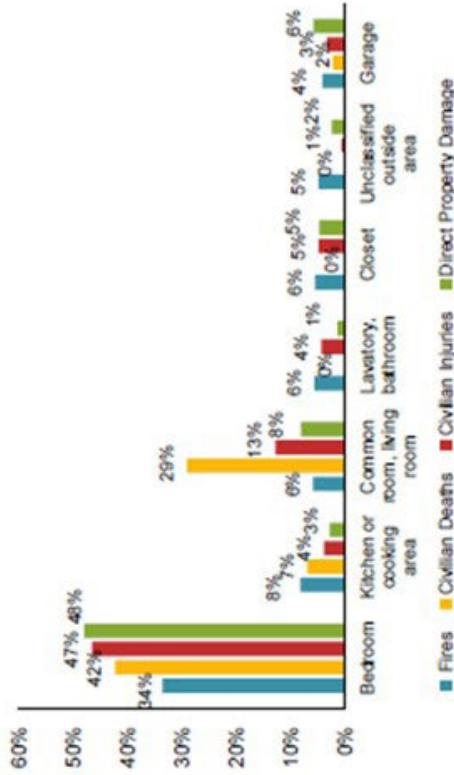
**Figure 10. Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Heat Source: 2014–2018**



**Area of Origin for Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Many of the home fires caused by playing with fire are areas where younger children may spend time without the presence of an adult. The bedroom was the most common area of origin for home fires involving playing with fire, accounting for one-third (34 percent) of the total. These fires were responsible for two in five deaths and nearly one-half of the injuries and direct property damage associated with fires involving fire play. Other leading areas of origin included the kitchen, living room, bathroom, and closets. Fires originating in a common room or living room accounted for a substantially disproportionate share of the deaths caused by fires involving fire play, as indicated in Figure 11.

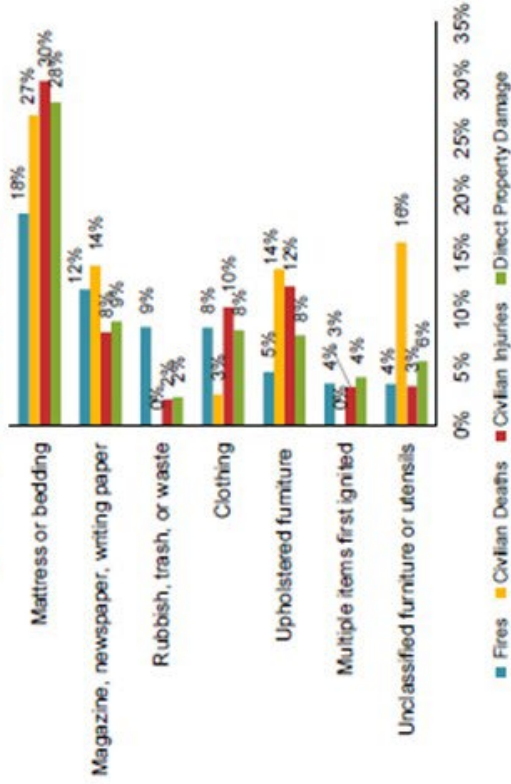
**Figure 11. Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Area of Origin: 2014–2018**



**Item First Ignited in Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Almost one in five home fires caused by playing with fire (18 percent) began with the ignition of a mattress or bedding, consistent with the bedroom as a leading area of origin. These fires were associated with the highest shares of the deaths, injuries, and direct property damage, as indicated in Figure 12. Items of convenience were often among the items ignited during fire play, including magazines and paper, rubbish, and clothing. Fires involving the ignition of upholstered furniture accounted for disproportionately higher shares of the deaths and injuries.

**Figure 12. Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Item First Ignited: 2014–2018**



**Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

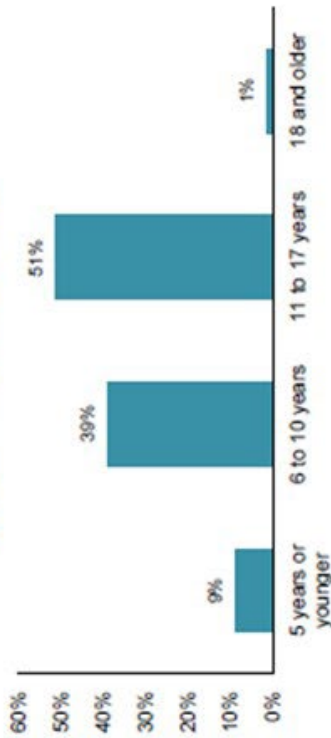
Playing with fire is estimated to have caused 3,140 fires each year in structures other than homes in 2014–2018. These fires resulted in an estimated five civilian deaths, 50 civilian injuries, and \$30 million in direct property damage each year. Due to the low numbers, deaths have been excluded from the following analysis.

**Age of Fire Setters in Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

As with home fires, the vast majority of non-home fires caused by playing with fire were started by children 17 years old or younger. However, over half of the fire setters (51 percent) were in the older age group of 11 to 17 years old, a much higher share than was the case for home fires. One in ten (9 percent) of these fires were started by children five years old or younger, the youngest age group, which accounted for approximately two

in five of the home fires caused by fire play. The older age of fire setters in non-home fires is likely to reflect the greater independence of older children and greater time outside the home.

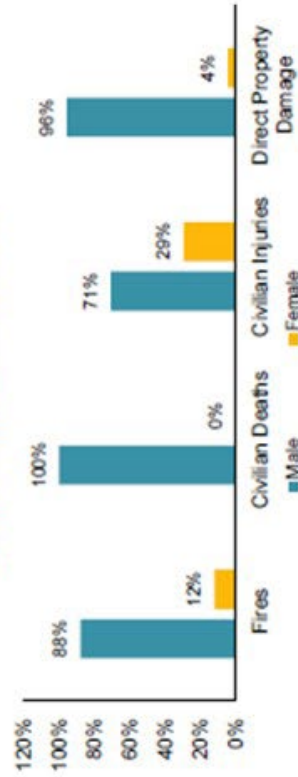
**Figure 13. Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Age of Fire Setter: 2014–2018**



**Sex of Fire Setters in Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Approximately nine out of ten (88 percent) home structure fires caused by playing with fire were started by boys, as shown in Figure 13. Fires started by girls accounted for a somewhat disproportionate share of the injuries (29 percent).

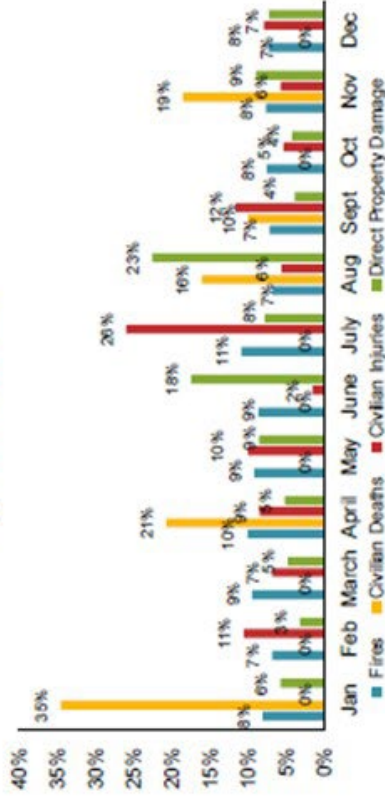
**Figure 14. Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Sex of Fire Setter: 2014–2018**



**Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month**

Non-home fires caused by playing with fire showed a somewhat different monthly pattern than home fires, which were highest during the summer months. As shown in Figure 15, non-home fires were highest from March through July, with April and July being the peak months. Fires in July, which accounted for approximately one in ten fires, caused approximately one-quarter of the injuries (26 percent). Fewer than one in ten fires occurred in August, but these fires accounted for nearly one-quarter of the direct property damage (23 percent).

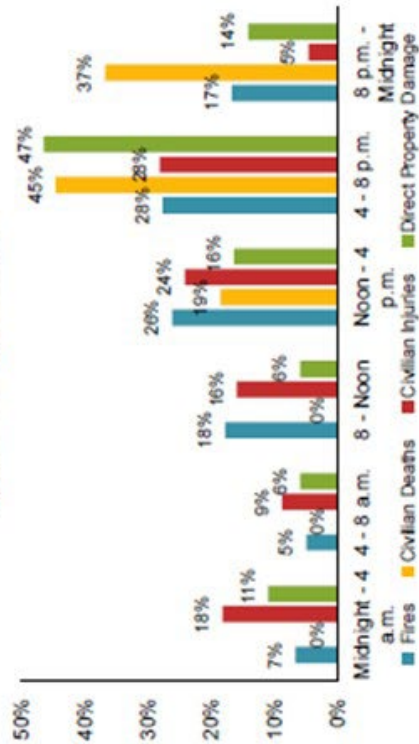
**Figure 15. Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Month: 2014–2018**



**Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day**

Over half (54 percent) of the non-home fires caused by playing with fire occurred in the hours between noon and 8 p.m. These fires also accounted for the greatest shares of the deaths, injuries, and direct property damage, with nearly half of the direct property damage (47 percent) being caused by fires taking place between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Few fires caused by playing with fire occurred between midnight and 8 a.m., while nearly one-fifth of the injuries were caused by fires occurring between midnight and 4 a.m.

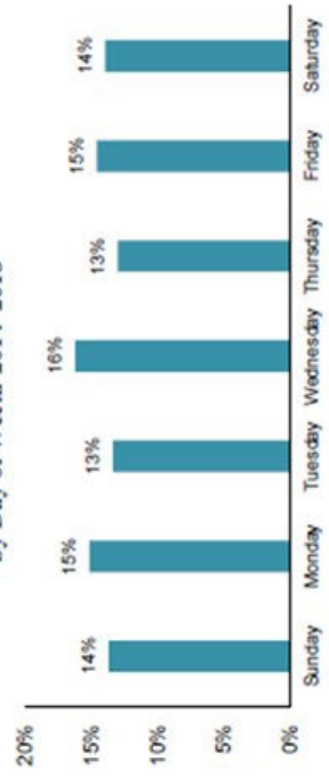
**Figure 16. Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Time of Day: 2014–2018**



**Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of the Week**

Fires in non-home structures varied between 13 percent and 16 percent the weekly total. Unlike fires caused by fire play in homes, non-home fires did not peak on weekends; they were highest on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. An earlier NFPA report on *Structure Fires in Schools* found that playing with fire was the third leading cause of school fires, which is likely to partially explain the higher shares of fires during the week.

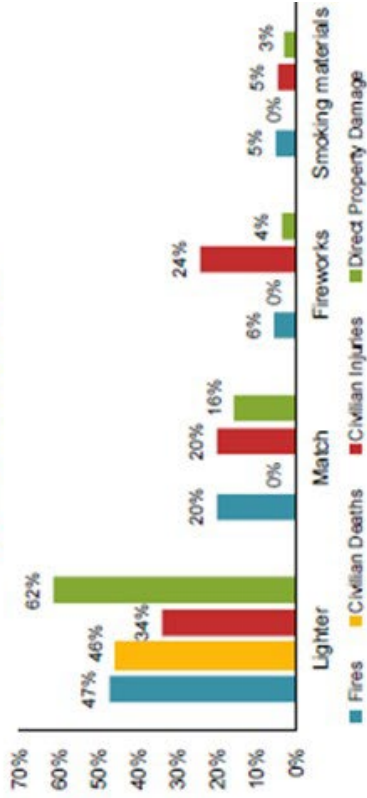
**Figure 17. Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Day of Week: 2014–2018**



**Heat Sources Involved in Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Nearly one-half (47 percent) of the non-home structure fires caused by playing with fire were ignited by a lighter, and another one in five fires were ignited by a match. Fires ignited by lighters also accounted for the majority of the direct property damage. Fireworks were involved in the ignition of fewer than one in ten fires but were responsible for approximately one-quarter of the injuries.

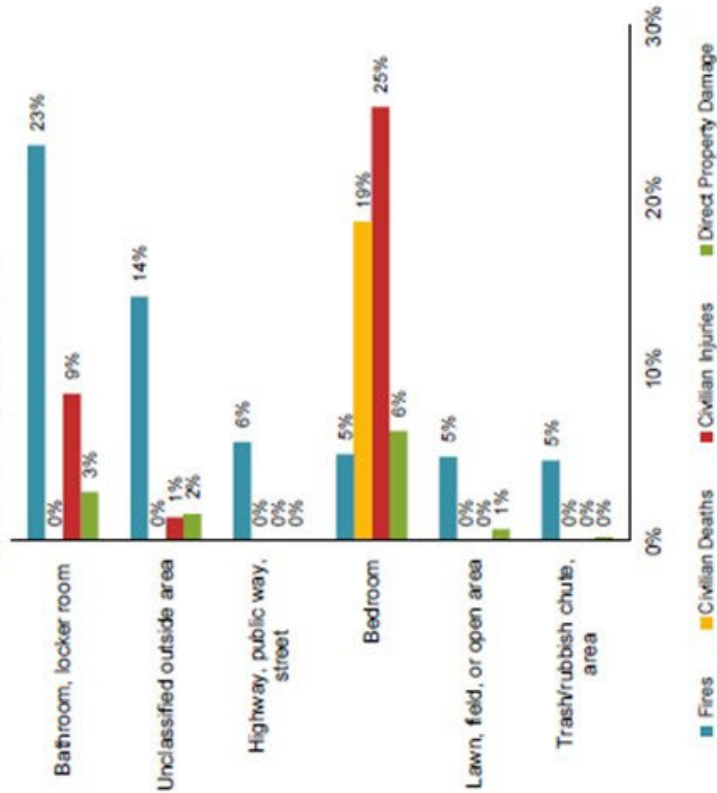
**Figure 18. Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Heat Source: 2014–2018**



**Area of Origin for Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

Fires caused by fire play in non-home structures most often originated in a bathroom or locker room (23 percent) or unclassified outdoor area (14 percent). Fires that began in a bedroom accounted for a small share of these fires, but substantially higher shares of the injuries, as shown in Figure 19. Note that non-home structures include a variety of residential properties other than homes, including dormitories, residential board and care facilities, and sorority and fraternity houses.

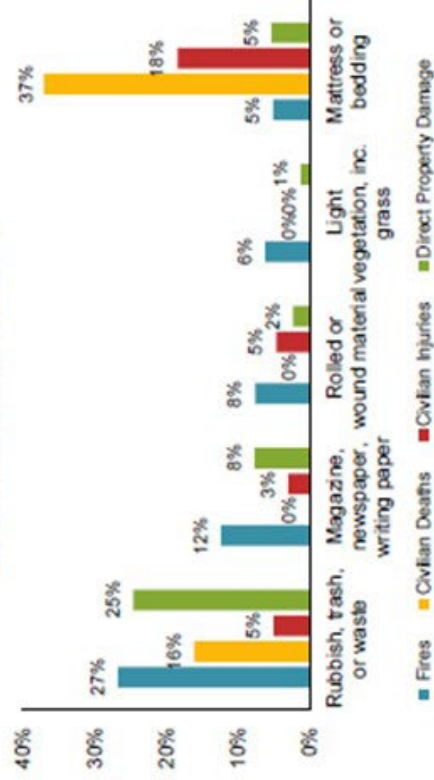
**Figure 19. Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Area of Origin: 2014–2018**



**Item First Ignited in Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

The materials first ignited in approximately two of five non-home structure fires caused by playing with fire were either rubbish, trash, or waste (27 percent) or a magazine, newspaper, or writing paper (12 percent), potentially representing materials of convenience. A mattress or bedding was the first material ignited in a small share of fires (5 percent) but was associated with larger shares of injuries, as indicated in Figure 20.

**Figure 20. Non-Home Structure Fires Caused by Playing with Fire by Item First Ignited: 2014–2018**



**Safety Tips to Prevent Fires Caused by Playing with Fire**

There are a number of fire safety practices that adults can follow in order to reduce the risk of fires caused by playing with fire. These include:

- Store matches and lighters out of the reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Never use lighters or matches as a source of amusement for children since they may try to imitate such behavior.
- Only use lighters that are designed with child-resistant features.
- Teach children to tell an adult if they see matches or lighters in a readily accessible location.
- Never leave matches or lighters in a bedroom or any place children may go without permission.
- Get help if you suspect your child is unduly fascinated with fire or engages in fire play. Local fire departments, schools, or community counseling agencies can facilitate access to train experts.

Additional information is available at *Children and Fire Safety*.

### Acknowledgments

The National Fire Protection Association thanks all the fire departments and state fire authorities who participate in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and the annual NFPA fire experience survey. These firefighters are the original sources of the detailed data that makes this analysis possible. Their contributions allow us to estimate the size of the fire problem.

We are also grateful to the US Fire Administration for its work in developing, coordinating, and maintaining NFIRS.

To learn more about research at NFPA visit [nfpa.org/research](http://nfpa.org/research).

E-mail: [research@nfpa.org](mailto:research@nfpa.org).

NFPA No. US517S



# **APPENDIX E**

## **STRUCTURE FIRES IN SCHOOLS**

This page intentionally left blank.



# Structure Fires in Schools

Richard Campbell  
September 2020

Copyright © 2020 National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®)

### Key Findings

- Local fire departments in the United States responded to an estimated average of 3,230 fires in school properties from pre-school through grade twelve from 2014 to 2018.
- The fires in these school properties caused an estimated average of one civilian death, 39 civilian injuries, and \$37 million in direct property damage per year.
- School property fires accounted for one percent of all US structure fires during this period and less than one percent of the accompanying civilian fatalities, injuries, and direct property damage.
- Three in five school fires were small fire incidents identified as confined fires, meaning they were confined to the cooking equipment, chimneys, fireplaces, boilers or trash in which they ignited.
- Two in five school fires (43%) were intentionally set. Fires with an intentional cause were more prevalent in high school and middle schools (44% of total) than in elementary schools (33%).
- Almost one-third of school fires were caused by cooking equipment (31%) and 10 percent by heating equipment.

### High School and Middle School Fires

- In high school and middle school fires, one-third of the property damage (34%) was caused by the small number of fires that occurred between midnight and 4 a.m., when buildings were unlikely to be occupied.
- More than two in five fires (44%) in high schools and middle schools were intentionally set and one in five was caused by playing with a heat source.
- Fires in high schools and middle schools were much more likely to originate in a lavatory or locker room (32%) than any other area.

### Elementary School Fires

- Elementary school fires most often began with the ignition of trash or cooking materials.
- Several leading factors contributing to the ignition of elementary school fires had behavioral implications, including playing with a heat source (22%), unclassified misuse of a material or product (8%), abandoned or discarded material or product (7%), and unattended equipment (6%).
- Electrical failures or malfunctions (17%) and mechanical failures or malfunctions (14%) also contributed to a substantial share of fires and they suggest that there might be gaps in the maintenance and repair of school equipment or infrastructure.
- Lighters and matches together provided the heat source in one-quarter of elementary school fires.

**Part 1. Structure Fires in Schools**

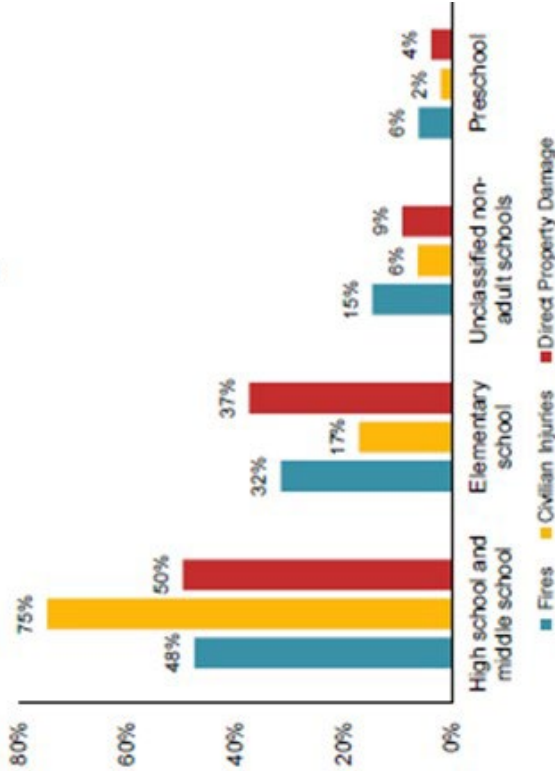
This report presents data on structure fires in school properties for the five-year period from 2014 through 2018. School properties include high school and middle schools, elementary schools (including kindergarten), preschools, and unclassified non-adult schools. Fires in vehicles or non-structure fires on school grounds are not included in this report.

US fire departments responded to an estimated 3,230 structure fires in schools each year from 2014 to 2018. These fires resulted in an average of one civilian death, 39 civilian injuries, and \$37 million in direct property damage a year. As indicated in Table 1 in the accompanying tables, the fires in school properties represented one percent of all the structure fires in the US during this period and less than one percent of the civilian deaths, injuries, and direct property damage. Due to the low numbers, civilian deaths are not included in the analysis in this report.

Most school fires occurred in either high schools and middle schools or elementary schools, as shown in Figure 1. Unclassified non-adult schools and preschools accounted for the remaining school fires and had comparatively smaller shares of the remaining school fires and direct property damage. School fire civilian injuries were concentrated in high school and middle school fires, and fires in these schools also accounted for half of the direct property damage in school fires.

In 2014–2018, three in five school fires were small fire incidents identified as confined fires. These fires were confined to the cooking equipment, chimneys, fireplaces, or boilers or trash in which they ignited. Accordingly, the 40 percent of school fires classified as non-confined fires<sup>3</sup> accounted for the vast majority of the civilian injuries and direct property damage.

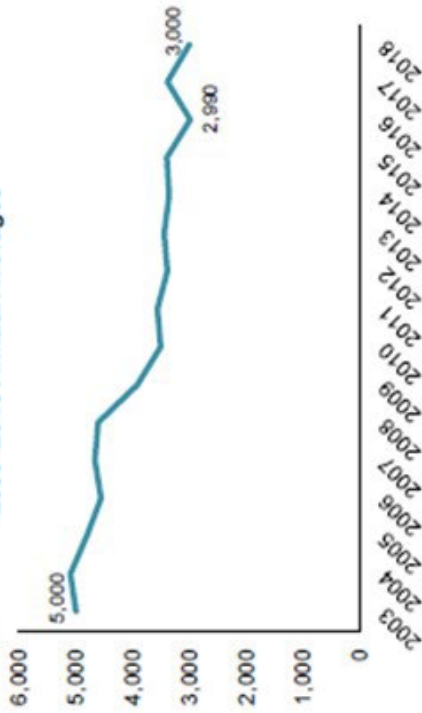
**Figure 1. Structure Fires in School Properties by School Type 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**School Fires by Year**

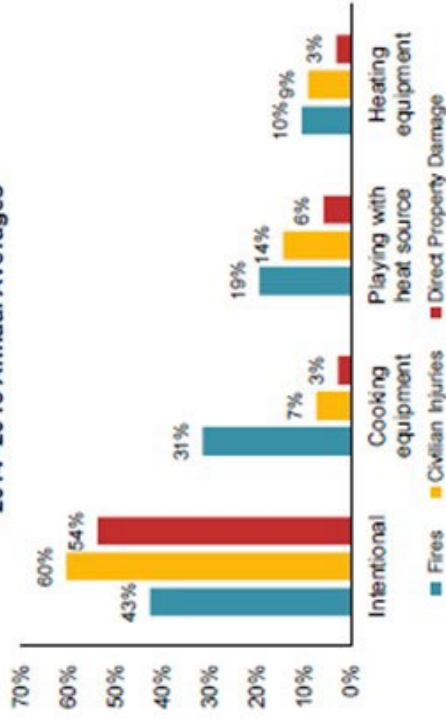
As shown in Figure 2, the number of structure fires that occur annually in schools has seen a distinct downward trend since 2003, with the sharpest decrease between 2004 and 2010. The annual number of school fires has generally been stable since 2010, although it is encouraging that the estimated 2,990 fires in 2016 and 3,000 fires in 2018 represent the low points for this period. Injuries and direct property damage have shown substantial year-to-year fluctuation, as indicated in Table 3 of the accompanying tables.

**Figure 2. Structure Fires in School Properties by Year**  
2003–2018 Annual Averages



fires might be unattended and more likely to cause damage. Fires that involved playing with a heat source were responsible for another one-fifth of the fires, while heating equipment accounted for one in 10 school fires. See Table 4 of the accompanying tables for additional details on the leading causes of fires.

**Figure 3. Structure Fires in School Properties by Leading Cause**  
2014–2018 Annual Averages



**Timing of School Fires**

School fires were most likely to occur during the daytime hours when the facilities were at their peak occupancy, as shown in Figure 4. Two-thirds of school fires occurred between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., but these fires accounted for less than one-third of the direct property damage, indicating that many of the fires were detected and extinguished relatively quickly. A comparatively small share of fires occurred in the twelve-hour period between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., as shown in Figure 3. Significantly, four percent of the fires that occurred between midnight and 4 a.m. accounted for approximately one-quarter (24%) of the direct property damage.

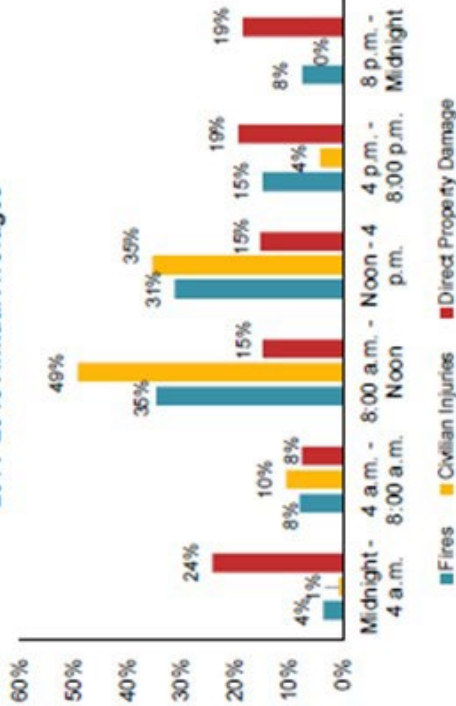
**Leading Causes of Structure Fires in Schools**

Figure 3 shows the leading causes of fires in school properties. The data in this table comes from several National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) data elements. Double counting is possible, particularly for playing with a heat source and fires that were intentionally set. For more information see *Methodology and Definitions Used in “Leading Causes of Structure Fires”*.

Fires that were intentionally set were the leading cause of school fires, accounting for over two in five fires, as shown in Figure 3. These fires also caused the majority of the injuries and over half of the property damage from school fires.

Fires that were caused by cooking equipment were the second leading cause of school fires, but these were largely confined fires resulting in little property damage. The ongoing presence of kitchen and other staff in schools is likely to be a factor that differentiates cooking-related fires in schools from those in homes, where cooking

**Figure 4. Structure Fire School Properties by Time of Day 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



Sprinklers can control a fire until the fire department arrives. A report by Marty Ahrens on the *US Experience with Sprinklers* found that sprinklers were present in only 39 percent of the reported fires in educational properties. A recent *report* from the UK found that sprinkler systems were not present in any of 46 school fires attended by London firefighters in 2019.

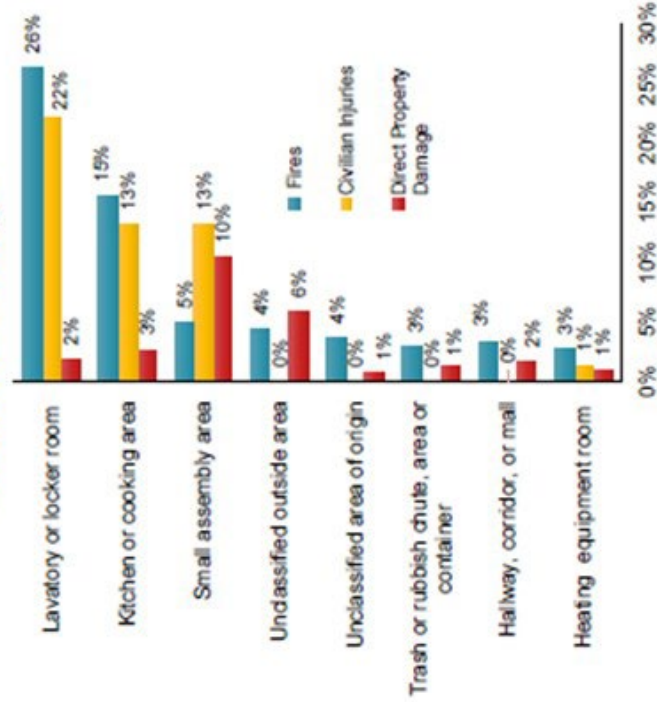
**Area of Fire Origin**

School fires most often originated in a lavatory or locker room, as shown in Figure 5. This is consistent with the intentional causes of many school fires and suggests that they frequently involved student fire play or arson. The majority of these fires were small confined fires and caused little property damage. However, they were likely to result in injuries (22% of total), underscoring the importance of education and intervention strategies to prevent intentional fire setting.

A kitchen or cooking area was the second leading area of origin for school fires. Confined fires were again predominant, and these fires resulted in little direct property damage. Fires in small assembly areas accounted for five percent of fires, but disproportionately higher shares of injuries and direct property damage.

The remaining fires were distributed among a variety of areas of origin. Just two percent of fires originated on an exterior roof surface, but these accounted for 10 percent of direct property damage. See Table 9 of the supporting tables for additional details.

**Figure 5. Structure Fires in School Properties by Area of Origin 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Item First Ignited**

Reflecting the predominance of intentionally set fires and cooking fires, the items most often first ignited in school fires were trash and cooking materials. Other leading items of ignition included magazines, newspapers, or writing paper; electrical wire or cable insulation; rolled or wound material; flammable or combustible liquids or gases; and appliance housings or casings.

**Factor Contributing to Ignition**

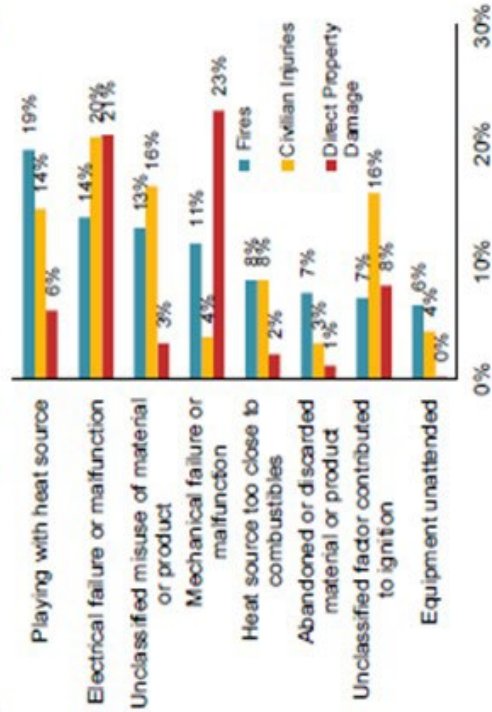
Human behavior was involved in two of the leading factors contributing to the ignition of school fires — playing with a heat source and unclassified misuse of materials or products, as shown in Figure 6. Electrical failures or malfunctions and mechanical failures or malfunctions were other leading factors and accounted for the largest share of the direct property damage.

Human behavior also appeared to be involved in a number of fires caused by other leading factors, including fires involving abandoned or discarded materials or products, heat sources being too close to combustible materials, unattended equipment, failure to clean equipment, equipment not properly operated, and equipment accidentally turned on or not turned off, suggesting that many school fires could be prevented with enhanced training and education efforts. See Table 11 for additional details.

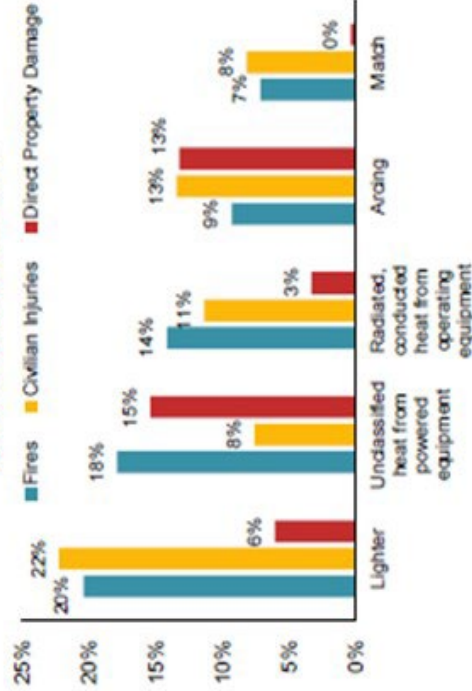
**Heat Source**

Figure 7 shows that heat from powered equipment and radiated or conducted heat from operating equipment together served as the heat sources in approximately one-third of school fires, while electrical arcing acted as the heat source in approximately one in 10 fires. Lighters and matches served as the heat source in over one-quarter of school fires, and those fires together accounted for a somewhat higher share of injuries (30%), likely because injury victims were intimate with the heat source. See Table 12 of the accompanying tables for additional details.

**Figure 6. Structure Fires in School Properties by Factor Contributing to Ignition, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Figure 7. Structure Fires in School Properties by Heat Source, 2014–2018**





## Part 2: Structure Fires in High Schools and Middle Schools

Because high schools and middle schools include distinctly different student populations than elementary schools, it is useful to analyze the key data elements of these two school groups separately. Note that high schools and middle schools represent a single code in the NFIRS and that data cannot be further disaggregated between the two levels of schooling.

### Leading Causes of Structure Fires in High Schools and Middle Schools

Fires with an intentional cause were the leading cause of fires in high schools and middle schools, accounting for more than two in five fires (44%), as shown in Figure 8. Fires caused by cooking equipment and fires caused by playing with a heat source were additional leading causes, followed by fires caused by electrical distribution and lighting equipment and heating equipment.

Although just one in 10 fires were caused by electrical distribution and lighting equipment, these fires were responsible for approximately one-quarter of the injuries (2.4%). It is likely that the injury victims were workers engaged in electrical work. It is also notable that fires caused by a

#### Sprinkler extinguishes fire in high school lab

A fire that started in a high school science laboratory during an experiment involving a Bunsen burner was quickly extinguished by an overhead sprinkler.

Firefighters were dispatched to the school after a sprinkler head activated and triggered the alarm.

On arrival, crews were advised by school officials that the fire was out, but they proceeded to the lab to confirm extinguishment, remaining on the scene until the alarms were silenced. Investigators determined that the fire was caused by the ignition of fuel inside the Bunsen burner.

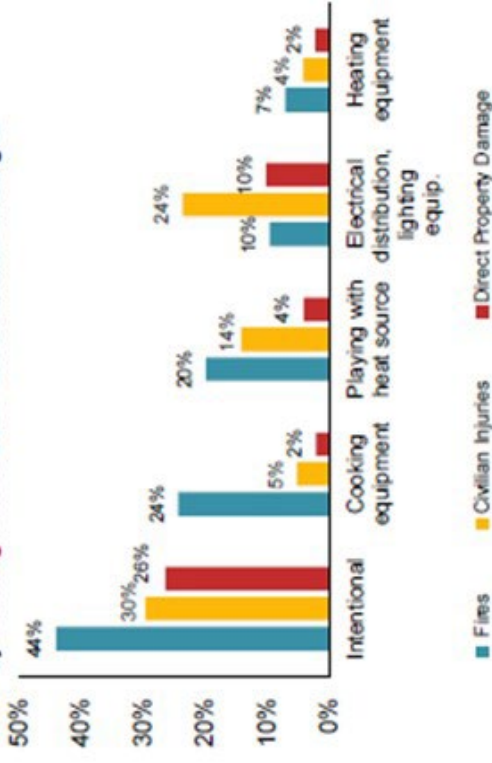
The fire caused an estimated \$500 in damage to classroom contents.

Source: "Firewatch," *NFFPA Journal*, May/June 2017

torch, burner, or soldering iron accounted for just one percent of these fires, but one-fifth of the direct property damage, as indicated by Table 14 in the accompanying tables. Hot work should only be performed by those who have the requisite permits and safety and fire prevention training.

It is worth noting that the prevalence of intentional fires in schools is not a problem unique to the United States. For instance, a *report* from Sweden in 2012 found that 40 percent of fires in Swedish school buildings were caused by arson.

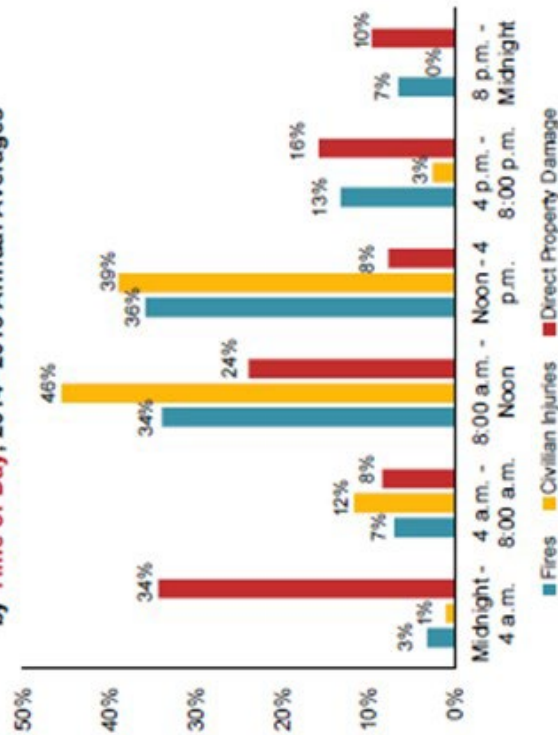
Figure 8. Structure Fires in High Schools and Middle Schools by Leading Cause 2014–2018 Annual Averages



**Timing of Fires in High Schools and Middle Schools**

The vast majority (70%) of fires in high schools and middle schools occurred during the peak occupancy hours between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., and these fires also accounted for most of the injuries (85%), as shown in Figure 9. One-third of the property damage (34%) was caused by a small share of fires that occurred between midnight and 4 a.m., when buildings were unlikely to be occupied.

**Figure 9. Structure Fires in High Schools and Middle Schools by Time of Day, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**

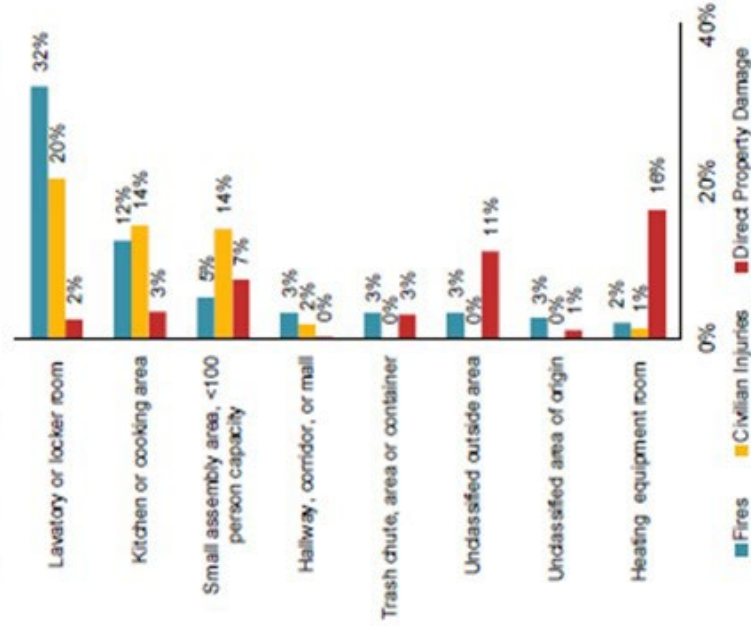


**Area of Origin**

Fires in high schools and middle schools were substantially more likely to originate in a lavatory or locker room than any other area, serving as the area of origin in approximately one-third of fires. That is more than two and a half times more the number of fires that

originated in a kitchen or cooking area, the second leading area of origin. Other leading areas of origin included small assembly areas, hallways, trash chutes, outdoor areas, and heating equipment rooms. Fires originating in a heating equipment room accounted for a disproportionate share of direct property damage, but these losses might have been influenced by a small number of fires.

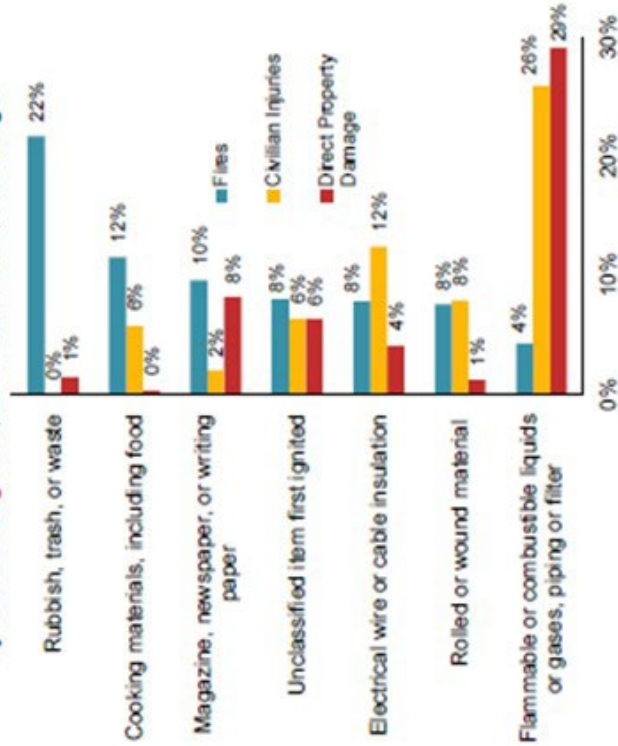
**Figure 10. Structure Fires in High Schools and Middle Schools by Area of Origin, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Item First Ignited**

The leading items first ignited in high school and middle school fires were rubbish, trash, or waste; cooking materials; and magazines, newspapers, or writing paper. Many of these items were likely involved in fires that were intentionally set or those caused by cooking equipment. Fires in which flammable or combustible liquids or gases, piping and filters were first ignited — just four percent of the total — caused one-quarter of the injuries and 29 percent of the property losses.

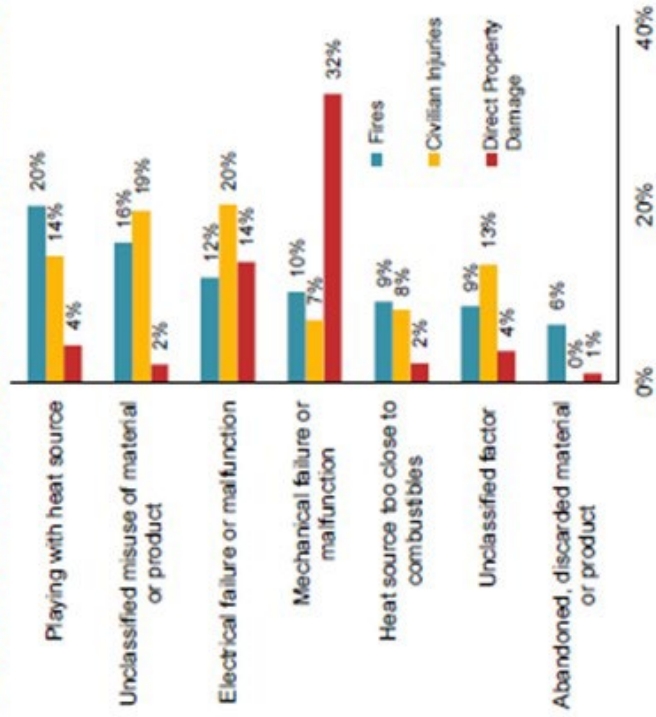
**Figure 11. Structure Fires in High Schools and Middle Schools by Item First Ignited, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Factor Contributing to Ignition**

Factors relating to human behavior were the two leading causes of middle and high school fires — playing with a heat source, which contributed to the ignition of one-fifth of the fires, and some form of misuse of a material or product, which contributed to the ignition of another 16 percent of the fires. Electrical and mechanical failures or malfunctions together contributed to the ignition of one in five fires in high schools and middle schools.

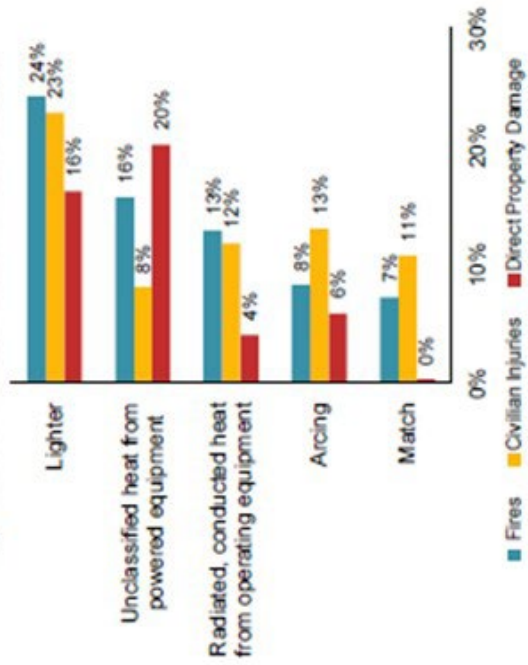
**Figure 12. Structure Fires in High Schools and Middle Schools by Factor Contributing to Ignition, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Heat Source**

As shown in Figure 13, almost one-third of the fires in high schools and middle schools were started by a lighter or a match. However, powered equipment and operating equipment together provided the heat for almost three in 10 fires and produced one-quarter of the direct property damage. Arcing also served as a leading heat source in high school and middle school fires, underscoring the need for proper maintenance of electrical equipment and use of power cords, as well as the importance of caution with electrical hazards in schools. Fires started by spontaneous combustion or a chemical reaction contributed to a minor share of the fires but caused the greatest amount of direct property damage (29%), as shown in Table 22. However, a small number of large loss fires could explain this disparity.

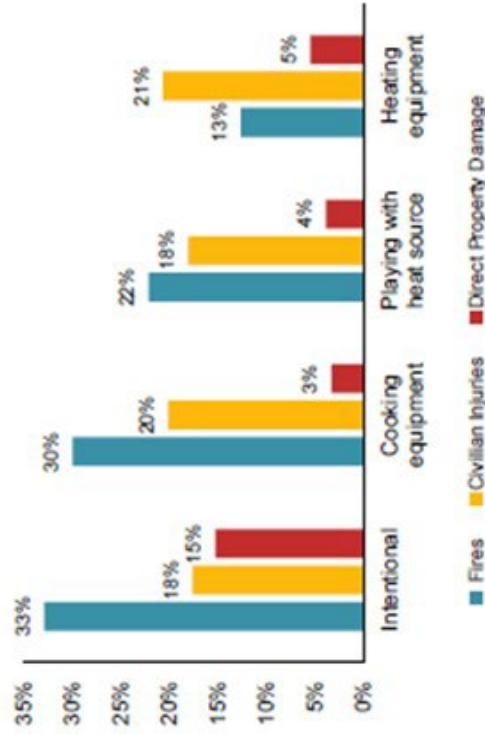
**Figure 13. Structure Fires in High Schools and Middle Schools by Heat Source, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Part 3: Structure Fires in Elementary Schools**

As with fires in high schools and middle schools, the leading causes of fires in elementary schools were intentionally set fires, fires caused by cooking equipment, and fires caused by playing with a heat source (Figure 11).

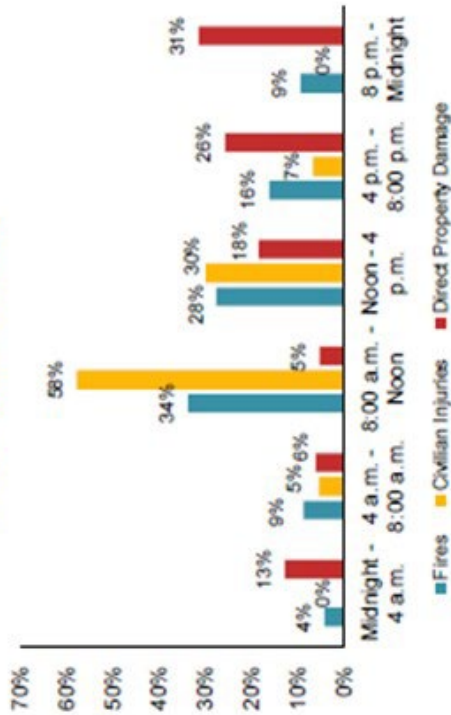
**Figure 14. Structure Fires in Elementary Schools by Leading Cause, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Timing of Fires in Elementary Schools**

The peak time period of fires in elementary schools was the eight-hour period between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., but the share of fires occurring during these school hours was lower than that in high schools. The greatest share of direct property damage was associated with fires occurring between 8 p.m. and midnight (31%), a time interval that accounted for fewer than one in 10 fires.

**Figure 15. Structure Fires in Elementary Schools by Time of Day 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Area of Fire Origin**

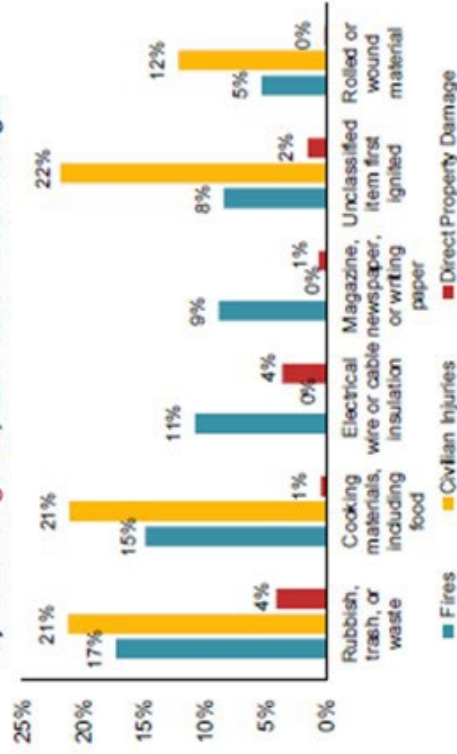
Fires in elementary schools were most likely to start in the lavatory or locker room or kitchen or cooking area, though the share of lavatory or locker room fires was substantially lower than in high schools, reflecting the lower prevalence of intentional fires at the elementary school level. A small share of fires starting on an exterior roof surface caused nearly one-quarter of the direct property damage, as shown in Table 29. Fires starting in a small assembly area also accounted for a disproportionate share of the direct property damage.

**Item First Ignited**

Elementary school fires were most often ignited in trash or by cooking materials. Fires ignited in cooking materials were primarily minor fires and did not result in property damage. The ongoing presence of kitchen staff in schools is likely to be a factor that

differentiates cooking-related fires in schools from those in homes, where cooking fires might be unattended and are more likely to cause damage. Fires ignited on a roof covering or finish represented a small share of fires but accounted for a disproportionately large share of direct property damage, as indicated in Table 30. It should again be noted that the disparity could be influenced by a small number of fires with larger losses.

**Figure 16. Structure Fires in Elementary Schools by Item First Ignited, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**

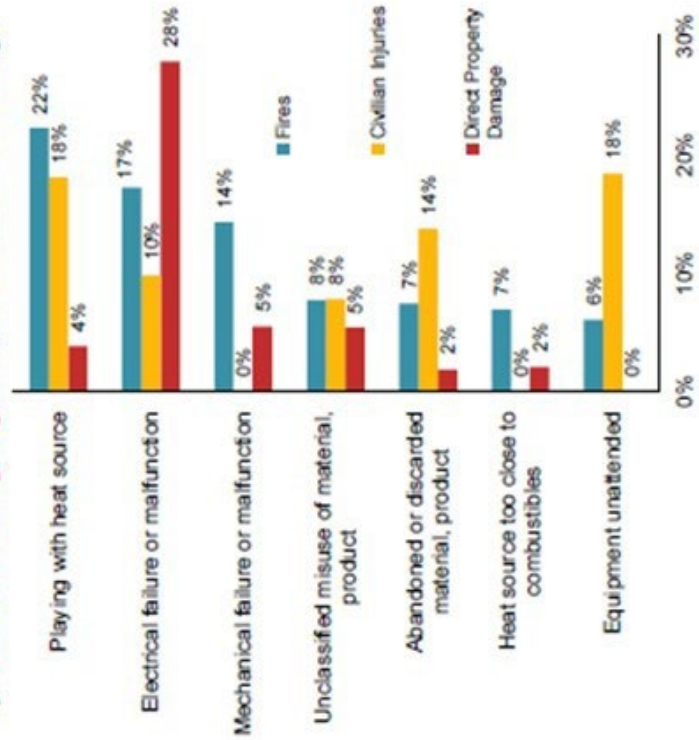


**Factor Contributing to Ignition**

Several leading factors that contributed to the ignition of fires in elementary schools had behavioral implications, including playing with a heat source, misuse of a material or product, unattended equipment, and abandoned or discarded material or product. Playing with a heat source was a particular issue at the elementary school level, serving as a factor contributing to ignition of just over one-fifth of the fires (22%).

Fires involving electrical and mechanical equipment were also leading causes of fires in elementary schools, suggesting gaps in the maintenance and repair of school equipment or infrastructure. Fires involving electrical failures or malfunctions, which contributed to slightly less than one-fifth of the fires, accounted for the highest share of the direct property damage. While responsible for fewer than one in 10 fires, those involving unattended equipment resulted in a disproportionately large share of injuries (18%), possibly because those attending to the equipment were injured while trying to put the fire out.

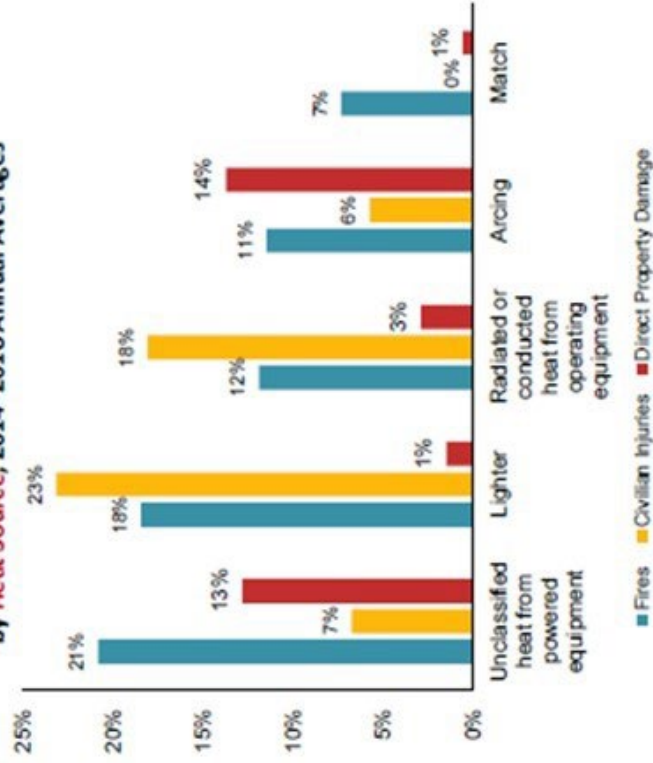
**Figure 17. Structure Fires in Elementary Schools by Factor Contributing to Ignition, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Heat Source**

Lighters and matches together provided the heat source in one-quarter of elementary school fires, which is consistent with intentional fires and fires involving fire play (Figure 18). Other leading heat sources of elementary school fires involved equipment or electrical sources, including heat from powered or operating equipment and electrical arcing.

**Figure 18. Structure Fires in Elementary Schools by Heat Source, 2014–2018 Annual Averages**



**Additional Information**

See *Structure Fires in Schools: Supporting Tables* by Richard Campbell, September 2020, for more detailed information about the material presented in this report.

**Acknowledgments**

The National Fire Protection Association® thanks all the fire departments and state fire authorities who participate in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and the annual NFPA® fire experience survey. These firefighters are the original sources of the detailed data that make this analysis possible. Their contributions allow us to estimate the size of the fire problem. We are also grateful to the US Fire Administration for its work in developing, coordinating, and maintaining NFIRS.

To learn more about research at NFPA, visit [nfpa.org/research](http://nfpa.org/research).

E-mail: [research@nfpa.org](mailto:research@nfpa.org)

NFPA No. PKG14

This page intentionally left blank.



## **APPENDIX F**

### **A WHOLE COMMUNITY APPROACH TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: PRINCIPLES, THEMES AND PATHWAYS FOR ACTION**

This page intentionally left blank.



# A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action

*FDOC 104-008-1 / December 2011*



**FEMA**

This page intentionally left blank.

## Table of Contents

---

Introduction .....	1
National Dialogue on a Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management.....	2
Whole Community Defined.....	3
Whole Community Principles and Strategic Themes.....	4
Strategic Themes in Practice .....	6
Understand Community Complexity .....	6
Recognize Community Capabilities and Needs.....	8
Foster Relationships with Community Leaders.....	10
Build and Maintain Partnerships.....	11
Empower Local Action .....	14
Leverage and Strengthen Social Infrastructure, Networks, and Assets.....	16
Pathways for Action.....	19
Conclusion.....	23

This page intentionally left blank.

## Introduction

The effects of natural and manmade disasters have become more frequent, far-reaching, and widespread. As a result, preserving the safety, security, and prosperity of all parts of our society is becoming more challenging. Our Nation's traditional approach to managing the risks associated with these disasters relies heavily on the government. However, today's changing reality is affecting all levels of government in their efforts to improve our Nation's resilience while grappling with the limitations of their capabilities.<sup>1</sup> Even in small- and medium-sized disasters, which the government is generally effective at managing, significant access and service gaps still exist. In large-scale disasters or catastrophes, government resources and capabilities can be overwhelmed.

The scale and severity of disasters are growing and will likely pose systemic threats.<sup>2</sup> Accelerating changes in demographic trends and technology are making the effects of disasters more complex to manage. One future trend affecting emergency needs is continued population shifts into vulnerable areas (e.g., hurricane-prone coastlines). The economic development that accompanies these shifts also intensifies the pressure on coastal floodplains, barrier islands, and the ecosystems that support food production, the tourism industry, and suburban housing growth. Other demographic changes will affect disaster



Figure 1: Joplin, Missouri, May 24, 2011—Homes were leveled with the force of 200 mph winds as an F5 tornado struck the city on May 22, 2011. This scene is representative of the growing impacts of disasters. Jace Anderson/FEMA

management activities, such as a growing population of people with disabilities living in communities instead of institutions, as well as people living with chronic conditions (e.g., obesity and asthma). Also, communities are facing a growing senior population due to the Baby Boom generation entering this demographic group. Consequently, changes in transportation systems and even housing styles may follow to accommodate the lifestyles of these residents. If immigration trends continue as predicted, cities and suburbs will be more diverse ethnically and linguistically. Employment trends, when combined with new technologies, will shift the ways in which local residents plan their home-to-work commuting patterns as well as their leisure time. All of these trends will affect the ways in which residents organize and identify with community-based associations and will influence how they prepare for and respond to emergencies.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Resilience refers to the ability to adapt to changing conditions and withstand and rapidly recover from disruption due to emergencies. White House, "Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8)," March 30, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation," November 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Strategic Foresight Initiative, "U.S. Demographic Shifts: Long-term Trends and Drivers and Their Implications for Emergency Management," May 2011.

Strategic Foresight Initiative, "Government Budgets: Long-term Trends and Drivers and Their Implications for Emergency Management," May 2011.

***A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action***

This document presents a foundation for increasing individual preparedness and engaging with members of the community as vital partners in enhancing the resiliency and security of our Nation through a Whole Community approach. It is intended to promote greater understanding of the approach and to provide a strategic framework to guide all members of the emergency management community as they determine how to integrate Whole Community concepts into their daily practices. This document is not intended to be all-encompassing or focused on any specific phase of emergency management or level of government, nor does it offer specific, prescriptive actions that require communities or emergency managers to adopt certain protocols. Rather, it provides an overview of core principles, key themes, and pathways for action that have been synthesized from a year-long national dialogue around practices already used in the field. While this is not a guide or a “how-to” document, it provides a starting point for those learning about the approach or looking for ways to expand existing practices and to begin more operational-based discussions on further implementation of Whole Community principles.

***National Dialogue on a Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management***

In a congressional testimony, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Craig Fugate, described today’s reality as follows: “Government can and will continue to serve disaster survivors. However, we fully recognize that a government-centric approach to disaster management will not be enough to meet the challenges posed by a catastrophic incident. That is why we must fully engage our entire societal capacity....”<sup>4</sup> To that end, FEMA initiated a national dialogue on a Whole Community approach to emergency management, an approach that many communities have used for years with great success, and one which has been gathering strength in jurisdictions across the Nation.

The national dialogue was designed to foster collective learning from communities’ experiences across the country. It occurred in various settings, such as organized conference sessions, research seminars, professional association meetings, practitioner gatherings, and official government meetings. The various settings created opportunities to listen to those who work in local neighborhoods, have survived disasters, and are actively engaged in community development. Participants in this dialogue included a broad range of emergency management partners, including representatives from the private and nonprofit sectors, academia, local residents, and government leaders. The conversations with the various stakeholders focused on how communities are motivated and engaged, how they understand risk, and what their experiences are with resilience following a disaster. In addition, international and historical resiliency efforts, such as FEMA’s Project Impact, were explored to gather lessons learned and best practices.<sup>5</sup>

FEMA also brought together diverse members from across the country to comprise a core working group. The working group reviewed and validated emerging Whole Community principles and themes, gathered examples of the Whole Community approach from the field, and

---

<sup>4</sup> Administrator Craig Fugate, Federal Emergency Management Agency, before the United States House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management at the Rayburn House Office Building, March 30, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> FEMA introduced Project Impact in 1997 as a national initiative designed to challenge the country to undertake actions that protect families, businesses, and communities by reducing the effects of natural disasters. The efforts focused on creating active public-private partnerships to build disaster-resistant communities.



identified people, organizations, and communities with promising local experiences. They participated in various meetings and conferences and, in some cases, provided the examples included in this document.

In addition to the national dialogue, this document was created concurrently with a larger effort to build an integrated, layered, all-of-Nation approach to preparedness, as called for by Presidential Policy Directive (PPD-8): National Preparedness.<sup>6</sup> As such, the Whole Community approach is being incorporated into all PPD-8 deliverables, including the National Preparedness Goal, National Preparedness System description, National Planning Frameworks, and the campaign to build and sustain preparedness nationwide, as well as leverage the approach in their development.<sup>7</sup> In support of these efforts, FEMA seeks to spark exploration into community engagement strategies to promote further discussion on approaches that position local residents for leadership roles in planning, organizing, and sharing accountability for the success of local disaster management efforts, and which enhance our Nation's security and resilience.

### *Whole Community Defined*

As a concept, Whole Community is a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests. By doing so, a more effective path to societal security and resilience is built. In a sense, Whole Community is a philosophical approach on how to think about conducting emergency management.

There are many different kinds of communities, including communities of place, interest, belief, and circumstance, which can exist both geographically and virtually (e.g., online forums). A Whole Community approach attempts to engage the full capacity of the private and nonprofit sectors, including businesses, faith-based and disability organizations, and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of local, tribal, state, territorial, and Federal governmental partners. This engagement means different things to different groups. In an all-hazards environment, individuals and institutions will make different decisions on how to prepare for and respond to threats and hazards; therefore, a community's level of preparedness will vary. The challenge for those engaged in emergency management is to understand how to work with the diversity of groups and organizations and the policies and practices that emerge from them in an effort to improve the ability of local residents to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from any type of threat or hazard effectively.

Whole Community is a philosophical approach in how to conduct the business of emergency management.

Benefits include:

- Shared understanding of community needs and capabilities
- Greater empowerment and integration of resources from across the community
- Stronger social infrastructure
- Establishment of relationships that facilitate more effective prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery activities
- Increased individual and collective preparedness
- Greater resiliency at both the community and national levels

<sup>6</sup> President Barack Obama, "Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8): National Preparedness," March 30, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> FEMA, "National Preparedness Goal," September 2011. (Formally released on October 7, 2011.)

***A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action***

The benefits of Whole Community include a more informed, shared understanding of community risks, needs, and capabilities; an increase in resources through the empowerment of community members; and, in the end, more resilient communities. A more sophisticated understanding of a community's needs and capabilities also leads to a more efficient use of existing resources regardless of the size of the incident or community constraints. In times of resource and economic constraints, the pooling of efforts and resources across the whole community is a way to compensate for budgetary pressures, not only for government agencies but also for many private and nonprofit sector organizations. The task of cultivating and sustaining relationships to incorporate the whole community can be challenging; however, the investment yields many dividends. The process is as useful as the product. In building relationships and learning more about the complexity of a community, interdependencies that may be sources of hidden vulnerabilities are revealed. Steps taken to incorporate Whole Community concepts before an incident occurs will lighten the load during response and recovery efforts through the identification of partners with existing processes and resources who are available to be part of the emergency management team. The Whole Community approach produces more effective outcomes for all types and sizes of threats and hazards, thereby improving security and resiliency nationwide.



Figure 2: Madison, Tennessee, May 29, 2010—Gary Lima, Tennessee Emergency Management Agency Community Relations Coordinator, leads Boy Scout troop #460 in a Memorial Day project to place flags on graves. The picture reflects emergency managers becoming involved in the day-to-day activities of community groups. David Fine/FEMA

### ***Whole Community Principles and Strategic Themes***

Numerous factors contribute to the resilience of communities and effective emergency management outcomes. However, three principles that represent the foundation for establishing a Whole Community approach to emergency management emerged during the national dialogue.

#### **Whole Community Principles:**

- **Understand and meet the actual needs of the whole community.** Community engagement can lead to a deeper understanding of the unique and diverse needs of a population, including its demographics, values, norms, community structures, networks, and relationships. The more we know about our communities, the better we can understand their real-life safety and sustaining needs and their motivations to participate in emergency management-related activities prior to an event.
- **Engage and empower all parts of the community.** Engaging the whole community and empowering local action will better position stakeholders to plan for and meet the actual needs of a community and strengthen the local capacity to deal with the consequences of all threats and hazards. This requires all members of the community to be part of the emergency management team, which should include diverse community members, social and community service groups and institutions, faith-based and disability groups, academia,

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

professional associations, and the private and nonprofit sectors, while including government agencies who may not traditionally have been directly involved in emergency management. When the community is engaged in an authentic dialogue, it becomes empowered to identify its needs and the existing resources that may be used to address them.

- **Strengthen what works well in communities on a daily basis.** A Whole Community approach to building community resilience requires finding ways to support and strengthen the institutions, assets, and networks that already work well in communities and are working to address issues that are important to community members on a daily basis. Existing structures and relationships that are present in the daily lives of individuals, families, businesses, and organizations before an incident occurs can be leveraged and empowered to act effectively during and after a disaster strikes.

In addition to the three Whole Community principles, six strategic themes were identified through research, discussions, and examples provided by emergency management practitioners. These themes speak to the ways the Whole Community approach can be effectively employed in emergency management and, as such, represent pathways for action to implement the principles.

**Whole Community Strategic Themes:**

- Understand community complexity.
- Recognize community capabilities and needs.
- Foster relationships with community leaders.
- Build and maintain partnerships.
- Empower local action.
- Leverage and strengthen social infrastructure, networks, and assets.

In the *Strategic Themes in Practice* section of this document, the Whole Community concept is explored through real-world examples that highlight the key principles and themes of the Whole Community approach. In order to provide an illustration of how the principles and themes can be applied, examples for each of the five mission areas—Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery (as outlined in the National Preparedness Goal)—are included. In addition, examples from other community development and public safety efforts have been included—most notably, community policing. While the focus and outcomes may differ, such efforts have proven effective in advancing public health and safety and offer a model for emergency management personnel to consider. The *Pathways for Action* section provides a list of reflective questions and ideas for emergency management practitioners to refer to when they are beginning to think about how to incorporate the Whole Community concepts into their security and resilience efforts.

As a field of practice, our collective understanding of how to effectively apply Whole Community as a concept to the daily business of emergency management will continue to evolve. It is hoped that this document will assist emergency managers, as members of their communities, in that evolution—prompting new actions and soliciting new ideas and strategies. FEMA is committed to continued engagement in ongoing discussions with its partners in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to further develop and refine strategies to deliver more effective emergency management outcomes and enhance the security and resilience of our communities and our Nation.

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

## Strategic Themes in Practice

The strategic themes presented in this section speak to the various ways the Whole Community approach can be effectively employed in emergency management and, as such, represent pathways for action by members of the emergency management community at all levels. These themes and pathways are explored through the presentation of real-world examples that highlight how Whole Community concepts are being applied in communities across the country.

### *Understand Community Complexity*

Communities are unique, multi-dimensional, and complex. They are affected by many factors and interdependencies, including demographics, geography, access to resources, experience with government, crime, political activity, economic prosperity, and forms of social capital such as social networks, social cohesion between different groups, and institutions. Developing a better understanding of a community involves looking at its members to learn how social activity is organized on a normal basis (e.g., social patterns, community leaders, points of collective organization and action, and decision-making processes), which will reveal potential sources (e.g., individuals and organizations) of new collective action. A realistic understanding of the complexity of a community's daily life will help emergency managers determine how they can best collaborate with and support the community to meet its true needs.



Figure 3: New Orleans, Louisiana, September 5, 2008—A bilingual volunteer helps non-English speaking evacuees, guiding them in the right direction to board the correct buses to their parishes. Understanding the complexity of communities (e.g., non-English speakers) helps emergency management practitioners to meet the residents' needs. Jacinta Quesada/FEMA

Understanding the complexities of local communities helps with tailoring engagement strategies and shaping programs to meet various needs. Numerous examples that involve local initiatives to identify, map, and communicate with a wide range of local groups exist nationwide. For example, the Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) has been actively identifying ways to better communicate and plan with linguistically isolated populations (LIP) and limited-English proficient (LEP) populations within the city. HDHHS is working with about 20 community organizations that serve and represent LIP/LEP communities, along with Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, four refugee resettlement agencies that work with these populations, and several apartment complexes in southwest Houston (where many refugee and some immigrant populations live), in an effort to develop trusted relationships and ways to provide current preparedness, response, and recovery information. Because of this outreach, significant unmet needs (e.g., transportation) for these specific populations have been identified. The City of Houston is using this information to fulfill unmet needs for these populations and continues to work with these community organizations and private sector partners to improve outreach materials, methods of communication, and preparedness programs.

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

The full diversity of communities is better understood when communication and engagement efforts move beyond easy, typical approaches to looking at the real needs and issues a community faces. In one California city, the police noticed a high level of violent crime in a particular neighborhood. In a typical policing model, the police would have assigned additional officers to patrol the neighborhood, approached the community to provide them with information about the criminal activity, and informed residents of what they might do to avoid being affected by the crime. However, as part of an operational shift, the police took a proactive approach by first engaging with the community to obtain information about the nature and frequency of the local crimes. At the initial meeting, the police learned from the local residents that a number of problems contributed to the unsafe conditions of the neighborhood—problems that police response alone could not correct. Cars speeding through the neighborhood; the presence of abandoned cars, couches, and other litter in front yards; rundown conditions of apartment buildings; few safe walkways for neighborhood children; and a lack of lighting on street corners all contributed to the crime situation.

**Understand Community “DNA”**

Learn how communities’ social activity is organized and how needs are met under normal conditions.

A better understanding of how segments of the community resolve issues and make decisions—both with and without government as a player—helps uncover ways to better meet the actual needs of the whole community in times of crisis.

At the next community meeting, the police brought together a number of government departments, including fire, public works, and the housing authority, to address the residents’ concerns. Government representatives agreed to provide dumpsters for the litter and the residents agreed to fill them. The community agreed to tow the abandoned cars and identified street repaving as a high priority. Together, the community and city officials approached the apartment owners, who agreed to paint the exteriors of the buildings. The public works department fixed the street lighting. Building upon the cooperation and the demonstrated responsiveness to the community’s needs, several residents provided the police with information that led to the arrests of several individuals involved in the area’s drug-related activities. In a relatively short period of time, police worked with local residents to transform what had been perceived to be a narrow crime issue into a broad-based community revitalization effort. Crime decreased, residents became involved, and the neighborhood was significantly improved. Emergency management practitioners can take a similar approach by understanding the underlying and core community concerns in order to build relationships and identify opportunities to work together to develop solutions that meet everyone’s needs.

Numerous approaches exist to identify and better understand the complexities of local populations, how they interact, what resources are available, and the gaps between needs and solutions. For example, community mapping is a way to identify community capabilities and needs by visually illustrating data to reveal patterns. Examples of patterns may take into account the location of critical infrastructure, demographics, reliance on public transportation, available assets and resources (e.g., warehouses that can be used as distribution centers), and businesses that can continue to supply food or water during and after emergencies. Understanding communities is a dynamic process as patterns may change. Emergency managers and local groups often use community mapping to gather empirical data on local patterns. Revealing patterns can help emergency managers to better engage communities and understand and meet the needs of individuals by illustrating the dynamics of populations, how they interact, and available resources.

***A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action***

One community mapping program that the Washington State Emergency Management Division developed (“Map Your Neighborhood”) won FEMA’s 2011 Challenge.gov award for addressing community preparedness. This program helps citizens identify the most important steps they need to take to secure their homes and neighborhoods following a disaster. In addition, it helps to identify the special skills and equipment that neighbors possess, the locations of natural gas and propane tanks, and a comprehensive contact list of neighbors who may need assistance, such as older residents, children, and people with disabilities and other access and functional needs.

***Recognize Community Capabilities and Needs***

Appreciating the actual capabilities and needs of a community is essential to supporting and enabling local actions. For example, in response to past disasters, meals ready-to-eat (MREs) have been used to feed survivors because these resources were readily available. However, for a large portion of the population, such as children, seniors, or individuals with dietary or health considerations, MREs are not a suitable food source for various reasons, as MREs tend to contain high levels of fat and sodium and low levels of fiber.

A community’s needs should be defined on the basis of what the community requires without being limited to what traditional emergency management capabilities can address. By engaging in open discussions, emergency management practitioners can begin to identify the actual needs of the community and the collective capabilities (private, public, and civic) that exist to address them, as the role of government and private and nonprofit sector organizations may vary for each community. The community should also be encouraged to define what it believes its needs and capabilities are in order to fully participate in planning and actions.

Based on a shared understanding of actual needs, the community can then collectively plan to find ways to address those needs. Following the devastating tornadoes in Alabama during the spring of 2011, various agencies, organizations, and volunteers united to locate recovery resources in the community and communicate information about those resources to the public. Two days after the tornadoes, they formed the Alabama Interagency Emergency Response Coordinating Committee. The committee was led by representatives from Independent Living Resources of Greater Birmingham, United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Birmingham, and the Alabama Governor’s Office on Disability. The committee also included representatives from FEMA and the American Red Cross.



Figure 4: Fargo, North Dakota, March 23, 2009—Thousands of students and community members work together with the National Guard at the Fargo Dome to make sand bags during a 24-hour operation. Community members have the capabilities to help meet their own emergency needs. Michael Reiger/FEMA

**Recognize Community Capabilities and Broaden the Team**

Recognize communities’ private and civic capabilities, identify how they can contribute to improve pre- and post-event outcomes, and actively engage them in all aspects of the emergency management process.

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

A daily conference call was attended by as many as 60 individuals representing agencies that serve individuals with disabilities and chronic illnesses. In addition, volunteers with disabilities continuously scanned broadcast media and printed and electronic newspapers and called agency contacts to obtain the latest information on resources for disaster recovery. For instance, volunteers placed calls to local hospitals and clinics, faith-based organizations, and organizations representing clinical professionals to request help with crisis counseling. Recovery resource information was compiled in an extensive database with entries grouped within the following categories: Red Cross, FEMA, emergency shelters/housing assistance, medication assistance, health care services, mental health support, food assistance, eyewear, communications, computers/Internet, hiring contractors for home repairs, insurance claims, legal aid, vital documents, older adult care, childcare, blood donations, animal shelter and services, and emergency preparation. The Disaster Recovery Resource Database was updated twice daily and information was disseminated in multiple formats (e.g., email attachment, website, hard copy, and telephone).

The committee used local media outlets, state agencies (e.g., health, education, rehabilitation, aging, and mental health), city and county governments, the United Way's 2-1-1 Information & Referral Search website, and nonprofit organizations to disseminate the database to community residents. Independent Living Resources of Greater Birmingham hosted a website with recovery resources presented by category. This collaboration greatly enhanced the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities, as well as older residents.

As a protection effort, some communities have developed self-assessment tools to evaluate how prepared they are for all threats and hazards. One example is a Community Resilience Index (CRI), which was developed by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance's Coastal Community Resilience Priority Issue Team, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, and the Louisiana Sea Grant College

Program in collaboration with 18 communities along the Gulf Coast, from Texas to Florida. It is a self-assessment tool and provides communities with a method of determining if an acceptable level of functionality may be maintained after a disaster. The self-assessment tool can be used to evaluate the following areas to provide a preliminary assessment of a community's disaster resilience: critical infrastructure and facilities, transportation issues, community plans and agreements, mitigation measures, business plans, and social systems. Gaps are identified through this analysis. The CRI helps to identify weaknesses that a community may want to address prior to the next hazard event and stimulates discussion among emergency responders within a community, thus increasing its resilience to disasters. As a result of the initial implementation of the Community Resilience Index (CRI), additional grant funding is being provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Storms Program to continue to build capacity in the region so facilitators can assist communities in taking the next steps. Under this new grant, facilitators will continue their work by helping communities identify issues and needs in connection with becoming more resilient, create a shared community understanding of the potential extent of future losses, apply strategies to serve near- and long-term mitigation needs, and take the first steps toward adapting to a rise in sea level. This support will be in the form of follow-up training and/or technical assistance.

**Plan for the Real**

Plan for what communities will really need should a severe event occur and not just for the existing resources on hand.

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

### *Foster Relationships with Community Leaders*

Within every community, there are many different formal and informal leaders, such as community organizers, local council members and other government leaders, nonprofit or business leaders, volunteer or faith leaders, and long-term residents, all of whom have valuable knowledge and can provide a comprehensive understanding of the communities in which they live. These leaders can help identify activities in which the community is already interested and involved as people might be more receptive to preparedness campaigns and more likely to understand the relevancy of emergency management to their lives.

The Colorado Emergency Preparedness Partnership (CEPP) exemplifies the benefits of fostering relationships with community leaders. According to its website, “CEPP is a collaborative enterprise created by the Denver Police Foundation, Business Executives for National Security, and the Philanthropy Roundtable. It is a broad coalition to implement a voluntary, all-hazards partnership between business and government and, to date, is the product of many Colorado partners including leaders of the philanthropic community, Federal, state and local agencies, business, academia, and US Northern Command.” CEPP has built these trusted relationships since its inception in 2008. When not responding to a disaster, Colorado Emergency Preparedness Partnership (CEPP) partners remain connected with their network through information bulletins and tap into their capabilities for smaller emergencies and other needs. For example, the police recently needed a helicopter for a murder investigation and they contacted CEPP, a trusted partner, to see if there was one available. Within 30 minutes, three helicopters were offered by three different member organizations.

As suggested previously, disaster-resilient communities are, first and foremost, communities that function and solve problems well under normal conditions. By matching existing capabilities to needs and working to strengthen these resources, communities are able to improve their disaster resiliency. Community leaders and partners can help emergency managers in identifying the changing needs and capabilities that exist in the community.

Community leaders can also rally their members to join community emergency management efforts and to take personal preparedness measures for themselves and their families. The inclusion of community leaders in emergency management training opportunities is a way to reach individuals, as these leaders can pass preparedness information to their members. They can be a critical link between emergency managers and the individuals they represent. Many emergency management agencies, such as the New York City Office of Emergency Management, include their private sector partners in regular exercises, sustaining and strengthening their relationships in the process.

For example, central Ohio is home to the country’s second-largest Somali population. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission has been working to gather information about this group’s preferred communication methods, traditions, behaviors, and customs in order to appropriately plan for its needs in the event of an emergency. The Somali population requested that planners include the Somali community leaders in emergency preparedness and response efforts because they were the foremost sources of trustworthy communication. Both emergency managers and the community benefit from developing these trusted relationships.

#### **Meet People Where They Are**

Engage communities through the relationships that exist in everyday settings and around issues that already have their attention and drive their interactions. Connect the social, economic, and political structures that make up daily life to emergency management programs.



*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

Trust is a recurring theme that underpins healthy and strong communities. It acts as the glue that holds different groups together, strengthens and sustains solidarity, and supports the means for collective action. It is crucial that partnerships are based on trust and not on fear or competition to ensure the success of the Whole Community approach. Building social trust requires more than conventional outreach focused on “trust issues”; it requires collaborating with communities in joint activities designed to address specific local problems. As emergency managers and community leaders work together to solve problems, trusted relationships are formed as they learn to support and rely on one another. Fostering relationships and collaborating with community leaders is a way to build trust within the broader community as they are the links to individual community members. To this end, it is important that the government and its partners are transparent about information sharing, planning processes, and capabilities to deal with all threats and hazards.

**Build Trust through Participation**  
 Successfully collaborating with community leaders to solve problems for non-emergency activities builds relationships and trust over time. As trust is built, community leaders can provide insight into the needs and capabilities of a community and help to ramp up interest about emergency management programs that support resiliency.

**Build and Maintain Partnerships**

While certainly not a new concept, building relationships with multi-organizational partnerships and coalitions is an exemplary organizing technique to ensure the involvement of a wide range of local community members. The collective effort brings greater capabilities to the initiatives and provides greater opportunities to reach agreement throughout the community and influence others to participate and support activities. The critical step in building these partnerships is to find the overlapping and shared interests around which groups and organizations are brought together. Equally important is to sustain the motivations and incentives to collaborate over a long period of time while improving resilience through increased public-private partnership. As FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate stated at the first *National Conference on Building Resilience Through Public-Private Partnerships*, “We cannot separate out and segment one sector in isolation; the interdependencies are too great... We want the private sector to be part of the team and we want to be in the situation where we work as a team and not compete with each other.”<sup>8</sup>



Figure 5: Tuscaloosa, Alabama, June 9, 2011—The Japanese International Cooperation Agency made a donation of several pallets of blankets to representatives from several faith-based and volunteer organizations. The donation came in the wake of the April tornados that hit the southeast. Tim Burkitt /FEMA

<sup>8</sup> Administrator Craig Fugate, Federal Emergency Management Agency, First National Conference on Building Resilience through Public-Private Partnerships, August 2011.

***A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action***

Businesses play a key role in building resilient communities. As businesses consider what they need to do to survive a disaster or emergency, as outlined in their business continuity plans, it is equally important that they also consider what their customers will need in order to survive. Without customers and employees, businesses will fail. The ongoing involvement of businesses in preparedness activities paves the way to economic and social resiliency within their communities.

An example of a public-private partnership that successfully negotiated difficult community political and economic dynamics comes from Medina County, just southwest of Cleveland, Ohio. Like so many urban areas, expansion into rural areas placed new demands on water supplies. Some homebuilders initially wanted to develop large plots that would require filling in existing wetlands and natural floodplains. The building plans also required firefighting services to truck in large amounts of water in the event of an incident.

A broad-based coalition that included the local government, county floodplain manager, planning commission, homebuilders association, and emergency manager came together to spearhead a process to promote development in the county while protecting water supplies and preserving wetlands and ponds. The partnership achieved a building standard that allowed builders to develop their desired housing design but also required them to build ponds and wetlands within each housing subdivision in an effort to sustain water supplies and allow for improved fire protection and floodplain management. The zoning and land use mitigation efforts promoted and protected the health, safety, and welfare of the residents by making the community less susceptible to flood and fire damage.

Working as a public-private partnership enabled the participants to reach an agreement and institutionalize it through cooperative legal processes. Mutual interests and priorities brought this otherwise disparate group together to form a productive partnership.

Partnerships are attractive when all parties benefit from the relationship. The State of Florida established a team dedicated to business and industry. This dedicated private sector team is

**Partners to Consider Engaging**

- Community councils
- Volunteer organizations (e.g., local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, Community Emergency Response Team programs, volunteer centers, State and County Animal Response Teams, etc.)
- Faith-based organizations
- Individual citizens
- Community leaders (e.g., representatives from specific segments of the community, including seniors, minority populations, and non-English speakers)
- Disability services
- School boards
- Higher education institutions
- Local Cooperative Extension System offices
- Animal control agencies and animal welfare organizations
- Surplus stores
- Hardware stores
- Big-box stores
- Small, local retailers
- Supply chain components, such as manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, and logistics providers
- Home care services
- Medical facilities
- Government agencies (all levels and disciplines)
- Embassies
- Local Planning Councils (e.g., Citizen Corps Councils, Local Emergency Planning Committees)
- Chambers of commerce
- Nonprofit organizations
- Advocacy groups
- Media outlets
- Airports
- Public transportation systems
- Utility providers
- And many others...

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

composed of various state agencies/organizations and business support organizations. The purpose of this team is to coordinate with local, tribal, state, territorial, and Federal agencies to provide immediate and short-term assistance for the needs of business, industry, and economic stabilization, as well as long-term business recovery assistance. The private sector team's preparedness and response assistance may include accessing financial, workforce, technical, and community resources. Local jurisdictions in the state are also incorporating this concept into their planning processes. Such partnerships help get businesses back up and running quickly after a disaster so they can then assist with the response and recovery efforts.

**Create Space at the Table**  
Open up the planning table and engage in the processes of negotiation, discussion, and decision making that govern local residents under normal conditions.  
Encourage community members to identify additional resources and capabilities. Promote broader community participation in planning and empower local action to facilitate buy-in.

Throughout 2011, the Miami-Dade County Department of Emergency Management, in partnership with Communities United Coalition of Churches, the American Red Cross--South Florida Region, FEMA, Islamic Schools of South Florida and many others, conducted a pilot effort to identify what works and what does not work in engaging the whole community in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. The following seven target population groups were chosen: low-income and disadvantaged residents, seniors, immigrants and those with limited English-speaking abilities, those of minority faith traditions, disabled people, youth, and the homeless. Given the size, diversity (e.g., ethnicity, religion, and age), and breadth of experience of Miami-Dade County Emergency Management, many lessons could be learned by focusing Whole Community efforts on this geographic area. Most notably, the pilot identified previously unknown assets that the target population groups could bring to an emergency situation, which resulted in the following developments:

- A network of 25 newly affiliated groups now partnering with emergency management and the Red Cross;
- Identification of 65 houses of worship, community groups, and religious broadcasters who can support disaster communications and language translation;
- New capacity to serve 8,000 survivors;
- Nine facilities already in the community identified as potential new sites for feeding and sheltering; and
- Five existing facilities identified as new points of distribution for commodities.

Following the pilot and despite significant budget cuts, Miami-Dade emergency management officials established a team of people to work over the next two years to institutionalize Whole Community into the way the department thinks, plans, and acts.

Once partnerships have been established, relationships like the ones created in Miami-Dade can be sustained through regular activities. Community ownership of projects will help ensure continued involvement and progress in the future. Furthermore, engaging community members through routine resilience-building activities, such as business continuity-related exercises, will ensure they can be activated and sustained during emergencies.

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

Including partners such as representatives from for-profit and nonprofit private sector organizations and individuals from the community in preparedness activities (e.g., emergency management exercises) is a way to maintain momentum. One key aspect of maintaining partnerships is to set up regular means of communication with community groups and local leaders, such as through newsletters, meetings, or participating volunteers, to ensure that they stay informed about and engaged in emergency management activities. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians sends out a monthly outreach newsletter that includes emergency preparedness updates. Contact information is provided in the newsletter to encourage community members to provide feedback on emergency management programs. The tribe also uses social media applications like Twitter and Facebook to update the community on emergency management issues and programs.

Emergency managers can continue to build and maintain partnerships that emerge during the response phase, enabling a better response when another disaster strikes. For example, Support Alliance for Emergency Readiness Santa Rosa (SAFER) is a network of organizations committed to serving actively during disasters. It was developed to bring together local businesses and faith-based and nonprofit organizations to provide more efficient service to disaster survivors after Hurricane Ivan devastated northwest Florida. The network's coordinating efforts were aimed specifically at eliminating unnecessary duplication of effort.

During non-emergency periods, SAFER works closely with other agencies to address the needs of the county's impoverished and vulnerable populations. In connection with this, SAFER helps families who lose their homes to fire, replenishes local food pantries, and provides cold weather shelters to the homeless. The relationships it forms while serving community residents daily provides the foundation for collective action when disaster strikes.

### *Empower Local Action*

Recognition that government at all levels cannot manage disasters alone means that communities need the opportunity to draw on their full potential to operate effectively. Empowering local action requires allowing members of the communities to lead—not follow—in identifying priorities, organizing support, implementing programs, and evaluating outcomes. The emergency manager promotes and coordinates, but does not direct, these conversations and efforts. Lasting impacts of long-term capacity building can be evident in an evolving set of civic practices and habits among leaders and the public that become embedded in the life of the community. In this regard, the issue of social capital becomes an important part of encouraging communities to own and lead their own resilience activities.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, community ownership of projects provides a powerful incentive for sustaining action and involvement.

In May 2011, a devastating tornado struck Joplin, Missouri, leading to the development of the Citizens Advisory Recovery Team (CART). CART is composed of city officials, business leaders, community leaders, and residents whose shared purposes are to engage residents to determine their recovery vision and share that vision with the community; provide a systematic way to address recovery through a planning process; and bring all segments of the community

---

<sup>9</sup> "By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—'social capital' refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." Putnam, Robert D., "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6:1, Jan 1995, 65-78, p. 67.

together to share information and work together.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after the tornado, CART, with support from FEMA's Long-Term Recovery Task Force, Housing and Urban Development, Environmental Protection Agency, and the American Institute of Architects, conducted extensive public input and community sessions to discuss: housing and neighborhoods, schools and community facilities, infrastructure and environment, and economic development. All of the ideas and comments from these meetings were used to draft a recovery vision as well as goals and project concepts. Recommendations were then presented to the City Council in November 2011.

Similarly, following the 2008 flood in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the city came together to identify the capabilities of agencies and organizations that could assist with the recovery. Representatives from state, county, and city governments, the chamber of commerce, schools, businesses, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and neighborhood associations, many of which were involved in the response to the flood, formed the Recovery and Reinvestment Coordinating Team (RRCT). They explicitly forged the partnership to help create a framework for recovery that would include the broad interests of the entire area.

The RRCT organized open houses and general public meetings for hundreds of residents and business owners in an effort to develop a community-wide discussion on the priorities for long-term revitalization and investment in the city. They also focused the public discussions on the need to integrate the revitalization plan with a flood protection plan. Out of these efforts, the RRCT established the Neighborhood Planning Process to oversee the city's post-flood Reinvestment and Revitalization Plan. The Reinvestment and Revitalization Plan included area action plans, goals, timelines, and redevelopment strategies for all ten affected neighborhoods, ultimately turning the recovery effort into an opportunity for redesigning and revitalizing the city.

**Let Public Participation Lead**  
Enable the public to lead, not follow, in identifying priorities, organizing support, implementing programs, and evaluating outcomes. Empower them to draw on their full potential in developing collective actions and solutions.

Strengthening the government's relationship with communities should be based on support and empowerment of local collective action, with open discussion of the roles and responsibilities of each party. This vision should be clearly conveyed so that participating organizations can commit adequate resources over the long term and have a clear understanding of what the desired outcomes will be. Engaging members of communities as partners in emergency planning is critical to developing collective actions and solutions.

Two consecutive tragedies involving youth in a city in Colorado caused community members to recognize a need to better educate their youth on emergencies. A local fire department battalion chief helped form a small group of volunteers from the fire and police departments, enlisted support from a local television station's meteorologist, and began offering clinics and classes. Other agencies joined the effort and the group also began offering a Youth Disaster Training program for teenagers, hoping to engage the younger population in a broader, more meaningful experience through which emergency management skills and knowledge could easily be learned. The organizers found that when the teen participants became involved, the program's learning

<sup>10</sup> Citizens Advisory Recovery Team. Listening to Joplin: Report of the Citizens Advisory Recovery Team, Nov. 2011.

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

objectives and training approach were transformed from what had initially been envisioned. The teens rejected the program's original logo and redesigned it to be more meaningful to their peers. The teens also pressed for a different type of instruction. They wanted to hear from people who had actually survived a disaster and learn what the experience was like and how the survivors and relatives of victims felt afterward.

The Youth Disaster Training program became such a success that requests to participate quickly outstripped the available and planned resources. Other organizations, including public school leaders, state agencies, and other organizations, joined in. The teenagers brought their parents, informed their friends, and participated in activities such as a career development session during which they met emergency managers from the health, fire, and police departments, as well as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and FEMA. As a result of the summer program, the teenagers became empowered to voice their needs and interests and design and implement the best ways to fulfill them.

Empowering local action is especially important in rural communities where there tends to be less infrastructure (e.g., telecommunications, public transportation, and health services) and where emergency managers are often part-time employees who are also responsible for areas outside of emergency management. Rural communities understand that the social capital found in local volunteer organizations and individuals is necessary for preparing for and responding to unique rural threats such as agroterrorism. The Agrosecurity Committee of the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) has established the Strengthening Community Agrosecurity Planning (S-CAP) workshop series to address challenges concerning the protection of agriculture and the food supply. Workshop participants include a wide range of community representatives (e.g., local emergency management and public health personnel, first responders, veterinarians, producers/commodity representatives, and agribusinesses). They come together to address the issues relevant to their specific agricultural vulnerabilities. The workshops help guide local Extension personnel and other community partners in developing the agricultural component of their local emergency operations plan to help safeguard the community's agriculture, food, natural resources, and pets. The workshops empower communities to build on their capacity to handle agricultural incidents through improved networking and team building.

### *Leverage and Strengthen Social Infrastructure, Networks, and Assets*

Leveraging and strengthening existing social infrastructure, networks, and assets means investing in the social, economic, and political structures that make up daily life and connecting them to emergency management programs. A community in general consists of an array of groups, institutions, associations, and networks that organize and control a wide variety of assets and structure social behaviors. Local communities have their own ways of organizing and managing this social infrastructure. Understanding how communities operate under normal conditions (i.e., before a disaster) is critical to both immediate response and long-term recovery after a disaster. Emergency managers can strengthen existing capabilities by participating in discussions and decision-making processes that govern local residents under normal conditions and aligning emergency management activities to support community partnerships and efforts. Emergency managers can engage with non-traditional partners within their communities to build upon these day-to-day functions and determine how they can be leveraged and empowered during a disaster.

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

Communities are extremely resourceful in using what is available—in terms of funding, physical materials, or human resources—to meet a range of day-to-day needs. Whether relying on donations and volunteers to stock a local food bank or mobilizing neighbors to form “watch groups” to safeguard children playing in public parks, communities have a great capacity for dealing with everyday challenges. There are opportunities for government to support and strengthen these pathways, such as providing planning spaces where people can meet and connect, providing resources to support local activities, and creating new partnerships to expand shared resources. Enhancing the successful, everyday activities in communities will empower local populations to define and communicate their needs, mediate challenges and disagreements, and participate in local organizational decision making. As a result, a culture of shared responsibility and decision making emerges, linking communities and leaders in tackling problems of common concern.



Figure 6: Margaretville, New York, September 4, 2011—Volunteers came to help residents remove mud and salvage belongings from homes ruined by floodwaters on “Labor for Your Neighbor” weekend events following Hurricane Irene. Elissa Jun/FEMA

For example, the protection and resilience of the Nation’s critical infrastructure is a shared responsibility involving all levels of government and critical infrastructure owners and operators. Prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts relating to the Nation’s infrastructure are most effective when there is full participation of government and industry partners. The mission suffers (i.e., full benefits are not realized) without the robust participation of a wide array of partners.

Following September 11, 2001, communities discovered that partnerships with local rail enthusiasts can help strengthen the security of the Nation’s rail network. Across the United States, thousands of rail enthusiasts, or “rail fans,” enjoy a hobby that takes them to public spots alongside rail yards where they watch and photograph trains. Rail fans are drawn from across a community’s social and demographic landscape. However, the heightened security measures that followed the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, resulted in law enforcement and rail security police becoming suspicious of rail fans photographing busy locations where commuter and freight trains clustered.

After two rail fans were detained by local police for taking pictures of trains, a public outcry arose from rail fans online and their national associations. Across the country, rail fans insisted that they were far from being a threat to security and were actually one of the rail network’s best security assets because they were routinely in a position to observe suspicious behavior. A coalition of senior police officers, rail fans, and local elected leaders convened to review and resolve the conflict. The controversy subsided as police acknowledged the rights of rail fans to

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

photograph trains from public locations and the rail fans publicly embraced the need for greater security around rail yards. Rail fans offered to help keep America's rail network safe from vandalism, terrorism, and other incidents by reporting situations that appeared to be out of the ordinary.

BNSF Railway, one of the largest freight rail companies in North America, developed a community-based rail fan reporting program called Citizens for Rail Security. This program includes a web-based reporting system in which rail fans can enter a minimal amount of their personal information, generate an official identification card, and receive guidelines on how to report any suspicious activities or potential security breaches.

Experiences in Haiti after the catastrophic earthquake in 2010 also underscore the value of leveraging existing social infrastructure. A research team that had worked for months after the disaster identified two different types of social and organizational networks providing aid to earthquake survivors.<sup>11</sup> One network consisted of large relief agencies that focused on transporting a large volume of humanitarian aid from outside the country and into the disaster area. The second type of network involved pre-existing social groups that routinely worked with and inside local Haitian neighborhoods to provide basic social services.

The network of large relief agencies had to create systems and gather manpower and equipment to distribute the aid, whereas the second group that used pre-existing social groups already had systems, manpower, and equipment in place. The unfamiliar network of large relief agencies was also plagued by aggression and theft by the locals, which the familiar pre-existing social groups did not experience. Since the network of pre-existing social groups routinely worked with and inside local Haitian neighborhoods to provide basic social services, they were trusted and had detailed knowledge of local conditions, which allowed them to anticipate local needs accurately and provide the aid required. Since they knew the actual amount of resources needed, they did not rely on large convoys that would be tempting to vandals.

**Strengthen Social Infrastructure**  
Align emergency management activities to support the institutions, assets, and networks that people turn to in order to solve problems on a daily basis.

Many of the problems encountered in providing aid to Haiti resemble difficulties faced in other large-scale emergency response operations. Problems did not occur because of an absolute shortage of supplies or slow responses. Rather, they resulted from failures to connect with and benefit from the strengths of existing, familiar patterns of community interaction and assistance.

One reason why local community organizations are effective during emergencies is that they are rooted in a broad-based set of activities that address the core needs of a community. They are of, by, and with the community. They may be, for instance, involved in feeding and sheltering the homeless or working with children in after-school programs. They also remain visible in the community, communicating regularly with local residents about issues of immediate concern, as well as more distant emergency management interests.

<sup>11</sup> Holguín-Veras, José, Ph.D., et al., "Field Investigation on the Comparative Performance of Alternative Humanitarian Logistic Structures after the Port au Prince Earthquake: Preliminary Findings and Suggestions," March 2, 2011.



## Pathways for Action

While there are many similarities that most communities share, communities are ultimately complex and unique. Ideas that work well in one community may not be feasible for another due to local regulations, available funding, demographics, geography, or community culture, for example. Some communities have fully integrated Whole Community concepts into their operations. For other communities, this is a new concept that they are hearing about for the first time. If this concept is familiar to you, think about what you can teach and share with others. On the other hand, if you are looking to begin a Whole Community approach or expand existing programs, the following questions and bullets may help get you started.

What follows are ideas and recommendations that were collected as part of the national dialogue during facilitated group discussions with emergency management practitioners from nonprofit organizations, academia, private sector organizations, and all levels of government. These recommendations are by no means exhaustive, but are intended to help you think about ways in which you can establish or broaden a Whole Community practice of emergency management within your community.

### How can we better understand the actual needs of the communities we serve?

- Educate your emergency management staff on the diversity of the community and implement cultural competence interventions, such as establishing a relationship with a multi-lingual volunteer to help interact with the various groups.<sup>12</sup>
- Learn the demographics of your community. Develop strategies to reach community members and engage them in issues that are important to them.
- Know the languages and communication methods/traditions in the community—not only what languages people speak and understand, but how they actually exchange new information and which information sources they trust.
- Know where the real conversations and decisions are made. They are not always made at the council level, but at venues such as the community center, neighborhood block parties, social clubs, or places of worship. Tap into these opportunities to listen and learn more about the community. For example, homeowner association quarterly meetings (social or formal) may serve as opportunities to identify current community issues and concerns and to disseminate important public information.

### What partnerships might we need in order to develop an understanding of the community's needs?

- Identify a broad base of stakeholders, including scout troops, sports clubs, home school organizations, and faith-based and disability communities to identify where relationships can be built and where information about the community's needs can be shared. Partner with groups that interact with a given population on a daily basis, such as first responders, places of worship, niche media outlets, and other community organizations. These

<sup>12</sup> For more information on cultural competence interventions, see Betancourt, J., et al., "Defining Cultural Competence: A Practical Framework for Addressing Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Health and Health Care," *Public Health Reports*, 2003, Vol. 118.

***A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action***

groups/organizations have already established trust within the community and can act as liaisons to open up communication channels.

- Every year, foreign-born residents and visitors are among those affected by disasters in our country. Reach out to local foreign country representatives through consulates or embassies to incorporate international partners in a Whole Community approach to domestic disasters.

**How do we effectively engage the whole community in emergency management to include a wide breadth of community members?**

- Reach out and interact with your Citizen Corps Council (or similar organization) to inquire about groups that are currently involved in emergency planning, as well as groups that are not involved but should be. Citizen Corps Councils facilitate partnerships among government and nongovernmental entities, including those not traditionally involved in emergency planning and preparedness. Additionally, Councils involve community members in order to increase coordination and collaboration between emergency management and key stakeholders while increasing the public's awareness of disasters.
- Strive to hire a diverse staff that is representative of the community.
- Maintain ongoing, clear, and consistent communication with all segments of the community by using vocabulary that is understood and known by those members.
- Discuss how organizations can have a formal role in the community's emergency plan and, when feasible, include them in training activities and exercises.
- Use the power of social media applications (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) to disseminate messages, create two-way information exchanges, and understand and follow up on communication that is already happening within the community.
- Involve children and youth through educational programs and activities centered on individual, family, and community preparedness.
- Develop recovery plans with full participation and partnership within the full fabric of the community.
- Incorporate emergency planning discussions into the existing format of community meetings. Multi-purpose meetings help increase participation, especially in communities where residents must travel long distances to attend such meetings.
- Identify barriers to participation in emergency management meetings (e.g., lack of childcare or access to transportation, and time of the meeting) and provide solutions where feasible (e.g., provide childcare, arrange for the meeting to be held in a location accessible by public transportation, and schedule for after-work hours).
- Consider physical, programmatic, and communication access needs of community members with disabilities when organizing community meetings.

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

How do we generate public interest in disaster preparedness to get a seat at the table with community organizations?

- Integrate the public and community institutions into the planning process by hosting town hall meetings and by participating in non-emergency management community meetings. Listen to the public's needs and discuss how individuals can play a role in the planning process.
- Make yourself available for local radio call-in programs to answer questions that callers have about emergency management and solicit input from the listeners on what they see as the top priorities for community resilience.
- Have an open house at your emergency operations center (EOC) and invite the public. Invite schools for field trips. Explain the equipment, organization, and coordination that are used to help protect the community.

How can we tap into what communities are interested in to engage in discussions about increasing resilience?

- Find local heroes and opinion leaders and learn what they are interested or involved in and tailor emergency management materials and information to meet their interests.
- Find out what issues or challenges various groups in your community are currently confronting, how they are organizing, and how emergency management might help them address pressing needs.

What activities can emergency managers change or create to help strengthen what already works well in communities?

- Understand how you can share and augment resources with partners within your community during emergencies. For example, providing a power generator to a store that has all the supplies the community needs but no power to stay open would be an example of a way in which to share and augment resources.
- Work with your partner organizations to better understand the various ways they will be able to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards and supplement their activities and resources rather than compete with them.
- Identify organizations that already provide support to the community and determine how you can supplement their efforts during times of disaster when there might be a greater need. For example, if food banks distribute food on a regular basis, emergency managers can deliver additional food to the food banks to help them meet a greater demand during a disaster.
- Leverage existing programs, such as the local Parent Teacher Association (PTA), to strengthen emergency management skills in the community. Offer Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training to PTA members.

*A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management:  
Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*

How can communities and emergency management support each other?

- Provide adequate information to organizations ahead of time so they can better prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards. In return, organizations will provide you with information on their status and ability to assist when you need them. For this reason, ongoing multi-directional information sharing is one of the most important aspects of maintaining your partnerships. Have regular meetings with formal and informal community leaders and partners to maintain momentum.
- Provide support to for-profit private sector organizations in the development of business continuity plans. Keeping businesses up and running after an event helps to stabilize a community's economy and promotes resiliency.

When reflecting on the previous questions and ideas, it is important to remember that one size does not fit all. The definition of success will vary by community. Just as certain Whole Community efforts are appropriate for some communities and not for others, every jurisdiction has a different idea of what success means to them. Periodically assessing progress facilitates an ongoing dialogue and helps determine if the needs of the community are being met. Whole Community implementation requires flexibility and refinement through routine evaluation as lessons are learned. Communities should define metrics that are meaningful to them to track progress in the actions they choose to take toward meeting the communities' needs.

Regardless of what stage you are at in practicing Whole Community principles, think about how you can start or continue incorporating Whole Community principles and themes into what you do today. Test out your ideas and discuss them with your colleagues to learn and continue the national dialogue.

## Conclusion

---

FEMA began its national dialogue with a proposition: A community-centric approach for emergency management that focuses on strengthening and leveraging what works well in communities on a daily basis offers a more effective path to building societal security and resilience. By focusing on core elements of successful, connected, and committed communities, emergency management can collectively achieve better outcomes in times of crisis, while enhancing the resilience of our communities and the Nation. The three core principles of Whole Community—understanding and meeting the actual needs of the whole community, engaging and empowering all parts of the community, and strengthening what works well in communities on a daily basis—provide a foundation for pursuing a Whole Community approach to emergency management through which security and resiliency can be attained.

Truly enhancing our Nation’s resilience to all threats and hazards will require the emergency management community to transform the way the emergency management team thinks about, plans for, and responds to incidents in such a way to support community resilience. It takes all aspects of a community to effectively prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards. It is critical that individuals take responsibility for their own self-preparedness efforts and that the community members work together to develop the collective capacity needed to enhance their community’s security and resilience.

Building community resilience in this manner requires emergency management practitioners to effectively engage with and holistically plan for the needs of the whole community. This includes but is not limited to accommodating people who speak languages other than English, those from diverse cultures or economic backgrounds, people of all ages (i.e., from children and youth to seniors), people with disabilities and other access and functional needs, and populations traditionally underrepresented in civic governance. At the same time, it is important to realign emergency management practices to support local needs and work to strengthen the institutions, assets, and networks that work well in communities on a daily basis.

To that end, FEMA will continue its national dialogue to exchange ideas, recommendations, and success stories. FEMA also intends to develop additional materials for emergency managers that will support the adoption of the Whole Community concept at the local level. As part of this ongoing dialogue, reactions and feedback to the Whole Community concept presented in this document can be sent to [FEMA-Community-Engagement@fema.gov](mailto:FEMA-Community-Engagement@fema.gov).

This document is just a start. It will take time to transform the way the Nation thinks about, prepares for, and responds to disasters. FEMA recognizes that the challenges faced by the communities it serves are constantly evolving; as an Agency, it will always need to adapt, often at a moment’s notice. This shift in the Nation’s approach to addressing the needs of survivors is vital in keeping people and communities safe and in preventing the loss of life and property from all threats and hazards. The Whole Community themes described in this document provide a starting point to help emergency managers, as members of their communities, address the challenge. However, it will require the commitment of members of the entire community—from government agencies to local residents—to continue learning together.

This page intentionally left blank.

# **APPENDIX G**

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON YOUTH FIRESETTING**

This page intentionally left blank.



## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON YOUTH FIRESETTING**

### **Youth Firesetting Origins: Initial Terminology was “Juvenile Firesetting”**

Four theoretical frameworks are evident when reviewing literature specific to juvenile firesetting: (a) Psychoanalytic Theory, (b) Social Learning Theory, (c) Dynamic-Behavioral Theory, and (d) Cycles of Firesetting Oregon Model. Each theory outlines the etiology for juvenile firesetting behavior based on the theoretical perspective of the researchers and three of the four are informed by a mental health perspective and have provided the foundation for the explanations of the motivations of youth who set fires to date.

## **YOUTH FIRESETTING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

### **Psychoanalytic Theory**

Psychoanalytic Theory is a theory of human development that interprets human development in terms of motives and drives. Those who ascribe to Psychoanalytic Theory believe that human development is “primarily unconscious and heavily colored by emotion. Behavior is merely a surface characteristic, and it is important to analyze the symbolic meanings of behavior, and that early experiences are important to human development” (Berger, 2005, p. 35). Psychoanalytic Theory prescribes that firesetting is a child’s desire to have power over something that they can extinguish themselves.

### **Social Learning Theory**

Bandura and Walters (1963) first introduced the Social Learning Theory as an extension of Miller and Dollard’s (1941) research on the behavioral interpretation of modeling. Bandura’s (1977) Social Learning Theory looked at the importance of learning through observation and modeling of behaviors, reactions, and attitudes of others. Bandura (1977) stated, “Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action” (p. 22).

Bandura (1973) believed that anger and aggression, just like other types of behaviors, were learned through observational learning. An individual’s observational learning comes from his or her family, cultural background, peer group, community, and mass media. According to Gaynor and Hatcher (1987), aggressive children come from families where one or more members also demonstrate aggressive behaviors. Through modeling, children learn to exhibit aggressive behaviors. As a result, poor social skills begin to develop within the family and continue to occur outside the family, for example, with peers and in school. Hence the family as well as the young person’s other primary environments reinforces the development of the socially deviant behavior of firesetting (pp. 46-47). The link between Social Learning Theory and juvenile firesetting would come from a child seeing a family member or peer set a fire out of anger or aggression.

Firesetting researchers Kolko and Kazdin (1986), drew on Social Learning Theory to develop a risk-factor model for youth who set fires. This model includes three domains: (a) learning experiences and cues, (b) personal repertoire, and (c) parent and family influences and stressors. Learning experiences and cues would include the child's early modeling and vicarious experiences, early interest and direct experiences, and the availability of adult models and incendiary materials. The personal repertoire would include cognitive components such as limited fire and fire safety awareness, behavioral components such as interpersonal ineffectiveness/skill deficits and antisocial behavior excesses, and motivational components. The parent and family influences and stressors would include limited supervision and monitoring, parental distance and lack of involvement, parental pathology and limitations, and stressful external events.

### **Dynamic-Behavioral Theory**

Dr. Ken Fineman (1980) introduced the Dynamic-Behavioral Theory of firesetting in 1980, to show that certain factors predispose a child to firesetting behaviors. These factors include (a) personality characteristics, (b) family and social situations, and (c) environmental conditions (see Table 1 for a description of these factors).

Fineman (1995) introduced his Juvenile Firesetter Child and Family Risk Survey to determine the future risk of firesetting for a child already determined to exhibit firesetting behaviors.

### **Cycles of Firesetting**

Based upon years of experience working with juvenile firesetters, the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office and the Oregon Treatment Strategies Task Force partnered to develop the Cycles Model of Firesetting. According to Stadolnik (2000), "The Cycles Model is visually represented by four concentric circles that represent the four dimensions of a juvenile's internal and external world that are considered to be related to their likelihood of firesetting" (p. 19). The cycle includes four circles: (a) the emotional/cognitive cycle, (b) the behavior cycle, (c) the family/household cycle, and (d) the community/social cycle. The four circles are described in Table 2.

## **YOUTH FIRESETTING RESEARCH TIMELINE**

The above theoretical frameworks of youth firesetting were established upon multiple empirical studies. The following section discusses this research timeline, beginning with the research of Dr. Helen Yarnell in the 1930s, through the current firesetter research of today. The chronology illustrates a move from studying institutionalized youth who set fires to the development of a series of typologies for non- institutionalized youth who set fires.

## 1930–1960

During 1937 and 1938, Dr. Helen Yarnell, working in the Psychiatric Division of Bellevue Hospital, undertook one of the very first studies on juvenile firesetting. The reason for the study stemmed from her discovery that children who were referred to the Psychiatric Division of Bellevue Hospital for observation and firesetting tendencies showed a variation in their clinical history. Yarnell's study team observed 60 children between the ages of 6 and 15. Sixty percent were between the ages of 6 and 8 and 35% were between the ages of 11 and 15. Only two were girls, ages 6 and 7. The research team reviewed the children's clinical history and completed interviews with each child. According to Yarnell (1940), the adolescent group's findings were much different than that of the younger group; however, Yarnell's study with the adolescent group was incomplete at the time of the printing of her monograph.

In the first column of Table 3 is a list of the findings on the children ages 6 through 8, except for five children who were deemed to have cognitive limitations severe enough to preclude them from the study. In the second column of Table 3 is a list of the findings on the adolescents, ages 11 through 15. Yarnell found that children aged 6-8, started fires because of a deprivation of love and security at home, whereas older children viewed fire as exciting and entertaining.

In a second study initiated shortly after Yarnell's study of 1937-1938, Drs. Nolan Lewis and Helen Yarnell (1951) looked at a group of 238 children who set fires between the ages of 5 and 15. In this study the case records were obtained from fire reports, insurance investigators, juvenile research centers, and juvenile courts. The 1951 study included the 30 cases from Yarnell's previous 1937-1938 research study. In this study Lewis and Yarnell reported a wide range of motivations for firesetting.

The motivations included:

1. Low average to superior intelligence of the children, except for children who set fires against the school.
2. Guilt over some type of sexual preoccupation.
3. Symbolic fires directed specifically toward one member of the family.
4. Fire and excitement, which accounted for 32% the youth-set fires.
5. Revenge against a parent or foster home, which accounted for 22% of the youth-set fires.
6. Enjoyment out of seeing the fire engines, which accounted for 17% of the youth-set fires.
7. Revenge against their employer, which accounted for 15% of the youth-set fires.
8. Desire to be a hero, which accounted for 8% of the youth-set fires.
9. Concealment of theft, which accounted for 6% of the youth-set fires.

Both the Yarnell (1940) and the Lewis and Yarnell (1951) studies were the first studies that looked specifically at the child and adolescent firesetter. These studies were the groundwork for future research on child and adolescent firesetting. Unfortunately, it was not until the 1970s when research on juvenile firesetting resumed when fire departments and mental health professionals noticed the increasing numbers of child and adolescent firesetting incidents.

## 1960–1980

There was little research, aside from that of Lewis and Yarnell, throughout the 1940s and 1950s. It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that the fire service and mental health took notice of the large number of reported youth who were setting fires, that were appearing in the fire service statistics of that time.

Macht and Mack (1968) began the resurgence in firesetting research in 1968. They studied four adolescents with firesetting behavior, ages 16 to 18. In this study they found that all four boys came from stressful home situations. The boys only set fires when they were away from their fathers, and each one of the boy's fathers had some type of significant job involvement with fire. Macht and Mack concluded from their study that fire had come to have a special and pleasurable meaning in the lives of these patients. In an important sense, the firesetting behavior represents a call from the overburdened adolescent to the absent father to bring him to the rescue. The activity in connection with fire served to reestablish a lost relationship with the father (p. 286).

Folkman and Siegelman (1971) undertook a pilot study to explore the firesetting behavior in 47 randomly selected children ages 6 and 7. In this study, Folkman and Siegelman found that only two boys had come to the attention of the fire service for setting fires. However, 60% of the boys and 33% of the girls were found to have an interest in fire, which was exhibited by either a self-report of previous firesetting or reporting they had asked to light matches. During this time, the focus expanded to identifying treatment options for youths who set fires. During a California State Psychological Association conference in 1975, a group of fire service personnel and psychologists met to discuss the issue of juvenile firesetting. The reason for this discussion was the fact that both fire service and mental health had been receiving referrals for youth who set fires and neither group knew how to help these children. Out of this meeting the Fire Service and Arson Prevention Committee was formed to design methods to work with the children who set fires. According to Gaynor and Hatcher (1987), this committee received a grant from the United States Fire Administration to begin work on designing and developing a method to classify juvenile firesetting behavior and to determine the risk of future firesetting in children who have been identified as exhibiting firesetting behaviors. This committee's work provided the basis for the evaluation and classification system used today with youth who set fires.

Bernard Levin (1976) wrote about the psychological characteristics of people who set fires. The focus of this article was on the adult who sets fires; however, he did discuss children and fire by stating, "Most people are fascinated by fire. This fascination starts at an early age and manifests itself in young children playing with matches. While people may not outgrow their basic fascination with fire, normal children learn that playing with matches is not acceptable behavior and discontinue it by the age of five or six. A few children continue to play with matches or deliberately set destructive fires, and their chronic firesetting is an observable symptom of a psychological disturbance" (p. 38).

He went on to discuss two types of treatments used when working with chronic juvenile firesetting behavior. The first treatment discussed by Welsh (1971) was stimulus satiation. This technique requires a firesetter to strike matches for an hour a day until the firesetter grows bored of lighting the matches and stops match lighting and/or firesetting. The second treatment is through positive

reinforcement that is accompanied with the threat of punishment by loss (Holland, 1969). This technique requires a child to bring any found match packages to their father, who would then give them a reward for their positive behavior. This treatment would cause the child to develop positive non-firesetting behaviors based on the positive reward.

The literature on juvenile firesetting from the 1940s through the 1970s focused either on diagnosis or treatment. During this time, Heath, Gayton, and Hardesty (1976) reviewed the literature on juvenile firesetting and found only six journal articles that exclusively discussed juvenile firesetting and 17 articles on issues related to juvenile firesetting. Unfortunately, they were unable to get their literature review article published in the United States, so they relied upon the Canadian Psychiatric Association to publish the literature review in their journal. However, from the 1980s through today, the literature has proven to be rife with research on juvenile firesetting, just not specific to the motivations of youths who set fires in schools or the phenomenon of school fires.

### **1980–Today**

From the 1980s through today, there have been many different foci of youth firesetting research, including: a) the impact of the environment on the behavior of the youth who sets fires (Fineman, 1980; Gaynor & Hatcher, 1987; Vreeland & Waller, 1979; Perks et al, 2019; Lambie et al, 2013;); b) mental health and substance use conditions contributing to firesetting (Fineman, 1980; Freud, 1932; Heath et al., 1976; Kolko & Kazdin, 1986; Kuhnley, Henderson, & Quinland, 1982; Lewis & Yarnell, 1951; Williams, 2005; Wooden & Berkey, 1984; Yarnell, 1940; Vaughn et al, 2010; Perks et al 2019; Lambie et al, 2013; MacKay et al, 2009; Kolko, 2001; Kolko & Vernberg, 2017; Franklin et al, 2002); c) firesetting as a learned behavior (Gaynor & Hatcher, 1987; Kolko & Kazdin, 1986; Vreeland & Waller, 1979); d) assessment of youths who set fires and evaluation instruments (Fineman 1980, 1995; Gaynor & Hatcher, 1987; Sakheim & Osborn, 1994; Slavkin, 2000; Stadolnik, 2000; Foster, 2019; Kolko & Vernberg, 2017); e) mental health and educational interventions (Bumpass, Fagelman, & Brix, 1983; Fineman, 1980, 1995; Kolko & Kazdin, 1986, 1991; Sakheim & Osborn, 1994; Stadolnik, 2000; Wooden & Berkey, 1984; Foster, 2019; Kolko, 2001; Kolko et al, 2001; Kolko & Vernberg, 2017; Franklin et al, 2002); f) juvenile firesetting motives and typologies (Cotterall, 1999; Fineman, 1980; Gaynor & Hatcher, 1987; Hall, 2006; Kolko & Kazdin, 1991; Meade, 1998; Sakheim & Osborn, 1994; Swaffer & Hollin, 1995; Terjestam & Ryden, 1996); and g) link between abuse/maltreatment, trauma, and youth firesetting (Perks et al, 2019; Lambie et al, 2013; Peters & Freeman 2016; Root et al, 2008; Nishi-Strattner L, Kopet T, Erdberg P, 2001; Becker KD et al, 2004; Martin G et al. 2004; Cole et al, 1986, 1983; Puri BK et al, 1995; Foster, 2019.). In Unit #3, we will learn more about the typologies of youth firesetting, motivations, and other contributing factors. The existing research on typologies contain anywhere from three to nine categories of firesetting motives, ranging from the curious to the pathological youth who sets fires. It is important to note that current recommended approaches to interventions in firesetting youth are not exclusively based on the firesetting literature; they also draw from research on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma-informed care, shared risk and protective factors, behavioral health science, motivational interviewing, resiliency, and other topics related to working with youth. Hence, it is important to collaborate with other disciplines in your youth firesetting programs to ensure that best practice approaches are being utilized.

Research on youth firesetting continues to evolve. At the time of publication of this course, there are several current national/international research projects underway. Utilize online journal and research database platforms (e.g., PubMed and MEDLINE, Science Direct, Cochrane Library Database of Systematic Reviews, ScienceOpen, Google Scholar, CINAHL, Ovid, etc.) to keep current on new findings and recommended interventions.

## RELATED TOPICS IN YOUTH FIRESETTING RESEARCH

### Arson and Youth Firesetting: The Early Years of Arson Elements and Motives

When a fire occurs, it is the responsibility of the fire investigator to determine the cause of the fire. The fire investigator looks for three elements to determine if the fire can be considered the crime of arson. DeHaan (2002) identified these elements as follows:

1. There has been a burning of property. This must be shown to the court to be actual destruction, at least in part, not just scorching or sooting (although some states include any physical or visible impairment of any surface).
2. The burning is incendiary in origin. Proof of the existence of an effective incendiary device, no matter how simple it may be, is adequate. Proof must be accomplished by showing specifically how all-possible natural or accidental causes have been considered and ruled out.
3. The burning is shown to be started with malice, that is with intent of destroying property (p. 508).

According to Wooden and Berkey (1984), “Arson itself is as old as civilization, but it was not until the nineteenth century that there appeared to be much concern about the motivations for it or about the psychological stability of arsonists” (p. 12). In the 1800s and early 1900s, considerable emphasis was placed on arsonists suffering from pyromania. It was not until the mid-1960s that research on the motives of arsonists moved away from theories of a certain type of deviance. In 1966, McKerraccher and Dacre studied 30 adult male arsonists in a forensic psychiatric setting. They found that when compared with 147 adult non-arson offenders, the motives for the arsons were related to feelings of aggression, rather than from a certain type of deviance. In support of McKerraccher and Dacre’s findings, Wolford (1972) reported that arsonists were unable to express their anger to others. Vreeland and Waller (1979) supported Wolford’s findings when their research found that arsonists could not confront the object(s) of their anger/aggression, and instead the arsonists displaced that anger/aggression against property by starting fires.

In addition to the literature that focuses on pyromania, more current discussions of arson revolve around criminality. The National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) has identified six major categories of arson motives:

1. Profit
2. Vandalism
3. Excitement
4. Revenge

5. Crime concealment
6. Extremism (DeHaan, 2002, p. 509)

According to DeHaan (2002), of these six categories, the vandalism category is most closely associated with juvenile and adolescent firesetting. The fires are “set when the opportunity arises, often after school or work or on weekends. Boredom and frustration among youths, sometimes lead to peer-group challenge to create some excitement” (p. 511).

O’Connor (1987) identified nine categories for the various motives for arson; (a) arson for profit, which would include insurance fraud and welfare fraud; (b) business-related fraud, which includes eliminating the competition and organized crime; (c) demolition and rehabilitation scams and building strippers; (d) revenge and prejudice fires; (e) vanity or hero fires; (f) crime concealment fires; (g) mass civil disturbances; (h) terrorism; and (i) juvenile firesetters and vandalism. Yet in focusing solely on juveniles, O’Connor stated that “a motive for juvenile firesetters is not always apparent” (p. 20), like it is with an adult. In support of O’Connor, Boudreau et al. (1977) stated, “Vandalism is a common cause ascribed to fires set by juveniles who seem to burn property merely to relieve boredom or as a general protest against authority. Many school fires as well as fires in abandoned autos, vacant buildings, and trash receptacles are believed to be caused by this type of arsonist” (p. 19).

In other words, according to Boudreau et al. (1977), O’Connor (1987), and DeHaan (2002), unlike arson in general, the motive is not always apparent as to juvenile firesetting and it could be just a symptom of boredom.

### **School Fires and Youth Firesetting**

According to historical information on school fires from the NFPA, there have been eight school fires in grades K-12 with 10 or more deaths between 1908 - 1958 in the history of the United States: <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/Building-and-Life-Safety/Structure-fires-in-schools/US-school-fires-with-ten-or-more-deaths> A synopsis of the three most deadliest these school fires follows. The first school fire occurred on March 4, 1908 at the Lakeview Elementary School in Collinwood, Ohio. The cause of the fire was said to be wood joists coming in contact with an overheated steam pipe that started the fire. This fire killed 175 students and teachers (Gottschalk, 2002). The second devastating school fire occurred on March 18, 1937, in New London, Texas. A disgruntled school employee who had been reprimanded for smoking and wanted to get back at the school administrators started the New London School fire. He tampered with the gas lines to run up the school gas bill. The ensuing explosion killed 294 students and staff (Gottschalk, 2002).

The third school fire occurred on December 1, 1958 in Chicago, Illinois at the Our Lady of the Angels School. A fifth-grade student lit a cardboard waste barrel in the school basement and started this school fire. The fire claimed the lives of 92 students and 3 nuns.

All these fires caused community devastation, millions of dollars in property loss, and the most precious loss of all, the loss of life. However, only the fire at Our Lady of the Angles School was started by a school student.

Refer to Appendix H: Table 1: Database Summary Description: Potential Sources of Youth Firesetting Related Data for current data and reports on school fires.

In Lewis and Yarnell's (1951) study from 1937–1938 of 238 children who set fires in school, 61 had set fires in either churches or schools (no differentiation between church or school was given). The reasons they gave for setting their school fires were predominately based on hatred, revenge, and the desire to destroy the school building, hoping that they would no longer have to attend school. Some of their other reasons included the following comments:

1. "We didn't like the looks of the teacher."
2. "I got a bad report card and thought I'd make a fire and blow it up."
3. "I was mad, because I didn't pass."
4. "I was tired of going to school."
5. "The teacher picked on me." (p. 300)

Some of the secondary reasons these students gave for setting the school fires was to see the fire, see the fire engines, and be the hero that discovers the fire. The researchers went on to say that these children might also vandalize school property, steal from teachers and staff, leave obscene notes on the teacher's desk, and mutilate the teacher's clothing. Their classroom behavior and schoolwork were poor at best and they showed a "predominately dull or borderline intelligence with special learning disabilities, and all of them were unable to compete in the classroom" (p. 300). Lewis and Yarnell (1951) also stated that children under age 10 rarely set school fires and the most frequent age group of school children who set fires are between 12 and 14 years of age. In Wooden and Berkey's (1984) study, they found that the "greatest number of fires (37%) set by the delinquent firesetters" were school-related fires (p. 72). The motives for these school fires were found to be "revenge, spite, or disruption of classroom activities" (p. 77). The median age for the youth who set fires in school in Wooden and Berkey's (1984) study was 14 and the fires were most often set in the classroom, school closets, under the teacher's desk, or in the wastebasket. They also found that most of the youth who set fires in school were considered trouble-making students and the fires occurred after being punished by a teacher or school administrator. In the body of current literature, only two examples of differing motives appear.

In an article written by Jeff Meade (1998) titled *Fire Power*, while not a study about youth who set fires in school but rather a compilation of information about school fires written for *Education Week*, Meade discussed school firesetting with juvenile firesetter researcher Paul Schwartzman. Schwartzman suggested that there was no one main reason firesetting juveniles target schools; however, he did suggest the following possible motives behind school firesetting:

1. A prank
2. To get out of final exams
3. Peer pressure
4. Seeking attention



Other possible motives behind school firesetting discussed by Meade (1998) include revenge, school disruption, anger, or no explanation at all. Hall (2006) reported that “deliberate fires in schools are often a result of mucking about which gets out of hand” (p. 2). However, according to Hall’s report, Dr. Jack Kennedy, a clinical forensic psychologist, reverted to a pathological explanation, asserting that there was a deeper reason for school fires. Kennedy stated, “For children, school is normally a focal point for their social world. So that’s where they’re going to be exposed to frustrations, to issues of tolerance, and anger. And because they place social controls on children, schools—unfortunately—often annoy them, cause them to be disgruntled, or to feel harm done by them. The results can be starting a fire to vent anger, or exact revenge against the school, or against the teacher. It is rare that there is not some sort of trail or story behind a fire at school. Fires may be like a friend to some of these children, the one thing they feel gives them some power” (Hall, 2006, pp. 2-3). As has been evidenced by the scant research that focuses specifically on youth who set fires in school, little is known about the motivations behind school fires. In Lewis and Yarnell’s (1951) research, all the youth who set fires in school had “predominately dull or borderline intelligence with special learning disabilities and all of them were unable to compete in the classroom” (p. 300). In Wooden and Berkey’s study in 1984, all the youth who set fires in school were troubled students who set school fires after a teacher or school administrator had punished them. Meade and Hall speculated about the motives of those who set fires in school but undertook no actual research to support their hypotheses.

**Table 1 - Dynamic-Behavioral Theory of Firesetting (Fineman, 1980)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
Personality characteristics	Child’s exhibited behaviors, school adjustment, physical problems, and organic dysfunctions.
Family and social situations	Information about the family system, how the child gets along with family members, how discipline is meted out, and if there is an ongoing crisis within the family.
Environmental conditions	The child receives encouragement to play with fire, models firesetting behavior identified in others, and deals with emotional distress, peer pressure, and stress.

Fineman (1995) introduced his Juvenile Firesetter Child and Family Risk Survey as a way to determine the future risk of firesetting of a child already determined to be a firesetter.

**Table 2 - Cycles Model of Firesetting (Stadolnik, 2000)**

<b>Cycle</b>	<b>Description</b>
Emotional/cognitive	Juvenile's thoughts and feelings after his or her firesetting event.
Behavior	Behaviors of the juvenile firesetter that coincide with his or her thoughts and feelings.
Family household	How the family responds to the firesetting event and the emotional environment of the juvenile's household.
Community/social	Responses by the community to the firesetting and what level of support or restriction the firesetter and family receive.

**Table 3 - Findings of Dr. Helen Yarnell's 1937-1938 Study**

<b>Ages 6-8</b>	<b>Ages 11-15</b>
All of the children are of average to dull normal intelligence, but many had some special educational disability such as reading or arithmetic. This made their school adjustment difficult.	This group showed little anxiety or regret for their firesetting.
In every case, the child had been deprived of love and security in his/her home life.	Anxiety dreams were infrequent.
They set fires only when under stress in their home situation.	The fires were planned, set away from home, and many caused losses involving thousands of dollars.
The children set fires, with associated fantasies to burn some member of the family who had either withheld love from the child or become too serious a rival for the love of a parent.	The adolescents waited to see the fires and enjoyed the noise and excitement from the fire engines.
The fires are set in and around the home, cause little damage, and are usually put out by the child himself; significance is chiefly symbolic.	The boys tended to go in pairs, with the exclusion of all other friends. The pairs included an aggressive and passive member, suggesting homosexual association; however, the researchers never proved this.
The children show other types of asocial behavior such as running away from home, truancy, stealing, and general hyper kinesis and aggression.	N/A
All children show acute anxiety and suffer from terrifying dreams and	N/A

fantasies, including vivid attacks by the devil, ghosts, and skeletons.	
All children have some sexual conflicts and many tell of active masturbation, sodomy, or fellatio; type of activity does not seem significant.	N/A
Enuresis was noted in only nine of the cases and seemed a part of the general picture rather than specifically associated with the fire motif.	N/A
A special group of children were orphans who had been placed in boarding homes but failed to make emotional adjustments.	N/A

This page intentionally left blank.

## **APPENDIX H**

### **TABLE 1: DATABASE SUMMARY DESCRIPTION: POTENTIAL SOURCES OF YOUTH FIRESETTING (AND COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION) RELATED DATA**

This page intentionally left blank.

Table 1: Database Summary Description: Potential Sources of Youth Firesetting (and Community Risk Reduction) Related Data		
DATABASE	DESCRIPTION	Youth Firesetting Specific Data or Reports
<p><a href="#">Youth Firesetting Information Repository and Evaluation System (YFIRES)</a></p>	<p>Launched in 2016, YFIRES includes data on youth (age 0 through 17) involved with a firesetting incident, misused fire, or used fire without the supervision or permission of a responsible adult. It is a two-tiered database that contains: 1) National data set with 20 de-identified data elements; 2) Local program case management data set with more than 150 data elements. YFIRES is a voluntary sample; specifically, the National Data Set it is not generalizable nor a population-based data set.</p> <p>YFIRES was created by a multidisciplinary group of 45 subject matter experts via a FEMA-AFG acquired by the International Association of Fire Fighters. (To learn more about the formative evaluation and strategic processes used, read the YFIRES resources, <a href="#">Concepts into Creation of the YFIRES Case Management Database</a>.) To help establish standardized definitions and data collection, the data dictionary was submitted to NFPA for inclusion in the Standard 1035 for Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist and Youth Firesetting Program Manager. While not an exclusive data source on youth firesetting incidents, it is a rich source of data due to the depth of content and quality of the users. Note: Multiple easily exported “canned” reports are available to registered users.</p> <p>*Data dictionary definitions of the data listed in the right column can be accessed via <a href="#">YFIRES Resources</a>.</p>	<p>YFIRES National Data* 2016-2020: n=3,098 cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender: Male 84%; Female 16%; Transgender n=3 but &lt; 1% rate.</li> <li>Age: 10 – 14 years; range 2 – 17 years.</li> <li>Family type: Mother only single-parent 27.3%; Biological parents 26.8%; Unknown 18%; Mother with partner 7%; Grandparents 5%.</li> <li>Incident Day of Week: Monday 15%; Tuesday 14.6%; Unknown 14%; Thursday 12.7%; Sunday 12.7%; Saturday 11.5%; Wednesday 10.7%.</li> <li>Incident Time: Unknown 39%; 9am-3pm 24%; 3pm-7pm 23%; 7pm-11pm 8.3%.</li> <li>Incident Location: Single family home 24.5%; School building – inside 14.7%; Park/Field/Vacant lot/Open land 13.5%; Unknown 9.3%.</li> <li>Ignition source: Lighter (disposable) 56.3%; Unknown 18.7%; Matches 8.7%; Lighter (multi-purpose BBQ) 5.5%; Fireworks 2.8%.</li> <li>Associates involved in incident: Yes 48%; No 43.4%; Unknown 8.5%.</li> </ul>
<p><a href="#">National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)</a> – and the U.S. Fire Administration -- <a href="#">Dept. of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency</a></p>	<p>NFIRS is the standard national reporting system used by U.S. fire departments to uniformly report fires and other incidents to which they respond. NFIRS is the world’s largest, national, annual database of fire incident information: All 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Dept of Defense, and Native American Tribal Authority participate in NFIRS. The NFIRS database comprises about 75% of all reported fires that occur annually. While this is the most extensive fire- and youth firesetting-related data source, not all fire departments in the U.S. report fires or contribute to NFIRS. Unless mandated by state requirements, participation is voluntary. Note: Only youth firesetting incidents that are reported and/or trigger a fire department response would be included in NFIRS data. Also, the section in which youth-related fires are entered is an optional area in the arson module, so the mechanism may not be correctly reported as youth firesetting. Only fire service agencies are allowed to contribute data to NFIRS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USFA publishes multiple data reports on fire deaths, rates, risks of dying, intentionally set outdoor fires and fires in residential buildings, etc.: <a href="http://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/">www.usfa.fema.gov/data/</a>.</li> <li>An estimate on the percentage of fire departments within each state that report to NFIRS is available: <a href="http://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/states/">www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/states/</a>.</li> </ul>

<p><a href="#"><u>National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)</u></a></p>	<p>NFPA compiles and releases detailed data analysis summary reports on a variety of fire related topics. NFPA publications may utilize NFIRS data or conduct surveys of a sample of fire agencies, then extrapolate the figures to represent national trends and activity levels.</p> <p>A primary source of cited youth firesetting-related data and statistics is the series of reports published by the NFPA titled “Playing with Fire.” At the time of this publication, <a href="#"><u>2014 is the most current version</u></a>. A new edition is expected to be released in 2021, check the NFPA website for updates.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Playing with Fire (2014)</u></a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An average of 49,300 fires involving “playing with fire” were reported to U.S. municipal fire departments each of the years from 2007-2011.</li> <li>• For each of these years, these fires caused an average of 80 civilian deaths, 860 civilian injuries, and \$235 million in property damage.</li> <li>• Location: 76% occurred outside or unclassified (% unclassified not listed); 23% structural (67% of these on residential properties with 64% in homes; 11% outside or on special properties; 7% on educational properties); and 2% vehicles.</li> </ul> <p>In the home structure fires (n=7,100 fires per year):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Age: 43% were started by children under 6; 15% 4yo; 15% 5yo; 11% 6yo</li> <li>○ Gender: Males 83%; Females 17%</li> <li>○ Ignition Source: Lighters 52%; Match 18%; Candle 5%; Fireworks 4%</li> <li>○ Incident Time: 9am-3pm 40%; 3pm-7pm 26%; 7pm-11pm 19%.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#"><u>Structure Fires in Schools (2020)</u></a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2014–2018, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 3,230 structure fires in schools each year.</li> <li>• These fires caused annual averages of 1 civilian death, 39 civilian injuries, and \$37 million in direct property damage.</li> <li>• Fires that were intentionally set were the leading cause of school fires, accounting for 43% (over 2 in 5 fires. Fires with an intentional cause were more prevalent in high school and middle schools (44% of total) than in elementary schools (33%).</li> <li>• School fires most often originated in a lavatory or locker room.</li> <li>• Two-thirds of school fires occurred between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.</li> </ul>
---	--	--



<p><a href="#">Fireworks Fires and Injuries (2020)</a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated 19,500 fires started by fireworks were reported to local U.S. fire departments in 2018.</li> <li>• These fires caused 5 civilian deaths, 46 civilian injuries, and \$105 million in direct property damage.</li> <li>• Many fireworks-related injuries were caused by fireworks that are legal in most states.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime Data Explorer Example: In 2019, 1,666 arson incidents were reported in Michigan by 635 law enforcement agencies in NIBRS; covering 96% of the total population. Of the 783 offenders with a reported age, 24% (n=191) were 19 years or younger.</li> <li>• Crime in the U.S. Report Ten-Year Arrest Trends: Arson arrests of persons under 18 years of age was 20% in 2019 (n=1089; total 5466) and 44% (n=3020; total 6947) in 2010.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">FBI UCR provides several reports</a> on data compiled from multiple crime data collections. These reports include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Crime Data Explorer (CDE)</a> an online interactive data tool</li> <li>• <a href="#">Crime in the United States</a> annual report</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)</a>: Captures details on each single crime incident—as well as on separate offenses within the same incident—including information on victims, known offenders, relationships between victims and offenders, arrestees, and property involved in crimes.</li> </ul> <p>Only law enforcement agencies are allowed to contribute data to the crime data collections analyzed by FBI UCR.</p>	<p><a href="#">Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting (FBI UCR)</a></p>
<p><b>Fire-Related Deaths: <a href="#">Quick Look Report (2018)</a></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 2014-2016 there were 1,344 fire-related deaths of infants, children &amp; young adults reviewed by CDR teams</li> <li>• Gender: 50% boys; 50% girls</li> <li>• Race/Ethnicity: 48% white; 33% African American</li> <li>• Age: 49% under age 5; 27% 5-9 years; 24% 10 years and older</li> <li>• Location: 90% occurred in child or relative's home; 60% rental properties; 50% single homes; 20% apartment/duplex homes</li> <li>• 30% had history of child maltreatment prior to death</li> <li>• 50% of the fatal fires resulted in more than 1 child death</li> <li>• 50% had smoke alarms present</li> </ul>	<p>The CFRP is the technical support and data center serving Child Death Review (CDR) and Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) programs throughout the United States. In 2019-2020, CFRP individually noticed an association with child deaths and fire, and hence did a more intensive analysis. Read their peer-reviewed published report, <a href="#">Social and Demographic Characteristics and the Contribution of Fireplay to Fire-Related Mortality Among Children in the U.S., 2004-2016</a> and the accompanying <a href="#">infographic</a>.</p>	<p><a href="#">National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention (CFRP)</a></p>

<p><b>Health Departments</b> (State or Local)</p>	<p>For local data, contact your State or local Health Departments. Many State departments publish various online reports on injuries, violence, and prevention initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30% were started by matches, lighters, cigarettes or candles</li> </ul> <p>For example: <a href="#">Michigan Dept of Health and Human Services Injury and Violence Prevention Section</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Injury and Violence in Michigan Burden Report</a></li> <li><a href="#">Michigan Violent Death Reporting System</a> (MIVDRS).</li> <li><a href="#">Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention Initiative</a></li> </ul>
<p><a href="#">National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) – Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)</a></p>	<p>The CPSC’s NEISS is a national probability sample of hospitals in the U.S. and its territories. Patient information is collected from each NEISS hospital for every emergency visit involving an <b>injury associated with consumer products</b>. From this sample, the total number of product-related injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms nationwide can be estimated. This web access to NEISS allows estimates to be retrieved on- line. Users can filter queries by selecting some any of the following variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treatment Date: date range that treatment for the injury occurred, e.g., how many fireworks-related injuries were treated in 2019</li> <li>Product: e.g., gasoline, gasoline cans, fireworks, gopher bomb, bottle rockets</li> <li>Sex: e.g., how many injuries occurred to males</li> <li>Age: e.g., how many injuries occurred to children between 5 – 19 years</li> <li>Body Part: e.g., how many injuries involved the face or arms</li> <li>Diagnosis: e.g., chemical burn, thermal burn, amputation</li> <li>Disposition: e.g., admitted to the hospital, treated in the ER and released, fatality, unknown</li> </ul>	<p>Separate customized data reports can be generated using the online NEISS system. Once the query report is downloaded as .xls file, injury description details (in addition to the filters listed to the left) are included in the report. Such as: Race, Location (home, street, school, other public property, etc.), Fire involvement (if there was a fire or not), Alcohol/Drug involved, and a very helpful text box narrative “ 8 yo male children were putting gasoline from a gas bucket on a fire and child was burned to left forearm and knee, calf and nipple, abdomen; second degree burn to forearm and first degree burn to face and rt forearm. No mention of fire department response.”</p> <p><b>CPSC – “ 2019 Fireworks Annual Report” (2020):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An estimated 10,000 consumer fireworks-related injuries were seen in U.S. hospital emergency departments in 2019.</li> <li>Burns accounted for 58% of the fireworks-related injuries treated in emergency departments.</li> <li>More than one-third (36%) of the victims of fireworks-related injuries were under the age of 15 years.</li> </ul>
<p><a href="#">Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) – United States Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs</a></p>	<p>OJJDP “ envisions a nation where our children are free from crime and violence. If they come into contact with the justice system, the contact should be both just and beneficial to them.” OJJDP hosts the <a href="#">Statistical Briefing Book</a> and publishes multiple reports, data snapshots, and FAQs fact sheets on child maltreatment, arrest, crime, court, residential placement, high school graduation rates, living arrangements, etc. involving juveniles.</p>	<p><b>OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimated number of arrests by offense and age group for 2019: Juveniles ages 0 – 17 years comprised 20% (n=1,800; total 9,070) of arson arrests.</li> <li>In 2018, an estimated 3.5 million children received a child maltreatment investigation or an alternative response; this is an increase of 18% since 2014.</li> <li>In 2018, more than 3/4 of perpetrators of child maltreatment were parents to the victim(s).</li> </ul>

<p><b>Juvenile Justice Statistics: <a href="#">National Report Series Bulletin – Juvenile Arrests, 2018</a> (2020):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2018, law enforcement agencies in the U.S. made 728,280 arrests of persons younger than 18 years.</li> <li>• The number of arrests of juveniles in 2018 was 60% fewer than the number of arrests in 2009.</li> <li>• Arson offense comprised 58% of the juvenile arrests in those persons less than 15 years. 17% of these juveniles were female, and 68% were white.</li> </ul>	<p>In 2019, BATS captured a total of 248 “ <a href="#">Juvenile Offender” fire related incidents:</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These incidents were associated with more than \$3.2 million in damages, 8 injuries and 2 fatalities.</li> <li>• “ Available Combustibles” was identified as the most widely utilized incendiary fire subtype.</li> <li>• “ Residential” was identified as the most targeted property type, followed by “ Education” .</li> <li>• 65% of these incidents occurred during the afternoon to early evening hours (12:01 - 21:00).</li> <li>• The high rate of occurrence was on Friday (20%) and the lowest was on Saturday (8%).</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Youth Risk Behavior Survey – YRBS</a> (2019):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~ 1 in 5 high school students reported being bullied on school property, and more than 1 in 12 high school students reported being cyberbullied in the last year.</li> <li>• 8% of high school students had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the 12 months before the survey.</li> </ul>
<p><b><a href="#">Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)</a></b></p>	<p>ATF publishes annual reports on <a href="#">arson</a>, <a href="#">explosives</a>, and <a href="#">juvenile offender (fire) incidents</a>. The data are compiled from incidents reported to the U.S. Bomb Data Center (USBDC) and Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS).</p> <p>BATS is a real-time dynamic incident management system that is strictly user dependent; therefore, it is possible that the data represented in this report may differ slightly from previously reported data due to updates or changes made by the owner of individual records. The data in BATS captures approximately 20% of the annual incendiary (arson) fires reflected in the UCR and/or NFIRS. Due to this limited dataset, the USBDC cautions the use of this report for analytical purposes.</p>	<p>The CDC conducts annual surveys to high school students as a part of a long-term data collection on “ Youth Risk Behavior Survey” or YRBS. The YRBSS was developed in 1990 to monitor health behaviors that contribute markedly to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the U.S. These behaviors, often established during childhood and early adolescence, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence.</li> <li>• Sexual behaviors related to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV infection.</li> </ul>
<p><b><a href="#">Youth Risk Behavior Studies and School Violence</a></b></p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol and other drug use.</li> <li>• Tobacco use.</li> <li>• Unhealthy dietary behaviors.</li> <li>• Inadequate physical activity.</li> <li>• The YRBSS also monitors the prevalence of obesity, asthma and other health-related behaviors plus sexual identity and sex of sexual contacts.</li> </ul> <p>From 1991 - 2019, the YRBSS has collected data from more than 4.9 million high school students in more than 2,100 separate surveys.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An associated report stated 48% of students in grades 7-12 experienced some form of sexual violence at school during the included school year of the report (2012).</li> </ul>
<p><b><u><a href="#">National Interagency Fire Center</a></u></b></p>	<p>Provides data, maps, and statistics related to wildland fire activities across the U.S.A. <u><a href="#">Wildland fire open data with GIS shared mapping.</a></u></p>
<p><b>State Department of Natural Resources</b></p>	<p>The Department of Natural Resources within in each state typically provide data and reports on fire causes, including those involving children, arson, fireworks, etc.</p>
<p><b>Bureau of Indian Affairs – Branch of Wildland Fire Management (U.S. Department of the Interior):</b></p>	<p>The BIA provides information on fires that occur on Indian Country lands. They also offer a <u><a href="#">youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.</a></u></p>
	<p>For example, <u><a href="#">Michigan DNR Annual Fire Report:</a></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People caused 9 out of 10 wildfires in the state</li> <li>• 14% of all fires reported by the DNR were specifically attributed to children</li> </ul>
	<p><u><a href="#">Human-Cause Fire Report:</a></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humans cause an average of 60,467 fires each year in the U.S.</li> <li>• More than 2.7 million acres are burned each year by people who start wildfires</li> <li>• 67% of all human-caused fires are started in the Southern and Eastern U.S.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u><a href="#">Human-caused wildfires account for 80% of all wildfires that occur in Indian Country each year.</a></u></li> <li>• <u><a href="#">It is estimated over 40% of arson fires in Indian Country are set by youth under the age of 18.</a></u></li> </ul>

<p><a href="#"><u>United States Forest Service – U.S. Department of Agriculture</u></a></p>	<p>Includes wildland fires information, public fire information websites, and the <a href="#"><u>InciWeb all-risk incident information management system</u></a>:</p>	
<p><a href="#"><u>U.S. Department of Education</u></a></p>	<p>Includes a <a href="#"><u>Federal Commission on School Safety with several resulting reports</u></a>.</p>	<p>Visit <a href="#"><u>SchoolSafety.Gov</u></a>.</p>
<p><b>State Departments of Education:</b> URLs vary by state</p>	<p>State-level Departments of Education track and report on school safety related data, including fires, arson, and discipline.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Florida DOE <a href="#"><u>School Environment Safety Incident Reporting and Know Your Schools</u></a> report cards and it's topically based reporting</li> <li>Arizona DOE <a href="#"><u>School Safety Program</u></a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Local Colleges and/or University Reports:</b> various URLs</p>	<p>Federal law requires U.S. colleges and universities to release annual reports on security and fire safety, which include the number of fires, cause, injuries, deaths, and arson crimes.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>University of Michigan Division of Public Safety and Security Annual Security and Fire Safety Report</u></a></p>
<p><a href="#"><u>National Center for Education Statistics - Institute of Education Sciences (NCES IES)</u></a></p>	<p>NCES publishes school “<a href="#"><u>Crime and Safety</u></a>” indicators, surveys, and reports. Data include school conditions, bullying, victimization, criminal incidents, fights, weapons (explosives are grouped with firearms), etc. that occur and schools and colleges in the U.S. It compiles data from multiple data sources including the National Crime Victimization Survey, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and Campus Safety/Security Survey and others. NCES also hosts <a href="#"><u>ACS-ED Maps</u></a> which is an online mapping tool that provides social, economic, demographic, and housing conditions of school-aged children in school districts.</p>	<p>NCES Annual Report on <a href="#"><u>Indicators of School Crime and Safety (2019)</u></a>: During the 2017–18 school year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About 51% of public schools (or 42,200 schools) reported providing diagnostic mental health assessments to evaluate students for mental health disorders.</li> <li>~ 38% of public schools (or 31,500 schools) reported providing treatment to students for mental health disorders.</li> <li>52% of public schools reported that inadequate funding was a major limitation in their efforts to provide mental health services to students.</li> <li>35% of public schools (28,700 schools) took at least one serious disciplinary action (including out-of-school suspensions lasting 5 or more days, removals with no services for the remainder of the school year, and transfers to specialized school) for specific offenses.</li> </ul>

<p>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <a href="#">Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER)</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)</a></p>	<p>WISQARS™ is an interactive, online database that provides fatal and nonfatal injury, violent death, and cost of injury data from a variety of trusted sources. Researchers, the media, public health professionals, and the public can use WISQARS™ data to learn more about the public health and economic burden associated with unintentional and violence-related injury in the U.S. Users can search, sort, and view the injury data and create reports, charts, and maps based on the following: Intent of injury (e.g., unintentional injury, violence-related, homicide/assault, legal intervention, suicide/intentional self-harm); Mechanism (cause) of injury (e.g., fall, fire, firearm, motor vehicle crash, poisoning, suffocation); Body region (e.g., traumatic brain injury, spinal cord, torso, upper and lower extremities); Nature (type) of injury (e.g., fracture, dislocation, internal injury, open wound, amputation, and burn); Geographic location (e.g., national, regional, state) where the injury occurred; Sex; race/ethnicity; and age of the injured person.</p> <p>WONDER is an integrated information and communication system that provides a single point of access to a wide variety of public health reports and data systems (both local and external) categorized by topic.</p> <p>NVDRS is the only state-based surveillance (reporting) system that pools more than 600 unique data elements from multiple sources into a usable, anonymous database. NVDRS covers all types of violent deaths – including homicides and suicides – in all settings for all age groups.</p> <p>NVDRS collects facts from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, law enforcement reports, and toxicology reports into one anonymous database. Data elements collected provide valuable context about violent deaths, such as relationship problems; mental health conditions and treatment; toxicology results; and life stressors, including recent money- or work-related problems or physical health problems.</p> <p>Specific fact sheets for data providers, law enforcement, and medical examiners are available on our NVDRS Resources webpage.</p>	<p>NOTE: If you haven't previously checked these out, you definitely need to! Everyone will enjoy (or at least appreciate) the magnitude of resources readily and easily available.</p>
<p><a href="#">National Burn Repository (NBR) -- American Burn Association (ABA)</a></p>	<p>The NBR summarizes and compares a set of standardized well-defined data elements. The NBR only includes data on hospitalized <b>in-patient cases that are voluntarily</b> submitted by specialized burn care facilities in the U.S. (and a few international burn centers). The NBR Annual Reports summarize clinical characteristics and course of burn treatment for cases submitted.</p>	

	<p>These cases constitute a convenience sample of burn patients that received specialized burn care from facilities that have a strong commitment to excellent burn care. They do not represent a random sample of all patients presenting to a hospital for burn treatment nor a sample of all patients admitted to burn centers.</p>	
<p><a href="#"><u>Local Burn Center Registry Database</u></a></p>	<p>Agencies can contact their local burn center to request local burn registry database data that would be de-identified to meet HIPAA privacy requirements. Depending on the intended use of the data, a formal (which can be labor-intensive and lengthy) data use request approval process may have to occur with the hospital's internal IRB (Internal Review Board). This request would be most successful if the youth firesetting program has an established relationship with their local burn center hospital.</p>	
<p><a href="#"><u>National Trauma Data Bank (NTDB) and Annual Reports</u></a></p>	<p>The American College of Surgeons' NTDB is the largest aggregation of U.S. trauma registry data ever assembled. Data are collected annually from participating trauma centers and are compiled into annual adult and pediatric reports that contain descriptive information about trauma patients (e.g., demographics, injury information, and outcomes). The NTDB's National Sample Program (NSP) is a national probability sample of 100 Level I and II trauma centers in the U.S. The goal of the NTDB NSP is to enhance current injury information by providing nationally representative baseline estimates of trauma care to meet the needs of trauma care assessment, clinical outcomes research, and injury surveillance. This program is supported by the CDC and the ACS. The NSP is a unique and powerful data base that includes information on trauma patients, such as admission and discharge status; patient demographics (i.e., gender, age, race); injury and diagnosis (i.e., mechanism, e-code, ICD-9 or AIS code); procedure codes; injury severity scores (i.e., Injury Severity Score, Glasgow Coma Scale); and outcome variables (i.e., length of stay, intensive care unit days, payment method). The NTDB NSP is a stratified sample, therefore proper statistical techniques must be used to calculate standard errors &amp; confidence intervals. Similar to the above listed local burn center data, programs may choose to reach out to their local trauma center hospital to obtain trauma registry data.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Nationwide Emergency Department Sample (NEDS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Hospital Discharge Survey (NHDS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Inpatient Sample (NIS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS)</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Health and Injury Database Systems</b>  <a href="#">AmeriBurn.Org</a>  <a href="#">Possible Sources for Obtaining Burn Data</a></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">United States Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration</a>: Includes data and statistics on injuries, fatalities, illness, locations, and cause.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Databases to Potentially Assist in Community Risk Reduction</b></p>
	<p>While not specific to youth firesetting, the World Health Organization's GHO data repository contains an extensive list of indicators (e.g., demographics and socioeconomic statistics, violence prevention, substance use, child health, etc.) that can be selected by theme or location.</p>	<p><a href="#">Global Health Observatory Data Repository (GHO)</a></p>



## **UNIT 2: WHO SETS FIRES AND WHY?**

### **TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

*The students will be able to:*



- 2.1 *Explain the range of factors that may contribute to youth firesetting behaviors.*

### **ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

*The students will be able to:*

- 2.1 *Distinguish the myths from facts related to youth firesetting.*
  - 2.2 *Explain the motivations and typologies of youths who set fires.*
  - 2.3 *Classify youth firesetting into typologies and justify their selections.*
  - 2.4 *Explain how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma can influence youth firesetting behaviors.*
  - 2.5 *Explain the impacts of the various behavioral and mental health conditions on youth firesetting.*
-

This page intentionally left blank.

 FEMA 

---

**UNIT 2:**  
**WHO SETS FIRES AND WHY?**

Slide 2-1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

TERMINAL OBJECTIVE

Explain the range of factors that may contribute to youth firesetting behaviors.

Slide 2-2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

ENABLING OBJECTIVES

- Distinguish the myths from facts related to youth firesetting.
- Explain the motivations and typologies of youths who set fires.
- Classify youth firesetting into typologies and justify their selections.

Slide 2-3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Explain how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma can influence youth firesetting behaviors.
- Explain the impacts of the various behavioral and mental health conditions on youth firesetting.

Slide 2-4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**INTRODUCTION**

- Children find fire fascinating because it engages all five senses.
- Children learn by observing the world around them — imitating and listening to parents and caregivers, siblings, friends, what they see in media, etc.

Slide 2-5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. Fire is (and has always historically been) an essential tool used in everyday human life.
- B. As fire is involved in so many aspects of life, it shapes how and what children learn about fire and what they perceive is an “appropriate use” of it.
  - 1. Fire is used in many aspects of our lives: to heat our homes, cook our food, light our way, celebrate holidays and birthdays, demonstrate science experiments, and possesses symbolism in religious ceremonies and practices. We’re exposed to fire and fire misuse in movies, television, online videos, games and marketing campaigns. We hear references to fire in songs, poems, stories and books.

- 2. Children can find fire fascinating because it engages all the human senses (i.e., sight, sound, smell, taste and touch). It is colorful; it glows and flickers, crackles and pops. Fire itself can have an appealing smell, or the food it cooks can smell and taste wonderful. Fire also provides heat.
  
- C. Children learn by observing and absorbing what is around them. Fire may be misinterpreted as being safe, when in fact, without knowledge of fire safety, responsible use and adult supervision, fire can become extremely dangerous.
  
- D. Children learn by observing, imitating and listening to parents and caregivers, siblings, other family members, friends, and what they see in movies, videos, shows, games, etc.

---

How do you think this impacts the issue of youth fire misuse, firesetting and experimentation?

Slide 2-6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- E. Understanding these concepts below will guide your work with firesetting youth:
  - 1. Fire is not bad or evil; it is an essential tool in life that youth must learn to use responsibly.
  
  - 2. Given our immense level of exposure as a culture to fire, it is important to include content and discussion on what are “good” and “appropriate” versus “bad” and “not allowed” uses of fire in your own local program.

II. CURRENT RESEARCH, MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT CHILDREN AND FIRE

What other myths and misconceptions have you heard or encountered regarding youth firesetting?

Refer to Table 1: Myths and Facts in this unit.

Take five minutes to discuss as a small group and five minutes debriefing as a class.

Slide 2-7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. How children learn about fire.
1. Children learn from the environments in which they live and from the individuals who are present in that environment. Individuals in a child’s life may be parents, caregivers, friends, older siblings, other relatives, neighbors or all of the above.
  2. As a child grows, so does their ability to absorb and interpret what they are seeing and doing, as well as their desire to act out on their own.
  3. As their cognitive development increases, so does their ability to recognize what they are seeing and doing and to relate it to feelings and emotions.
  4. Children relate to and mimic what they see and observe within their environment. Envision a birthday party with gifts, celebratory songs, family, friends and a cake, complete with birthday candles being thrust in the child’s face for them to make a wish and cheering results as they do, followed by presents, cake eating and lots of attention.
  5. How about a campfire with hotdogs and marshmallows or a fire in the fireplace during a winter that casts a lovely glow in the house while offering warmth? Children love the bright, almost trance-like glow of the colors the fire brings, the noise and the excitement of Independence Day fireworks in the sky.
  6. They also may see parents/caregivers/ siblings/friends smoking cigarettes, using gasoline to start a bonfire, throwing a Molotov cocktail into a neighbor’s window because of some perceived wrong or adults holding their hand against a stove burner to “teach them a lesson.”

7. Firesetting in children is not simply happenstance, and there are many misconceptions about why firesetting occurs.
8. First and foremost, there are many inaccurate beliefs that are perpetuated by misinformed adults and the media who do not understand the importance of clearly distinguishing between positive messages about fire and those that propagate dangerous decision-making.
9. In this section, we directly acknowledge these myths not to perpetuate them, but rather to have open discussion focused on the facts and truths so that together we can start changing the culture and societal beliefs identifying the importance of accurate information.

**CURRENT RESEARCH,  
MYTHS AND FACTS**

- Adults must convey proper safety education messaging about the benefits and dangers of fire to children.
- Failure to teach that fire is a tool to be used responsibly can result in unsafe behaviors.

Slide 2-8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

B. Myths and facts.

1. As adults, we must do our due diligence by conveying proper fire science, prevention and safety educational messaging about both the benefits and dangers of fire and recognizing the importance of both aspects.
2. It is no different than giving a child a car but not teaching them to drive safely, or taking a child to the shooting range but not ensuring that they know the rules associated with firearm safety.
3. Failure to teach that fire is a tool that must be used responsibly or else have unintended consequences can result in delusions of understanding about fire science, resulting in unsafe behaviors.
4. Specifically, there are many fallacies regarding firesetting that can easily be refuted and explained.
5. Refer to Table 1: Myths and Facts.

**Table 1: Myths and Facts**

<b>MYTH</b>	<b>FACT</b>
It is easy to control a small fire.	While fires are certainly easier to control when they are small, all big fires start small. Unless one has a deep understanding regarding fire behavior, how things burn and how fire spreads, a fire can quickly become out of control.
Firesetting in children is normal behavior.	Curiosity about fire is absolutely normal. Fire offers visual stimulation, can be used to cook food and may be a trigger of happy memories such as a campfire or candles on a birthday cake. However, children setting fires is not normal behavior, and they need to be taught the importance of fire safety and have proper supervision.  There are many reasons children start fires, and those underlying reasons must be addressed.
Firesetting is simply a phase that all children go through.	Children do not go through a firesetting phase, nor is it something that they will outgrow if they are actively engaging in said behaviors. Immediate fire prevention and safety educational portion of intervention needs to be implemented to stop firesetting behavior.  Children may be using fire as communication, expressing an unmet need that they have no words to express. These needs must be addressed as part of the intervention process.



---

**WHO SETS FIRES AND WHY?**

---

<p>A child setting many fires is simply a pyromaniac.</p>	<p>There is no such thing as “simply a pyromaniac.” The clinical diagnosis identifies the disorder as a compulsion to set fires, a fascination with fire and reoccurrences of fire setting accompanied by feelings of tension and relief but without any ulterior motive for setting fires. However, there is no consensus between mental and behavioral health professionals. In fact, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) classifies the individual with pyromania as one who “receives pleasure, gratification, or relief when setting fires,” yet it excludes those ulterior motives such as for monetary gain, concealment of criminal activity, to express anger or vengeance or as the result of impaired judgment (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Fire professionals are advised not to label individuals as pyromaniacs as the term requires a mental health diagnosis, and as stated, there is no consensus.</p>
<p>Firesetting, cruelty to animals and enuresis (bed-wetting) are indicative of an individual that will grow up to become a serial criminal offender.</p>	<p>This theory was alleged by John MacDonald in the 1960s in a study that he conducted and then repudiated himself, as did many other behavioral and mental health experts. There is no known correlation between firesetting, enuresis and cruelty toward animals. Each behavior needs to be looked at independently and addressed as such.</p> <p>Hollywood picked up on this theory and has promoted it over the years.</p>
<p>Harsh punishment and scare tactics will teach the kid a lesson and stop the firesetting.</p>	<p>Punishment and discipline alone do not work. Scare tactics can add trauma to a child and/or increase youth firesetting behaviors and therefore are not part of a best-practices trauma-informed care approach. Kids need to understand fire science. Punishment does not teach that.</p>

III. COMMON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE FIRESETTING BEHAVIOR

What are the four common factors known to be present with most firesetting youth (no matter the typology)?

Slide 2-9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

A. Risk factors that influence fire behavior.

**COMMON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE FIRESETTING BEHAVIOR**

- Four common factors influencing firesetting behaviors:
  - Easy access to ignition materials.
  - Lack of adequate supervision.
  - Failure to practice fire safety.
  - Easy access to information (online and other methods).

Slide 2-10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1. There are four common factors known to be present with most firesetting youth (no matter the typology).
  - a. Easy access to ignition materials.
  - b. Lack of adequate supervision.
  - c. Failure to practice fire safety.
  - d. Easy access to information (via online and other methods).
2. Failure to teach proper utilization of fire and the dangers that can potentially ensue run through all these common factors.

3. Proper modeling by adult figures would go far in alleviating all or some of these contributing factors as we know that children mimic or emulate what they see, live and experience.
4. Education is not only integral to the youth regarding responsible use of fire, but also to the adult figures within their home and social environment.

B. What we currently know about youth firesetting: research and evidence-informed approaches.

After reading “A Brief History of Research on Youth Firesetting” as part of the pre-course assignment, what new or surprising information did you learn about the studies and research performed on firesetting and youth firesetting behaviors?

Slide 2-11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1. The existing body of published research on youth firesetting spans multiple disciplines of:
  - a. Psychology.
  - b. Psychiatry.
  - c. Forensics.
  - d. Behavioral science.
  - e. Child development.
  - f. Fire service.
  - g. Medicine/nursing.
  - h. Program evaluation.
2. This is important to acknowledge, as the strategies and approaches we use in our youth firesetting prevention and intervention work must be evidence-informed and based on currently known best practices.

3. As the science and knowledge advances, our practices must adapt and change to apply the new findings to our work with firesetting youth.
4. We also must remember that the emerging science on what is the most effective intervention to change behaviors might be coming from outside of our own professional circle and experience, i.e., it might be new contributions, research, educational materials and strategies from partner agencies.
5. Hence, one of the most important underlying concepts to effective youth firesetting prevention and intervention is to utilize a collaborative multidisciplinary and multiagency approach to our work.
6. Research evidence supports the following generalizations/observations and approaches to working with youth collectively, as well as in firesetting prevention and intervention:
  - a. While the existing theoretical models (review “A Brief History of Research on Youth Firesetting”) somewhat differ, the models highlight that there are additional **risk factors** that can contribute to firesetting behaviors in youth.

These include:

**COMMON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE FIRESSETTING BEHAVIOR (cont'd)**

- Risk factors that may influence firesetting behaviors:
  - Family.
  - Social.
  - School and community.
  - Cultural.
  - Environmental.
  - Child characteristics.
  - Knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and norms.

Slide 2-12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- Risk factors are those that increase the probability of injury and unwanted behaviors. As described, there are many risk factors that contribute to youth firesetting behaviors, which without being addressed will cause ongoing fire misuse by a child.

-- Family.

- Social.
  - School and community.
  - Cultural.
  - Environmental.
  - Child characteristics (personality; emotional regulation; cognitive functioning; impulsivity; or marijuana, alcohol or other substance use).
  - Knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and norms.
- Having multiple contributing risk factors and/or certain underlying issues (e.g., abuse/ maltreatment, family dysfunction, mental/ behavioral health conditions) can lead to an increase in the risk of recidivism.
- b. The main goal of youth firesetting prevention and intervention is behavior change.
- For youths to use fire in a responsible and supervised manner versus their current behavior of firesetting, or in other words, to reduce and eliminate firesetting recidivism (repeat youth firesetting behavior).
- c. Utilize multiple strategies, tools and approaches to achieve this desired behavior change, such as:
- Identifying specific motivations.
  - Understanding typologies.
  - Providing safety education (using the five E's of community risk reduction).
  - Referring to supportive services.
- d. It takes multiple approaches to address the underlying factors that may be contributing to firesetting behavior.
- e. Positive, supportive redirection is the most effective approach. Eliminate scare tactics as they do not work; in fact, they can cause harm by further traumatizing a child and/or increasing unwanted behaviors.

- f. Current best practices in youth work, trauma-informed care and resiliency building all focus on strengths-based approaches.

What are potential underlying issues that cannot be controlled or fixed in the child's life?

Instructor will list these "risk factors" on an easel pad.

Slide 2-13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- g. Incorporating a strengths-based approach means that when working with the child, you shift the focus from "What's wrong with this kid?" to "What strengths does this child have that we can build on?"

What do you think a "strengths-based" approach means in the context of working with an at-risk youth?

Slide 2-14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- h. Typologies in youth firesetting are very helpful in thinking about and better understanding what contributing factors are motivating a child.
- i. However, there are some underlying issues that cannot be controlled or "fixed" in the child's life. Supporting and building on the child's strengths allows them to overcome the challenges in life that cannot be eliminated or fixed.

j. Shared risks and protective factors approach:

- This evidence-based public health and injury prevention approach is directly relevant to youth firesetting.

---

What are some protective factors that could decrease the likelihood of injury and unwanted behaviors for at-risk youth?

Instructor will list these “protective factors” on an easel pad.

Slide 2-15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- Protective factors are those that decrease the likelihood of injury and unwanted behaviors. Protective factors include:
  - Positive attitude and values.
  - Good mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health.
  - Having conflict resolution skills.
  - Consistent parental/caregiver supervision.
  - Strong social supports, success at school, etc.
  - In other words, if we strive to increase the number of protective factors in a child’s life and to decrease their number of risk factors, then we will be successful in reducing or eliminating their youth firesetting behaviors.

k. Motivational interviewing (MI) and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) are effective approaches in promoting behavior change, including in youth firesetting intervention and prevention.

- MI is “a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change ... by eliciting and exploring the person’s own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 29).

- CBT as a treatment attempts to change thinking and behavioral patterns by:
  - Realistically reevaluating distorted thoughts that create problems.
  - Coping with difficult situations with problem-solving skills.
  - Gaining an improved sense of self-confidence.
  - Facing fears rather than avoiding them.
  - Learning methods to calm mind and body (American Psychological Association, 2017).
  
- l. One method of MI is “OARS” (Hall et al., 2012).
  - Ask open-ended questions.
    - Avoid yes/no or limited answers.
    - Youth talks; interventionist listens.
  - Make affirmations.
    - Recognize and affirm youth’s strengths.
    - Help build rapport.
  - Use reflections.
    - Rephrase the youth’s statement to capture their meaning and feeling.
    - Reinforce the desire for change.
  - Use summarizing.
    - Demonstrates understanding of the conversation and youth’s perspective.
  
- m. There are six skills related to active listening (Leading Effectively Staff, 2021):
  - Paying attention.



- Withholding judgment.
  - Reflecting.
  - Clarifying.
  - Summarizing.
  - Sharing.
- n. Mindfulness exercises may include simple approaches such as living in the moment and focusing on breathing. More structured exercises could be a body scan or walking meditation (Mayo Clinic, 2020). Mobile mindfulness applications like Insight Timer and Smiling Mind are free and available across multiple platforms.
- o. Much evidence has arisen in the past decade on the effectiveness and benefits of behavioral treatment modalities that combine strategies like mindfulness, deep breathing and other emotional regulation strategies.
- p. Everyone (including non-clinicians) can apply some basic MI, mindfulness, CBT and emotion regulation principles to their communication, interviews, interventions and interactions! This is not only effective with firesetting youth, but it also benefits your relationships/ communications with colleagues, significant others, friends, etc. Learning, practicing and using active listening skills convey the message to them that, “You are important, you have value, and your feelings and story matter.”
7. We will discuss interviewing techniques and approaches later in Unit 3: Components of the Youth Firesetting Intervention Process.

This page intentionally left blank.

## ACTIVITY 2.1

### Five Common Typologies of Youth Firesetting Behavior

#### Purpose

Identify the needs and motivation, types of incidents, demographic commonalities, and dangers of each typology.

#### Directions

1. The instructor will divide the class into five small groups and assign one of the five typologies to each group:
  - a. Group 1: curiosity/experimentation.
  - b. Group 2: troubled/crying out for help/crisis.
  - c. Group 3: thrill-seeking/risk-taking.
  - d. Group 4: delinquent/criminal/strategic.
  - e. Group 5: pathological/severely disturbed/cognitively impaired/thought-disordered.
2. In your small groups, consider and discuss these factors related to your group's assigned typology:
  - a. What are some of the motivations behind the firesetting?
  - b. What types of incidents often occur?
  - c. What are the commonalities (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic), if any?
  - d. What are the associated dangers with this typology of firesetting?
  - e. Please refer to the section titled Motivations and Typologies of Firesetting Youth in the Student Manual (SM).
3. Small groups will have 20 minutes for collaboration and discussion. Nominate a spokesperson from the group to summarize findings to the class.
4. Each group will have two minutes to share their findings.

This page intentionally left blank.

#### IV. MOTIVATIONS AND TYPOLOGIES OF FIRESETTING YOUTH

##### A. Motivations for firesetting behavior.

1. While everyone is looking for a definitive answer about “why” something happens, there is no easy answer to why youths set fires, but rather many theories regarding the origins of firesetting.
2. In the mid-1980s, the approach shifted from studying youth firesetting behaviors in a vacuum to expanding the focus to look more closely at an individual’s surroundings and social learning environment.
3. In the newer etiological themes, firesetting behaviors were seen as being taught, adopted and greatly influenced by a youth’s social learning environment. David Kolko suggests that one must think about family (whatever that family unit looks like) when considering firesetting behavior, and in fact, he believes that youth firesetting is a problem that ensues from the behaviors of adults (2001).
4. Pathology is referred to as the process of a disease or deviation from a state of health and wellness.
5. While youth firesetting is not a disease, **firesetting behavior is a response to some level of need**, whether it be curiosity or problem-driven or possesses an intentional or criminal intent.
6. It is our goal that through conducting an interview/screening process, we can identify the need(s) and subsequently provide the necessary educational intervention and/or referrals to services changing the firesetting behavior.
7. It is paramount, however, to not get so caught up in assigning typology to a youth who is starting fires, but rather to recognize that there are many contributing factors.
8. In fact, the characteristics of firesetting typologies can often overlap:
  - a. A youth may initially present with one or more typologies, or the factors motivating the child’s firesetting behaviors can morph or change with time, hence the typology of the new firesetting changes too.
    - As an example, a youth may set a fire out of crisis or trauma and continue to set fires as a self-regulating mechanism (helping them regulate their emotions) or as a result of other things occurring in their life that are not being addressed.

- b. Anger, rage, home life, neglect, cognitive ability, social environment, culture or trauma are only a few examples of the child's motivation.
  - c. The important thing to remember is that whether a child is setting fires out of curiosity or an older teenager is setting fires to cause harm and damage, they both require our help and intervention that will be beneficial for them and the adults.
9. Different etiological themes or theories include, but are not limited to:
- a. Social Process Theories dictate that all individuals have the potential to carry out criminal behaviors.
  - b. Expressive Trauma Theory states that firesetting is a manifestation of childhood trauma; firesetting is utilized as a means to vent, lash out or express emotional distress from being a trauma victim.
  - c. Learning Theory opines that firesetting behaviors are learned through familial association, peers and other outside associations (whether knowingly or unknowingly) that portray inappropriate use of fire.
  - d. Societal Reaction Theory stipulates that an individual sets fires for the greater reaction from society, the adult figures in their lives, or the emergency and governmental agencies that respond.
10. There currently is not a singular and universally accepted model for predicting youth firesetting behaviors.
11. The establishment of one standardized theoretical model is both challenging and problematic due to the above variances in multiple theories, a lack of a consistent national mechanism for unified data collection and the existence of additional schools of thought from multiple disciplines.
12. Categorizing firesetting youth can be difficult as there are often behaviors and pathological characteristics (i.e., those that deviate from a condition of health and wellness) that present in multiple typologies.
13. It is important to recognize that the primary objective strategy of a youth firesetting intervention program is to change behaviors through interruption of firesetting activities via education, behavioral and mental health, juvenile justice, and social services.

14. Rather than focusing on the youth's behaviors as being negative, focus should be placed on how one can take lessons from their experiences and change behaviors to be more positive and reflective of their inner strengths.
  15. Youths who set fires are human beings not to be labeled as "bad," "evil" or "disturbed." Through intervention, they can learn to make more positive choices and focus on the benefits associated with said choices. They need assistance, and that is exactly what we are here to do.
- B. There are five typologies that will be discussed to help frame the youth firesetting issue and guide intervention services for firesetting youth:
1. Curiosity/experimentation.
  2. Troubled/crying out for help/crisis.
  3. Thrill-seeking/risk-taking.
  4. Delinquent/criminal/strategic.
  5. Severely disturbed/cognitively impaired/thought-disordered.
- C. Curiosity/experimentation.
1. Children are innately curious creatures wanting to touch, taste, explore and question everything!
  2. Curiosity and experimentation are healthy parts of one's childhood experience.
  3. It was only after studying many children (his own included) in the 1950s that moral development theorist Jean Piaget established comprehensive theories showing that through cognitive development children think quite differently from adults. Only through an understanding of said cognitive development can we ascertain a better recognition of the dynamics contributing to firesetting behaviors.
  4. Characteristics of curiosity and experimentation:
    - a. Includes boys and girls across a wide age span.
    - b. Use fire out of fascination, curiosity or a need to know more about it.
    - c. Lack understanding of fire's power.

- d. Have low impulse control.
  - e. Need to know about and explore the environment.
  - f. Are active learners (learn by touching, doing and experimenting).
  - g. Either do not understand and/or fail to think through consequences. Some scholars do separate “curiosity with understanding” from “curiosity without understanding.” If the youth takes precautions, they do have some understanding.
  - h. May have cognitive challenges such as learning disabilities or behavioral disorders that contribute to poor decision-making or spontaneous behaviors.
  - i. Young children have no cognitive understanding of consequence when questioned regarding their activity.
  - j. No identifiable pattern or history with fire.
  - k. May (or may not) try to extinguish fire.
  - l. May (or may not) alert an adult to a fire in progress.
  - m. May hide.
  - n. May not intend to cause harm or damage due to malice. While there is no intent for harm, may have intentionally chosen to set the fire.
  - o. Just like younger children, adolescents can be curious about fire and experiment with it.
  - p. Older children may model a science project or something they have seen in school or with friends.
  - q. May deny involvement or lie.
  - r. When presented with facts, may admit guilt.
- D. Crisis/troubled/crying out for help.
- 1. It is difficult to imagine a family today (whatever that family unit looks like or who it is comprised of) that has not experienced some form of stress or feelings of being under too much pressure or emotional weight.



2. Stress manifests differently in all of us, as we each have our own healthy and unhealthy methods of dealing or coping with it.
3. Certain life events that we face may seem especially overwhelming to individuals who do not yet have the coping mechanisms in place to deal with said events, and they look for whatever avenues they may find to find peace.
4. Adolescents, preteens and teenagers often can feel like the weight of the world rests on their shoulders, and as a result, they look for ways that offer relief to whatever stressors or traumatic events they may be experiencing. Firesetting can be one of those methods.
5. Characteristics of crisis/troubled/crying out for help:
  - a. Firesetting may be calling attention (intentionally or unintentionally) to an underlying problem or unaddressed basic need.
  - b. Child may have poor coping or problem-solving skills.
  - c. Child may have had a recent or past major home/school life change, crisis, trauma or adverse experience.
  - d. Family dysfunction and/or home environment chaos may be common.
  - e. Child has access to ignition materials with no supervision, or the supervision is inadequate (e.g., distracted, substance-impaired or sleeping adult caregivers; use of an immature sitter or sibling; or infrequent monitoring).
  - f. There may be a continuing series of firesetting.
  - g. Fires are sometimes directed at specific people, targets, locations or objects.
  - h. Fire may be symbolic of what is causing problems.
  - i. Physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect are possible.
  - j. Children use fire to express anger, sadness, frustration and powerless feelings related to stress or major changes in their lives.
  - k. Youth may lie or make up a wild story about the fire's cause.

- l. Youth may ignore the fire and lack remorse as they feel their behavior was justified.
  - m. Youth will likely continue to set fires until needs are identified and met.
  - n. The crisis to the youth is based on their experiences, **not** those of the practitioner or parents/caregivers.
  - o. This typology of firesetting demands a rapid and integrated response from a team of multidisciplinary professionals.
6. Individuals react to things in different ways. Loss of a loved one, death of a pet, divorce or some type of separation, parental incarceration, changes in school, removal from birth parents' custody, bullying or teasing, a friend or romantic breakup, experiencing various types of abuse, or other overwhelming events may cause a child to act out in diverse ways.
  7. Fire may be a form of communication in which the youth feels that it is the only way to get attention to themselves and the difficult situation they are experiencing. They may not be able to express or feel safe expressing these needs and emotions.
  8. This attention-seeking activity has the potential to cause great harm, and it necessitates immediate intervention from members of a team that includes, but is not limited to, behavioral and mental health, juvenile justice, law enforcement (police and fire), and social services.
- E. Thrill-seeking/risk-taking.
1. A thrill-seeking/risk-taking firesetting youth sets fires to experience the danger and sensation of risk-taking.
  2. They may be copying what they have seen others do, or they may try to increase the risk (e.g., add accelerants, create an explosion, make a bigger fire, etc.) to "outdo" what they've seen.
  3. These individuals enjoy the idea of trying to get away with an unapproved activity and/or a crime without facing any consequences for their actions; they often stay around to view the chaotic activities that ensue (e.g., fire suppression activities, bustling of emergency responders, media attention and response). This is an adrenaline rush to them. They may have a deep-seeded psychological need for attention and will often offer themselves as an aide to the responders. These youths are often intelligent. These are characteristics of serial arsonists. It has been argued that successful firesetting intervention can reduce the incidence of serial arson.

4. Successfully completing risky tasks gives them overconfidence; they become attracted to increasingly riskier behavior over time, often placing themselves in danger as they take greater chances in thrill-seeking activities.
5. For a thrill-seeking/risk-taking youth who sets fires, this is sometimes a “gateway” crime or unapproved activity. In this context, “gateway” means that without intervention and meeting the youth’s underlying needs, various dangerous behaviors are likely to continue.
6. Subtypes may fall under this typology, such as a firesetting youth with an untreated childhood Conduct Disorder (CD), which can evolve into antisocial personality disorder as an adult.

According to Anderson and Kiehl, citing Cleckley (1941) and Hare (1996), **psychopathy** is defined as a “disorder characterized in part by shallow emotional responses, lack of empathy, and an increased likelihood for antisocial behavior” (2014).

7. Characteristics of thrill-seeking/risk-taking.
  - a. Experiment for an adrenaline rush.
  - b. Experiment with fire and other devices (e.g., explosives, fireworks, accelerants, pressure-creating devices/bottle bombs, etc.).
  - c. Fail to think through possible consequences.
  - d. May lack a moral compass.
  - e. May have demonstrated symptoms of CD since early childhood.
  - f. Are heavily peer- and/or media- influenced (social or general); may copy what others are doing.
  - g. Enjoy attention; if punishment (that gains the attention of media or friends) is exclusively used, it may increase the risk-taking for future firesetting behaviors. Negative attention is still attention.
  - h. Have easy access to fire tools and “other” materials including candles or gas stoves. Anything that has an open flame is a potential ignition device.
  - i. Experience extreme boredom.
  - j. Are cunning and manipulative.

- k. Experience poor decision-making and lack of judgment.
- l. Use available combustibles and/or materials.
- m. May try to extinguish the fire or summon help because their motive was not for the fire (or incident) to get out of control.
- n. May fear consequences.
- o. May tell the truth if confronted in a respectful manner and presented with facts.
- p. Often embarrassed when caught (getting caught may be perceived as an insult to their intelligence as they may think they “are smarter” or more superior to others, especially authority figures).
- q. See fire as a means of exercising their superiority over others.
- r. Will lie to get out of trouble; getting away with firesetting by lying or blaming another adds to the thrill of the act.

F. Delinquent/criminal/strategic.

1. As a legal term, a “juvenile” is a person who has not attained their 18th birthday; “juvenile delinquency” is the violation of a U.S. law committed by a person prior to their 18th birthday which would have been a crime if committed by an adult.
2. The term “delinquent child” rather than “criminal” began its development with the creation of the first separate juvenile courts, owing in large part to the development of the philosophy of “parens patriae.” Under this philosophy, juvenile criminal behavior is seen as a sign of a lack of parental care and control; this doctrine holds that the state has a responsibility to look after the well-being of children and to assume the role of parent if necessary.
3. As previously mentioned, the role of family is seen as pivotal with these youths, so much so that courts see family relationships as being preventive toward delinquency and criminal behaviors.
4. An individual becomes delinquent when they perceive the criminal activities to be more favorable than unfavorable, i.e., there is benefit to them when they commit a crime.

5. The belief that criminality is not only learned but learned through interactions with others is a common motif through many theories or schools of thought. This means there is potential for one to respond favorably to intervention and be rehabilitated.
6. The thought is that if these firesetting youths can learn criminal behaviors as they strategically plan their fires, they can also learn to make better choices and thereby interrupt the firesetting behaviors. If we can figure out how setting these fires provides validation or satisfaction and direct them to more positive strategies to achieve the same or similar validation or satisfaction, behavior change is possible.
7. Characteristics of delinquent/ criminal/strategic:
  - a. Are distinguished by motive of willful intent to cause destruction.
  - b. May cause incidents that are spontaneous or conversely well-planned.
  - c. Typically target schools (after hours), abandoned buildings, open fields, dumpsters and abandoned structures.
  - d. Are often influenced by peer-pressure, boredom or showing off.
  - e. May be influenced by alienation from families and society.
  - f. As criminal and strategic firesetters, they may use fire as crime concealment or as retaliation for a perceived injustice. Many firesetting youth also hold the inaccurate belief that a fire will destroy all evidence, so the fire may be planned to conceal another incident or criminal act that has been carried out.
  - g. May have a troubling behavioral history.
  - h. May have low self-esteem.
  - i. May use accelerants with multiple points of origin.
  - j. May fail to experience guilt or show remorse for the fire they set.
  - k. If left unchecked, have great potential for ascending to violent crimes.
8. The unique characteristic of this typology is the planned and willful intent to cause damage or harm.

9. Their firesetting is purposeful and destructive, strategic and often retaliatory for an injustice that may be real or perceived; that injustice may be to an individual, an organization (school or government) or society.
  10. A revenge-motivated fire may be a strategic and well-planned, isolated event or may be spontaneous and the commencing of serial firesetting, i.e., future arson.
- G. Severely disturbed/cognitively impaired/thought-disordered typology.
1. This typology has multiple underlying cognitive, behavioral and mental health conditions contributing to the child's behavior.
  2. It can be summed up as a rule that those who set fires within this typology are individuals who are seeking to return to an emotional equilibrium state after going through what they perceive as intense emotional unpleasantness (Williams, 2013).
  3. Pathological firesetting is very disconcerting because the perpetrator uses fire as a means for receiving gratification without regard to others.
  4. They tend to have symptoms of emotional dysfunction and a lack of interpersonal relationships with others.
  5. As such, as they age, they do not possess positive coping mechanisms when dealing with stress and have very poor decision-making patterns. Firesetting can become a coping mechanism used to provide relief from anxiety, stress, anger, aggression or tension.
  6. This typology may self-report to experiencing hallucinations, delusions or other symptoms of schizophrenia.
  7. Characteristics of severely disturbed/ cognitively impaired/thought-disordered:
    - a. Left unaddressed, youth firesetting behaviors can transcend into a pathology of continuing fire starts or arson.
    - b. These youths can ultimately set hundreds of fires.
    - c. They may utilize fire to exact aggression on an innocent victim.
    - d. They likely have a long history of dysfunction, with problems in most aspects of life (home, school, difficulty establishing or maintaining relationships, interaction with law enforcement or juvenile justice).

- e. They self-report having no friends, poor school performance, being chronic liars, highly impulsive, destructive to property (in addition to fires), and extremely angry and frustrated.
  - f. Firesetting may begin at an early age (e.g., 2 to 5 years old). Youths evolve into this category through the other typologies; early intervention is key.
  - g. There is a need to discern a planned act versus spontaneous act.
  - h. They may have a high IQ but a long history of disorders.
  - i. Fires often have distinct patterns and may be ritualistic.
  - j. They deny or lie about their involvement.
  - k. They believe they are smarter than authorities (fire, police, school staff, parents/caregivers).
  - l. They may document or record their fires. Collecting souvenirs from the fire scene or related newspaper articles may be their documentation.
  - m. They may interject themselves into investigation. Arsonist and serial murderer Jeffrey Dahmer did this. It can give them a “hero” experience; they were able to figure out the fire cause.
  - n. May have a history of abuse.
  - o. Parents/family may also have history of behavioral and mental health disorders, substance abuse, and/or involvement with law enforcement.
8. It is important to note that while physical, psychological, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse are by no means excuses for firesetting behaviors, youths who exhibit these characteristics in this typology often self-profess to seeking reduction in stress and anxiety that may be the result of said actions perpetrated against them.
9. Conducting screenings and gleaning the information that can lead to the identification of a typology is essential and will guide you in how best to help the child. We will discuss this further in Unit 3.
10. The youth with this typology might also be a sexual offender and/or have other criminal offenses.

11. Specifically, in their mindset, setting fires provides them some semblance of peace and relaxation. From an intervention perspective, it is necessary to have them identify the feelings associated with the firesetting. This may be in conjunction with the behavioral and mental health aspect of intervention.

H. Continuum of risk and recidivism.

1. While firesetting behaviors occur for many reasons as discussed, it is important to understand that social environments, culture, cognitive ability, social media and many other contributing factors may come into play with the youth with whom we work.
2. Recall earlier discussions on “shared risks and protective factors.” Essentially, the more risks and fewer protective factors or unmet needs for the youth, the higher likelihood for repeat behavior. Shared risks should be reduced while also increasing protective factors.
3. If left unaddressed, firesetting behavior has the potential to manifest into other aggressive or criminal activities.
4. That is not to say that a child whose motivation for starting fires is out of curiosity will escalate into setting fires out of revenge or delinquency, but rather the risk associated with their activities increases as their firesetting activities continue.
5. For this reason, intervention is critical to interrupting these behaviors and the risks associated with them.



## ACTIVITY 2.2

### Classifying Typologies of Youth Firesetting

#### Purpose

Discuss the possible classification of the youth firesetting into one of the typologies and identify potential contributing factors or motivations given three case studies.

#### Directions

##### Part 1

1. The class will view the 12-minute video “In Their Own Words.” The purpose of viewing the video is to gain an understanding of the many factors that may influence youth firesetting behaviors.
2. Upon completion of the video, you will work in your table group to answer the following questions:
  - a. What typology of firesetting would you assign to Domingo and why?
    - Curiosity/experimentation.
    - Crisis/trouble/cry-for-help.
    - Thrill-seeking/risk-taking.
    - Delinquent/criminal/strategic.
    - Pathological.
  - b. What typology of firesetting would you assign to Amy and why?
    - Curiosity/experimentation.
    - Crisis/trouble/cry-for-help.
    - Thrill-seeking/risk-taking.
    - Delinquent/criminal/strategic.
    - Pathological.

- c. What typology of firesetting would you assign to Jason and why?
  - Curiosity/experimentation.
  - Crisis/trouble/cry-for-help.
  - Thrill-seeking/risk-taking.
  - Delinquent/criminal/strategic.
  - Pathological.
3. In your table group, you will reach a consensus on a typology for each of the firesetting youths and justify why you placed them into that typology. If typologies overlap, provide explanation.
  - a. Why is it sometimes complicated to understand the motives behind youth firesetting?
  - b. What facts must be taken into consideration when categorizing or typing firesetting youth?
4. You will have 20 minutes for this discussion.

## **Part 2**

1. Read the three case study profiles (Amy, Domingo and Jason) found in your SM.
2. In your table groups, discuss if any of your group members would change their opinion on the typology they selected for each youth.
3. Each group will present a summary of what you discussed to the class.
4. You will have 10 minutes for this this part.

## **Part 3**

The class will view the nine-minute video “Four Years After.” In this video, you will see how the lives of Amy, Domingo and Jason have changed since “In Their Own Words.”

## ACTIVITY 2.2 (cont'd)

### Classifying Typologies of Youth Firesetting

#### Domingo's profile

**Background:** Domingo is 17 years old and is a senior in high school. He lives with his parents and younger sister. When Domingo was 8 years old, he found an M-100 in his older brother's room. He lit it. The M-100 exploded, seriously injuring Domingo. Over the next two years, he underwent a series of surgeries on his hands and arms. By working daily for three months with a physical therapist, Domingo regained some of the strength in his hands. However, he is still unable to use his left hand to grip objects or hold things securely.

**Dealing with it:** Feeling angry at himself for the mistake he made, Domingo suffered from periods of depression following his injury. His parents became concerned as Domingo lost interest in all the things he used to enjoy. He became increasingly withdrawn, and by the time he was 13, Domingo no longer participated in school events or wanted to spend time with his old friends. He was angry most of the time. Then, in the summer before he entered high school, Domingo committed a series of thefts. He was apprehended by a police officer and was required to participate in weekly counseling sessions as part of his court-ordered probation. Domingo was defiant and unwilling to talk to counselors. Eventually, with the help of one counselor in particular, Domingo came to deal with his anger. Over time, he has become more active in school again, and he says that today he accepts himself more than he did before.

**Looking ahead:** His mother attributes Domingo's more positive outlook to the fact that he was apprehended before things "became too serious." She is proud that Domingo has become a counselor at the burn camp he attended the summer of his injury. Domingo agrees that the worst is over, and he is planning to attend college next year and wants to major in sports journalism.

#### Amy's profile

**Background:** Amy is 16 years old. She is a sophomore in high school. Amy was close to her mother, so it was a very difficult period for Amy when her mother died from breast cancer.

Amy's father and mother were divorced shortly after she was born, and her father relocated to another state. After her mother's death, Amy lived with her aunt (her mother's sister) until she was 12. It was during this time that Amy began setting small fires, mostly around the house. One of the fires severely damaged the garage. Amy's aunt, frightened and unable to deal with the firesetting, found out where Amy's father was living and put her on a bus to go live with him. That was four years ago.

Living with her father has been difficult for Amy. He has two other children, 7 and 5 years old, who stay with him on the weekends (their mother and Amy's father are separated). Amy often feels left out.

Amy's favorite thing to do is design clothes, and her dream is to become a fashion designer. She argues with her father because he sees no future in Amy's dream. He wants her to become something more "realistic," like a nurse.

**Firesetting:** Amy hadn't set a fire since she was 12. But last year, after a big argument with her father, Amy set a fire behind the apartment building where she lives. She doesn't know why, really. She feels maybe she was just depressed about the way things were going at home. The fire damaged three units. Amy was caught by a neighbor and turned in to the police — a very scary experience of going to court, being treated like a criminal, spending 30 days in a juvenile detention center and having everyone at school know about it.

The court ordered Amy to repay \$11,000 in damages to the landlord at \$150 per month (she'll have it all paid back by the time she is 22 years old). If Amy doesn't pay as ordered by the court, her father will be held responsible. He is not happy about that prospect, so he's making sure Amy earns enough at her job to stay current with the payments. Amy is trying to be responsible.

Amy's job (with a graphic design firm) is the one bright spot in her life because she can see that it is leading her closer to her goal of fashion design. Amy's counselor at school helped her get the job, and she is very encouraging and supportive. Amy works at the design firm after school and on Saturdays. She is paid \$7.00 per hour, and she works 18 hours each week. Amy's weekly take home pay is \$78.42, so about half of her money goes to repay the damage resulting from the fire.

Amy's outlook: Amy's relationship with her father is still strained, but she hopes that eventually things will work out. Both of them are working at it. Amy's been in counseling for the last year, and it's helped her understand how her frustrations at home led her to set fires. She feels pretty confident she won't do it again.

### Jason's profile

**Background:** Jason is 14 years old, and he lives with his foster parents. When he was 5, his biological parents were divorced. Jason lost track of his father and he stayed with his mother until he was 10. By then, Jason had set 27 fires, and his mother felt Jason needed more help than she could give him (she was also caring for Jason's two half-sisters). As a result, Jason has been living with his foster parents for the past four years. They've tried to give him guidance, but he's been pretty wild and hard to control, skipping school, sometimes not coming home for a day or two, etc.

Until Jason was arrested, he saw himself as pretty tough and able to take care of himself. Now, he is beginning to see all the hassles he's created for himself and his family. Jason alternates between being angry at having been arrested and trying to take some responsibility for his actions. He's put his foster parents through a lot, and he regrets that.

**Friends:** Some of Jason's friends have been arrested more than once, and most of them are older than Jason. Part of his probation is that he is not permitted to hang out with his old friends. Jason sees this as unfair, but at the same time, he knows that they are probably headed for some serious jail terms, so it's probably a good thing that he's not involved with them now.

**Firesetting history:** Jason has set dozens of fires, dating back to the first one in his backyard at age 6. The last fire (which was the one he was arrested for) was set at school, late at night. It was a storage unit, and it caused \$35,000 in damage. Jason's not sure why he set the fire, but it was exciting to see the flames shooting in the air. A teacher saw Jason leaving the scene, and the police arrested him two hours later.

**Current legal status:** Because he had set so many previous fires, Jason feels that he was made an example. He was convicted of a felony and served two months in jail. That was five months ago. He was also ordered to serve 300 hours of community service at a youth center for disabled kids. Actually, Jason likes this work, and he hopes to continue in a paid position when the community service is completed. This depends on whether Jason's supervisor will recommend him to the head administrator when Jason's service is completed.

**Plans for the future:** Jason had planned to go into the Army after school, but with the felony conviction, he can't serve in the Armed Forces. Actually, the first thing he has to do is repay the \$35,000 in damage caused by the fire. Jason figures that will take four years. After that, he's not sure what he'll be doing.

This page intentionally left blank.

**V. ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND TRAUMA**

A. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma.

What is an ACE?

Slide 2-23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**VIDEO PRESENTATION**

“HOW CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AFFECTS HEALTH ACROSS A LIFETIME”

[https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine\\_burke\\_harris\\_how\\_childhood\\_trauma\\_affects\\_health\\_across\\_a\\_lifetime?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime?language=en)

Slide 2-24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND TRAUMA**

- Examples of ACEs:
  - Experiencing violence, abuse or neglect.
  - Witnessing violence in the home or community.
  - Having a family member attempt or die by suicide.

Slide 2-25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1. Over the past two decades, much research and understanding has evolved on ACEs. ACEs are potentially traumatic adverse events and environment aspects impacting the safety, stability and bonding that should occur during childhood. For example:
  - a. Experiencing violence, abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect.
  - b. Witnessing violence in the home or community.
  - c. Having a family member attempt or die by suicide.

**ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND TRAUMA (cont'd)**

- Substance misuse.
- Parent/caregiver mental health illness.
- Instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison.

Slide 2-26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- d. Substance misuse.
- e. Parent/caregiver behavioral and mental health illness.
- f. Instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison.

**ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND TRAUMA (cont'd)**

- Long-term physical and mental impacts of ACEs:
  - Increased risk-taking and associated risk of injury.
  - Alcoholism and drug use.
  - Depression and anxiety.
  - Involvement in sex trafficking.

Slide 2-27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



2. ACEs have been proven to have multiple long-term negative physical, behavioral and mental effects, including:
  - a. Increased risk-taking and associated risk of injury.
  - b. Alcoholism and drug use.
  - c. Depression.
  - d. Anxiety.
  - e. Involvement in sex trafficking.

**ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND TRAUMA (cont'd)**

– Wide range of chronic diseases and leading causes of death such as cancer, diabetes, obesity, heart disease and suicide.

Slide 2-28

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- f. A wide range of chronic diseases and leading causes of death such as cancer, diabetes, obesity, heart disease and suicide.
3. The toxic stress associated with ACEs can negatively impact child brain development and contribute to issues with attention, decision-making, learning, stress response and forming healthy relationships (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2021).
4. ACEs can be major underlying issues that contribute to youth firesetting behaviors.
5. The more ACEs that an individual has, the more likely that they will experience these harmful lifelong effects. Unfortunately, ACEs are common in the U.S.
6. Approximately 61% of adults surveyed reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACE; nearly one in six reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs (CDC, 2021).

7. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), more than two-thirds of children report at least one traumatic event by age 16 (2020).
  8. In the past year, at least one in seven children have experienced child abuse and/or neglect, and this is likely an underestimate (CDC, 2021).
  9. This widespread prevalence and impact of ACEs highlights two other important aspects in your youth firesetting intervention work:
    - a. You (and your colleagues doing this work) must acknowledge and have self-awareness on your own background and experiences. Be cognizant of the potential for secondary trauma and/or re-traumatization in the professionals working with the youth/families. In short, watch out for you and your colleagues as you can't help the youth you're trying to serve if you are struggling yourself.
    - b. Understanding the presence and impact of ACEs further underlines the importance of eliminating scare tactics from your youth firesetting prevention and intervention work. Not only is it harmful (it truly is the equivalent of adults bullying children), but it can exacerbate the underlying trauma and/or increase firesetting and other unwanted behaviors.
  10. Appendix E: What Are ACEs? And How Do They Relate to Toxic Stress? contains a helpful infographic for future use/ reference.
- B. Helping to mitigate the impact of ACEs.
1. Being knowledgeable about ACEs and incorporating “trauma-informed care” approaches in your programs and interactions with youths is the first step.
  2. Youths must feel safety, value, connection, trust and transparency, and be empowered to make choices!
  3. Research shows that ACEs can be prevented, and our work in youth firesetting prevention and intervention directly assists with that. The long-term impact of ACEs can also be mitigated through specific strategies.
  4. Building resiliency and having a stable and committed relationship with a caring and supportive parent, caregiver and/or other adult in their life have been proven as essential.

5. Each of us involved in youth and community work have the potential to make a difference, simply by showing respect and caring for the children that we serve.

---

- How can ACEs influence children negatively?
- How can ACEs influence firesetting behaviors?

Slide 2-29

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What societal trends do we see regarding childhood experiences and behaviors, and what should we be thinking about for the future?

Slide 2-30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How might we be a caring and supportive adult in a youth's life without crossing emotional boundaries or lines?

Slide 2-31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

In the context of youth firesetting prevention and intervention, how do we prevent compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma in ourselves and colleagues?

Slide 2-32

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**VI. SIMPLE VERSUS COMPLEX FIRESETTING BEHAVIOR**

A. Introduction.

1. This section differentiates “simple” firesetting behaviors and “complex” firesetting behaviors to provide context for the specific typologies associated with these classifications.
2. We will discuss simple and complex firesetting behaviors and their associated intervention strategies in Unit 3.
3. Youth firesetting can have tragic and costly consequences. Interrupting the behaviors is key to limiting the destructive activities. While there currently is not a universally accepted single model of classification or definitive understanding of youths involved in firesetting behaviors, the incidence of firesetting and how intervention occurs can be categorized into two basic classifications: simple firesetting behaviors and complex firesetting behaviors.
4. Thinking about the youth firesetting cases you encounter in this simplified way can help you “triage” how best to help the youth.

## SIMPLE VERSUS COMPLEX FIRESSETTING BEHAVIOR

- Simple firesetting behavior:
  - Youth modeling behaviors from adults or those they look up to in their lives.

Slide 2-33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### B. Simple firesetting.

1. Simple firesetting behaviors often result from children modeling behaviors by those they look up to in their lives: caregivers, parental figures, older siblings or peers.
2. Accessibility may be a prevalent trait when there are readily available matches, lighters and other ignition sources in the home.
3. A common characteristic of all typologies is one of failure to create and maintain a safe environment by adult caregivers. When children are age-appropriately taught about both the benefits with proper safety measures as well as the dangers or consequences of what can happen with fire, they will have a better understanding of responsibly utilizing fire (i.e., when it can be safely and responsibly used as a tool versus when/how not to use it).
4. Intervention through education to all persons in a home environment (especially parents or caregiving adults) can rectify this situation and interrupt these dangerous firesetting behaviors.

## SIMPLE VERSUS COMPLEX FIRESSETTING BEHAVIOR (cont'd)

- Simple firesetting behaviors can escalate to complex firesetting behaviors without appropriate and effective intervention.

Slide 2-34

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

C. Complex firesetting.

1. Complex firesetting behaviors are not as easily rectified.
2. Complex firesetting behaviors can escalate from simple firesetting behavior if there is not appropriate and effective intervention provided after the initial or early fire sets.

**SIMPLE VERSUS COMPLEX FIRESETTING BEHAVIOR (cont'd)**

- Complex firesetting behavior:
  - Occurs when there are multiple underlying issues or unmet needs.
  - Youth utilize fire to cope with stressful situations, gain attention, react to abusive situations, etc.

Approximate end point of Day 1.

Students read Appendix E: What Are ACEs? And How Do They Relate to Toxic Stress?

Slide 2-35

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Complex firesetting behaviors also occur when there are multiple underlying issues and/or unmet needs; in other words, there are very likely multiple contributing factors and motivations to the firesetting.
4. Youth may utilize fire as a means to:
  - a. Cope with stressful situations.
  - b. Gain attention.
  - c. React to abusive or violent situations.
  - d. Retaliate against a perceived injustice.
  - e. Conceal other criminal behavior or other reason.
5. Thus, it is important for youth firesetting interventionists to attempt to identify the motivation(s) behind the firesetting behaviors (recognizing that motivations may change as one matures and goes through more life experiences), as well as cognitive limitations, disorders or as other challenges present.
6. Identify the presence of comorbidities or co-occurring disorders.

- 7. In short, due to the multiple underlying contributing factors and motivations associated with complex firesetting behaviors, intervention with these youths must incorporate behavioral and mental health, education, social services and perhaps juvenile justice.

**VII. UNDERLYING DIFFICULTIES IN FIRESETTING BEHAVIOR**

**UNDERLYING DIFFICULTIES IN FIRESETTING BEHAVIOR**

- Youths can have underlying difficulties with:
  - Social and interpersonal skills.
  - Communication.
  - Impulse control.
  - Behavioral issues.

Slide 2-36

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. Youths who misuse fire may have underlying difficulties with:
  1. Social and interpersonal skills.
  2. Communication.
  3. Impulse control.
  4. Behavioral issues.

**UNDERLYING DIFFICULTIES IN FIRESETTING BEHAVIOR (cont'd)**

- Intellectual or developmental disabilities.
- Learning disabilities.
- Impaired cognitive functioning.
- Mental health conditions.

Slide 2-37

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. Intellectual or developmental disabilities.
6. Learning disabilities.
7. Impaired cognitive functioning.
8. Behavioral and mental health conditions (refer to Appendix A: Commonly Seen Mental and Behavioral Health Conditions in Firesetting Youth).

In the context of youth firesetting intervention, what are the potential benefits of understanding the behavioral and mental health conditions that can impact a youth?

Slide 2-38

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- B. This does not mean that every firesetting youth has these mental/behavioral health conditions or challenges, but the majority of children (and their adult caregivers) will benefit from learning social-emotional, self-regulation and other positive life-coping skills.

**UNDERLYING DIFFICULTIES IN FIRESETTING BEHAVIOR (cont'd)**

- Youths may benefit from:
  - Counseling.
  - Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).
  - Anger management.
  - Impulse control.
  - Social skills training.

Slide 2-39

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- C. Behavioral and mental health evaluation and treatment may be an essential part of helping a child involved in firesetting. Youths may benefit from:

1. Counseling.



2. CBT.
  3. Anger management.
  4. Impulse control.
  5. Social skills training.
- D. As previously discussed in Unit 1: A Strategic Approach to Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention, specific data and research findings must be interpreted within the context of the population that was studied (e.g., acute care hospitals, residential inpatient treatment centers, outpatient clinics, juvenile justice and diversion programs, community-based fire safety education, state versus local programs, etc.).
- E. Your views, beliefs and biases toward firesetting youths are formed and framed by your own personal and in-field experiences. The same is true for the youths, families and colleagues (internal and external to your organization) that you are working with.
- F. Hence, it is essential to “stay grounded” and current in what research evidence shows so that we are practicing these findings and approaches in the field, i.e., giving these youths the best that we have to help them.
- G. To be most successful in this work, we must prepare ourselves for the different youths that we will encounter. What would you do and how could you prepare yourself to react positively to a child who is homeless, has poor hygiene, smells like feces and is wearing dirty shredded clothes; is transgender or identifies as another gender; is in a gang; has been violent to others; has multiple behavioral and mental health conditions or disabilities; etc.?
- H. We often face barriers due to the biases of youths and their families such as negative past experiences with agencies or authorities, interventionist gender (as they may not want a woman versus a man working with them), perceived judgment, threat of being removed from the home or witnessing arrest of a caregiver that did not follow trauma-informed care approaches, interventionist not looking like them and/or that they could not possibly understand their situation, and more.
- I. While the interventionist cannot control or change what a youth/family thinks, being aware and sensitive to these potential biases and beliefs can help the situation and can help to better understand why the youth/family might be resistant to intervention and seeking/following up on help.
- J. Generalized findings in the body of diverse research presented in “A Brief History of Research on Youth Firesetting” include:
1. Greater involvement of boys versus girls (approximately 85% to 90% versus approximately 10% to 15%).

2. Average age: 10 to 15 years old.
3. Link to abuse/maltreatment and ACEs.
4. Propensity for mental and/or behavioral health conditions, which may or may not yet be diagnosed (e.g., attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) occurs at a higher rate in firesetting youths than compared to the general youth population).
5. May smoke or have polysubstance use; inadequate supervision and/or inconsistent discipline.
6. Single-parent home or alternative caregivers.

### **VIII. UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS**

- A. The goal of this section and discussion is not to turn everyone into a mental health clinician!
- B. Rather, every professional who works with youths, no matter what their discipline or expertise, will at some point be working with a child that has special needs or underlying mental and behavioral health conditions, whether that child has been officially diagnosed or not.
- C. All too often, the firesetting incident might be the first time that underlying mental or behavioral health conditions surface and are acknowledged by adults in the child's life.
- D. This provides a wonderful opportunity for you to be the eyes and ears in helping to recognize that there may be underlying issues contributing to the child's youth firesetting behavior.
- E. The firesetting behavior may force involvement of professionals such as the fire service, medical team, counselors or school personnel to directly interact more closely with a child.
- F. If you work or interact with youths (in your professional or personal life), you absolutely will be encountering these conditions and behaviors.
- G. In full transparency, working with youths and family members with behavioral or mental health conditions is not always easy and can at times be very frustrating or exhausting.

- H. Acknowledging this and arming yourself with knowledge about various conditions can assist in helping you do the best work that you can with them.
- I. Most importantly, if you treat the youth and family with patience, tolerance and understanding, it will serve them and yourself well!
- J. The misuse of fire by youths cannot always be attributed to experimentation or curiosity. There are times when it is motivated by other things in a child's life that may not be easily recognized by caregivers and/or interventionists.
- K. Remember, a youth can have underlying difficulties with:
1. Social and interpersonal skills.
  2. Communication.
  3. Impulse control.
  4. Learning disabilities.
  5. Intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs).
  6. Behavioral disorders.
- L. In general, these conditions and issues have the potential to impact a child's ability to regulate their emotions and behaviors, learning, and decision-making processes.
- M. Mental and behavioral health conditions do not cause youth firesetting, but the presence of them can contribute to youth firesetting behavior.
- N. For example, ADHD can influence poor decision-making and spontaneous actions in which a child does not consider potential dangers or consequences (e.g., pouring gasoline on a toy car and lighting it to launch it like a rocket ship).
- O. More detailed information about these conditions and the impact that they can have on youth firesetting behaviors is in Appendix C: Sean's Story: My Life Torn Apart by Firesetting.
- P. **Important:** If there is ever a time that you or a family member think a youth is a threat to themselves or someone else, immediately call your local emergency number (e.g., 911) or take them to a hospital emergency room.
- Q. Know that multiple crisis, tip and help hotlines are available. Consider posting these resources on your organization's website, including them in materials given in your youth firesetting intervention program and sharing them with your colleagues.

- R. Doing the youth and community work that we all do means that we will encounter someone who could benefit from this help.
- S. Behavioral and mental health evaluation, treatment and/or counseling may be an essential part of helping a child and family.

## ACTIVITY 2.3

### Strategies for Supporting Behavioral and Mental Health Needs

#### Purpose



Demonstrate effective understanding and interaction with youths with mental and behavioral health conditions.

#### Directions

1. This is an instructor-led class activity.
2. The focus of this activity will be on some of the most common special-need conditions that youth firesetting intervention specialists will encounter when working with firesetting youths, their families and caregivers:
  - a. ADHD: Symptoms of ADHD in children and adults can include the inability to think ahead, frequent interrupting (of themselves and others), impulsivity, fidgeting, difficulty processing steps in a sequence and being easily distracted.
  - b. Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs): The DSM-5 characterizes ASD as “persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, including deficits in social reciprocity, nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction, and skills in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).
  - c. Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and CD: ODD and CD are often diagnosed in childhood following behavior that is aggressive, argumentative, hostile, disrespectful to authority and involves engaging in dangerous activities such as lying and stealing.
    - ODD and CD can evolve into antisocial personality disorder as adults. Most of the prison population in the U.S. has been diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder.
3. The class will view a video describing or depicting the condition or disorder.
4. After reviewing and reflecting on each video, discuss ideas about how to work with a youth who has this condition. The instructor will pose the following questions after each video:
  - a. How could this condition or disorder impact or exacerbate youth firesetting behaviors?

- b. How can you leverage the parents' or caregivers' knowledge of the condition or disorder so you can have a meaningful and productive interaction with the youth?  
  
Keep in mind that some conditions or disorders are hereditary, and the parents may also be affected by the condition or disorder.
  - c. What questions might you want to ask the parents/caregivers prior to working with the youth?
  - d. What additional information would be helpful to know? What specific strategies might you use? What might be "triggers" for the youth?
  - e. What types of calming or coping approaches or tools are you aware of that have worked well to help those experiencing the condition or disorder we are discussing (e.g., squeeze balls, sensory or fidget toys, weighted blankets, breathing exercises, etc.)?
  - f. Does anyone in the class have experience working with someone with this condition or disorder and is willing to share helpful tips?
5. The instructor will allow 10 minutes for discussion after each of the four videos.

IX. SUMMARY

 **FEMA**   
U.S. Fire Administration

## SUMMARY

- In this unit, we distinguished myths from facts related to youth firesetting.
- We discussed the motivations and typologies of youths who set fires.

Slide 2-46

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

 **FEMA**   
U.S. Fire Administration

## SUMMARY (cont'd)

- We explained how ACEs and trauma can influence youth firesetting behaviors.
- We explained the impacts of the various behavioral and mental health conditions on youth firesetting.

Slide 2-47

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

 **FEMA**   
U.S. Fire Administration

## SUMMARY (cont'd)

- We then classified youth firesetting into typologies and justified their selections.

Slide 2-48

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

This page intentionally left blank.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **COMMONLY SEEN MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS IN FIRESETTING YOUTH**

This page intentionally left blank.

**COMMONLY SEEN MENTAL and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS IN FIRESETTING YOUTH**

Youth may have more than one behavioral/mental health condition with overlapping symptoms. See the full text Appendix for more details on each condition, symptoms, and potential treatments. In general, treatments for all conditions may include: Therapy, medication, or a combination of medication and therapy.

Additional and updated information may be obtained from these vetted resources:

- National Institute of Mental Health: [nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
- NIH National Institute of Child Health and Human Development: Health topics A – Z: <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics>
- American Psychological Association: [apa.org](http://apa.org)
- American Psychiatric Association: [psychiatry.org](http://psychiatry.org)
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: [aacap.org](http://aacap.org)
- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD): [aaidd.org](http://aaidd.org)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: [samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov)
- Centers for Disease Control Children’s Mental Health: <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/index.html>
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5): [www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm](http://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm)

Mental & Behavioral Health Condition	Signs, Symptoms, & Behaviors Displayed	Website	Video
<b>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)</b>	Easily distracted; has trouble following instructions; switches quickly or “ bounces” from one activity to another; fidgets, moves, rocks, squirms, or can’ t sit still; talks nonstop and interrupts people; blurts out inappropriate comments; impatient; struggles with controlling their emotions.	<a href="https://www.apa.org/topics/adhd">https://www.apa.org/topics/adhd</a> <a href="https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity_disorder-adhd/index.shtml">https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity_disorder-adhd/index.shtml</a>	For example: <a href="https://youtu.be/NL483G4xKu0">https://youtu.be/NL483G4xKu0</a>
<b>Depression</b>	Can be challenging for caregivers to recognize in youth. Prolonged irritability, sadness, or negative mood; Hopelessness; Feelings of guilt or worthlessness; Inability to cope with problems and daily activities; Dramatic changes in	<a href="https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml">https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml</a> <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/depression.html">https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/depression.html</a>	

		<p>sleeping or eating habits; Fatigue, lethargy, excessive sleeping or insomnia; Excessive complaints of physical ailments; Social withdrawal from friends; Loss of interest in activities they previously enjoyed; Changes in school performance; Acts of self-harm, such as cutting or hair pulling; Thoughts of suicide or death; Smoking (cigarettes, marijuana, or synthetic compounds); Use of substances (alcohol, illicit drugs, misuse of prescription and/or over-the-counter medications).</p>	
	<p><a href="https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/anxiety-disorders/what-are-anxiety-disorders">https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/anxiety-disorders/what-are-anxiety-disorders</a></p>	<p>Fear, intense anxiety, become incapable of performing different tasks, racing pulse or pounding heart, chest pain, nausea, impending doom, sweating, shaking, insomnia or difficulty sleeping, changes in appetite, Persons with anxiety disorders frequently have other associated conditions, such as substance use/misuse from “self-medicating” or calming.</p>	<p><b>Anxiety Disorders</b> (including Panic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Social Phobia, Generalized Anxiety Disorder)</p>
	<p><a href="https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml">https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml</a></p>	<p>A specific type of anxiety resulting from a real, perceived, or observed danger, traumatic event, or threat of harm to themselves or others. This trauma injures and changes parts of the brain (e.g., amygdala, hippocampus, prefrontal cortex, mid-anterior cingulate cortex) that can have lasting impacts on brain processing and storage. The youth may be fearful; hypervigilant; startle easily to certain voices, noises, or images; have</p>	<p><b>Acute Stress Injury “Disorder” and Post-Traumatic Stress Injury “Disorder”</b></p>

		<p>flashbacks of the event during the day and/or nightmares; increased heart rate and blood pressure; socially withdraw or become detached; feel emotionally numb; lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed; act out; or develop destructive behaviors.</p>	
<p><b>Autism Spectrum Disorder</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asc/index.shtml">https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asc/index.shtml</a></p>	<p>Symptoms hugely vary from person to person, ranging from mild to severe; some children function well with only mild symptoms observed (often referred to as Asperger Syndrome), while others have severe impairments that require rather intensive care. Poor to no eye contact; May or may not be able to verbally communicate; Does not react or has unexpected reactions to interactions or typical “social cues” with other people; Prefer to be alone; Show repetitive behaviors like rocking, hitting head, or flapping arms; May not like or become irritable when touched; May become overly focused or “obsessed” on specific items (such as fire); May have verbal or physical outbursts especially in a strange, new, or stimulating environment.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml">https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml</a></p>
<p><b>Bipolar Disorder</b> (previously called Manic-Depression)</p>	<p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEb4lxTq_E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEb4lxTq_E</a></p>	<p>Shifts in mood and behaviors from one “extreme” of sadness/depression to overexcited/manic. Mania: High; elated; “wired or jumpy”; not sleeping; constant motion; being overexcited and agitated or irritable; talk very fast; participating in risk-taking and pleasure-seeking activities. Depression: See the symptoms listed above for Depression. Some people enjoy the</p>	

WHO SETS FIRES AND WHY?

		<p>“ high” and tireless activity that accompany mania, which can make the depressive state more difficult to endure; watch for signs of suicide thoughts and actions.</p>	
<p><b>Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder (CD)</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-With-Oppositional-Defiant-Disorder-072.aspx">https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-With-Oppositional-Defiant-Disorder-072.aspx</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Conduct-Disorder-033.aspx">https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Conduct-Disorder-033.aspx</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.cdc.gov/childrementalhealth/behavior.html#defiant">https://www.cdc.gov/childrementalhealth/behavior.html#defiant</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.cdc.gov/childrementalhealth/behavior.html#conduct">https://www.cdc.gov/childrementalhealth/behavior.html#conduct</a></p>	<p>Defiance, disobedience, hostility (especially with parents, adults, and authority figures), refusal to follow rules or requests, frequent arguing or fighting, blaming others for misbehavior, being spiteful, and easily annoyed or angered.</p>	
<p><b>Borderline Personality Disorder</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/borderline-personality-disorder/index.shtml">https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/borderline-personality-disorder/index.shtml</a></p>	<p>Pervasive instability in moods, relationships, self-image, and behaviors. Moods and actions may abruptly and intensely change. May demonstrate anger; extreme attachment or “ clinging” followed by sudden withdrawal to others; impulsive behaviors; self-harm; frequently have difficulty maintaining jobs and relationships; substance use.</p>	
<p><b>Schizophrenia</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/index.shtml">https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/index.shtml</a></p>	<p>Paranoia and delusions -- may believe others are reading their minds, controlling their thoughts, or planning to harm them; hallucinations -- hear voices or see people that other people do not; may not be able to discern what is reality; may be withdrawn or agitated and unable to focus attention.</p>	

<p><b>Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder</b></p>	<p>A fairly new diagnosis that was first included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 2013.</p> <p>Severe temper outbursts (verbal or behavioral), on average, three or more times per week. Outbursts and tantrums that have been ongoing for at least 12 months. Chronically irritable or angry mood most of the day, nearly every day. Trouble functioning due to irritability in more than one place (at home, at school, and with peers).</p>	<p><a href="https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/disruptive-mood-dysregulation-disorder/index.shtml">https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/disruptive-mood-dysregulation-disorder/index.shtml</a></p>	
<p><b>Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDDs)</b></p>	<p>Intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) are disorders that are usually present at birth and that negatively affect the trajectory of the individual's physical, intellectual, and/or emotional development; also known as cognitive impairments, can cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than is typically expected. Can be caused by injury, disease, or birth defects. Youth can exhibit mild to severe limitations in speaking, walking, taking care of themselves, learning, and social skills.</p> <p>Include: Cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), premature birth, vision impairment, learning disability, fetal alcohol syndrome.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/idds/conditioninfo/default">https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/idds/conditioninfo/default</a> and <a href="https://www.aaid.org/intellectual-disability/definition">https://www.aaid.org/intellectual-disability/definition</a> and <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/ncehddd/developmentaldisabilities/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/ncehddd/developmentaldisabilities/index.html</a></p>	

<p><b>Learning Disabilities and Disorders</b></p>	<p>Learning disabilities are a group of disorders in which intelligence is not impaired, but a child's brain has difficulty receiving, processing, storing, or communicating information. Youth exhibit a gap between what is expected they would understand for their age vs. their actual performance in reading, speaking, reasoning, emotional maturity, social skills, etc. It is common to have more than 1 LD (e.g., difficulty writing and reasoning) and also have ADHD.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/learning-disorder.html">https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/learning-disorder.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/learningdisabilities">https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/learningdisabilities</a></p>	
<p><b>Abuse, Neglect, and Maltreatment (including human trafficking)</b></p>	<p>Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect (including abandonment, maltreatment, and human sex or labor trafficking) can have many lasting negative physical and mental health impacts. Child may show changes in behavior or school performance; may not receive or get delayed treatment for injuries and health issues; has learning or concentration troubles; is watchful or appears “on alert”; may be reluctant to be near a specific person; is overly passive, compliant, or withdrawn; has unexplained bruises, burns, bites, broken bones, or other injuries; acts scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn, or aggressive; withdraws or “shrinks” away from physical contact; runs away; may be consistently dirty or has extremely poor hygiene; frequently misses or skips school or scheduled appointments; talks about or displays sexual behaviors or knowledge that is beyond expected for their age.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan/">https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/focus-areas/child-abuse-neglect">https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/focus-areas/child-abuse-neglect</a></p>	



## **APPENDIX B**

### **UNDERSTANDING YOUTH AND THEIR MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSIS**

This page intentionally left blank.

## Understanding Youth and Their Mental Health Diagnosis

This handout is meant to give you an idea of what to expect when a youth is coming in with a particular diagnosis. No child will exhibit all the behaviors listed, and this is not a guaranteed way to work with every kid. Always check with the parents about the best way to work with their child; they are your best experts on the youth.

Also, when working with any youth, it is a good idea to take a few minutes to get to know them separate from the incident you are there to discuss. Give them a chance to get comfortable with you, and get to know what they like and don't like; this can be very helpful as you try to help them understand their behavior and its effect on others.

Diagnoses included are:

- Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attention deficit disorder (ADD).
- Anxiety.
- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), including autism and Asperger's.
- Bipolar disorder.
- Conduct Disorder (CD).
- Depression.
- Emotional behavioral disorder (EBD).
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD).
- Opposition defiant disorder (ODD).

The best tip for working with any child is to be flexible. You can't really predict how it will all go, and you will get better results by being able to adjust and accommodate.

## Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder

### Common behaviors

- Difficulty paying attention.
- Often unorganized or messy.
- Easily distracted by stimuli and have trouble concentrating at all times.
- Frequently shift conversations and jump topics randomly.
- Often look like they are not paying attention when they may be.
- If hyperactive or have ADHD, they fidget or squirm frequently.
- Talk excessively and will have trouble sitting through long videos.
- Often impulsive making choices.
- Blur out answers before you have finished a question; try to anticipate what you are saying.
- Interrupt frequently.
- Do not think ahead or consider consequences of actions.

### Tips for interventions

- Be specific and keep rules and discussions short.
- Have them repeat rules and consequences frequently.
- Letting them play with a fidget toy, even just a paper clip, can help them focus.
- Check to see if they are paying attention; sometimes they are not looking at you and appear to be drifting off, but they actually comprehend what you are saying.
- Get them up and moving when possible.
- Interesting visuals can be useful, but they may be likely to imitate behaviors they find exciting.

## **Anxiety**

### **Common behaviors**

- Constant worry.
- Negative thinking or pessimistic.
- Anger, tantrums and irritability are common.
- Avoiding behaviors; will be hard to get them to face you or tell you what happened.
- Perfectionism is common; it has to be just right.
- Poor concentration.
- Often complain of physical ailments: headaches, stomachaches, etc.

### **Tips for interventions**

- Avoid worst-case scenarios; they are quick to imagine the worst and fixate on it.
- Give clear, concrete answers.
- Work through different scenarios with them, but avoid them focusing too much on all the possibilities; limit speculation.
- Remind them that the best way to be safe is to stay away from fire tools.
- Do not use fear with them.
- Help them see what they have control of in various situations.

## **Autism Spectrum Disorders (Includes Asperger's)**

### **Common behaviors**

- Little to no eye contact.
- Do not respond to facial expressions or have appropriate facial expressions.
- Do not follow pointing or prompting to look at things.
- May echo or repeat things you are saying; this is common when they are seeking to understand.
- Do not start or maintain a conversation.
- Odd sensitivity to smells, sounds, lights, textures and/or touch; can be oversensitive or undersensitive.
- Repetitive behaviors are common; some are soothing and help them manage anxiety.
- Concrete thinkers and are able to work around what you say if you give them a broad guideline.
- Many have language delays or odd use of language.
- Fire can be visually soothing for these youths; good to encourage videos of fire.

### **Tips for interventions**

- Be very specific about rules and expectations.
- Do not demand eye contact or expect to see recognition on their faces.
- Having visuals for the family to use may be more useful with them, but they are likely to look at them from a different angle rather than directly like most children.
- Many youths have excellent memories; it's more about making sure they understand the rules rather than remembering them.
- If they are verbal, it is good to have them repeat rules.
- Let parents guide you on how their child learns.

## **Bipolar Disorder**

### **Common behaviors**

- Vacillate between mania and depression.
- Mania behaviors include: elevated mood, restlessness, speaking rapidly, increase in activity level, irritability and aggression.
- Depression behaviors include: trouble concentrating, loss of interest in activities and withdrawing from others.

### **Tips for interventions**

- Caution working with child in a manic state as they may get more ideas than hearing the overall message.
- Avoid using guilt as a tool to help them understand their behaviors as it can trigger the depression and will not resonate in a manic state.
- Focus on impulse control in discussion.
- Develop alternatives for managing their behaviors.

## **Conduct Disorder**

### **Common behaviors**

- Aggressive toward people and animals.
- Property destruction is common.
- Lying and stealing are common.
- Show serious violation of rules.
- Seek to create frustration in others, especially those in power or perceived power.
- Lose temper frequently.
- Argue with adults.
- Blame others for mistakes or behaviors.
- May be hostile.
- Actively refuse to follow rules or comply with requests.
- ODD is a precursor diagnosis for many of these youths.

### **Tips for interventions**

- Do not take their behavior personally.
- Stay calm and take breaks rather than react to them.
- Expect them to push back against you.
- Do not get into a power struggle.
- Do not expect to make them come around to your way of thinking.
- Avoid embarrassing them; they are prideful and will retaliate if they feel threatened.
- Work with them one-on-one or in very small groups.
- Set a structure with clear expectations and outline of process.
- Give them some control in the situation; give them a sense of power.
- Use age-appropriate materials; important to not talk down to them or show them material for a younger child.
- Avoid direct demands; asking them to complete an oath or sign a contract is not likely to work.



## **Depression**

### **Common behaviors**

- Trouble focusing or concentrating.
- Impaired thinking or negative thinking; imagine things to be very different than what reality is.
- Often shut down or act out.
- Anger is a common response from a depressed child.
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt are common.

### **Tips for interventions**

- Do not use guilt.
- Help them see the reality of their choice and not the worst case.
- Ensure they understand the rules, expectations and consequences as you explain them rather than inflating them.
- Help them to understand they are not abnormal and are able to correct their behavior.
- Reinforce positive responses frequently.

## **Emotional behavioral disorder**

This is a school term and includes a variety of youth with mental health diagnosis and behavior challenges. In each case, it is best to ask parents about how the child learns and what motivates them. Also, it is good to ask questions about how their teachers work with them or whether they work with them at home.

## **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**

### **Common behaviors**

- Hyperactive and impulsive.
- Stubborn, irritable.
- Passive, fearlessness.
- Overstimulation issues.
- Trouble organizing.
- Problems with memory.
- Difficulty with abstract concepts.
- Trouble learning from past experiences.
- Difficulty understanding cause and effect.
- Hungry for attention, talkative.
- Trouble recognizing social cues.
- Trouble generalizing behaviors.

### **Tips for interventions**

- Use same language from written rules or discussion verbally.
- Be concrete when discussing concepts; demonstrate where possible.
- Ask them to repeat rules and consequences for you.
- Do not debate or argue with them; they are looking for loopholes.
- Be absolute about rules and expectations; never generalize.
- Be clear about how behavior and consequences are connected.

## Oppositional Defiant Disorder

### Common behaviors

- Frequently lose temper.
- Argue with adults; often play people against each other.
- Actively defy or refuse to comply with rules or requests.
- Deliberately annoy people and try to agitate them.
- Blame others for mistakes and behaviors.
- Can be spiteful or resentful.
- Have an ongoing pattern of uncooperative, defiant, hostile and annoying behavior, particularly toward people of authority.

### Tips for interventions

- Reinforce them for showing flexibility or cooperation.
- Take breaks, shift focus; do not stay with any one thing too long.
- Pick your battles; do not get into power plays.
- Try to come at them from their interests.
- Ignore claims about not caring if they lose things or privileges.
- **Do not** argue with them; state facts and realistic consequences and move on.
- Do not try to take control of them or the situation; it is better to give them a sense of control.
- Show them what you like about them; focus on the positive.
- Remember they are experts at pushing buttons and getting people to react; keep your composure, and take breaks as needed.

This page intentionally left blank.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **SEAN'S STORY: MY LIFE TORN APART BY FIRESETTING**

This page intentionally left blank.

**Sean's Story: My life torn apart by firesetting**

Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Toolkit

**Mental and Behavioral Health Resources**

Fire misuse behaviors in youth cannot always be attributed to experimentation or curiosity. There are times when it is motivated by other things in a child's life that may not be easily recognized by caregivers. This handout will help you understand the emotional, behavioral, and mental health factors that can influence a youth's behavior.

The purpose of this handout is to: 1) Educate adults on the warning signs that a youth needs help; 2) Provide a basic overview of mental health conditions that may be present in firesetting youth; and 3) Find local assistance and resources. It is not meant to diagnose conditions or replace evaluation by a professionally trained clinician.

**Warning signs that a child needs help**

- Social withdrawal from friends\*
- Loss of interest in activities they previously enjoyed\*
- Hyperactivity
- Changes in school performance\*
- Poor grades, despite hard effort
- Frequent outbursts of anger
- Prolonged irritability, sadness, or negative mood\*
- Inability to cope with problems and daily activities\*
- Dramatic changes in sleeping or eating habits\*
- Intense fear of weight gain
- Excessive complaints of physical ailments\*
- Persistent disobedience or aggression
- Defiance of authority, truancy, theft, or vandalism
- Confused thinking
- Delusions or hallucinations
- Excessive anxiety, such as refusing to go to bed or school
- Persistent nightmares
- Acts of self-harm, such as cutting or hair pulling\*
- Thoughts of suicide or death\*
- Smoking (cigarettes, marijuana, or synthetic compounds)\*
- Use of substances (alcohol, illicit drugs, misuse of prescription and/or over-the-counter medications)\*

*Note: If you think a youth is a threat to themselves or someone else, immediately call your local emergency number (e.g. 911) or take them to a hospital emergency room.*

**Firesetting, mental health conditions, and treatment**

Youth who misuse fire can have underlying difficulties with social and interpersonal skills, communication, impulse control, behavioral issues, impaired cognitive functioning, learning disabilities, or mental health conditions such as:

**Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

- ADHD is one of the most common neurobehavioral disorders in children and can continue into adulthood. Youth exhibit difficulties in staying focused and paying attention. They may have issues with controlling their behavior, impulses, and verbal expressions. This can lead to risk-taking and impulsive behaviors. ADHD also includes hyperactivity (over-activity or not being able to sit still).

**Depression**

- Depression is a common but serious illness that despite popular belief affects both children and adults. Since symptoms in youth can sometimes be difficult to identify, many cases go untreated. Youth may exhibit some of the signs and symptoms indicated by \* above.

**Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder (CD)**

- Youth with ODD exhibit behaviors such as: defiance, disobedience, hostility (especially with parents, caregivers, adults, and authority figures), irritability, refusal to follow rules or requests, frequent arguing, blaming others for misbehavior, lying, being spiteful, and easily annoyed or angered.
- CD is a more severe form of ODD. Youth with CD exhibit a persistent disregard for following social norms and often violate the basic rights of others, for example: aggression or violence towards people and animals, vandalism and destruction of property, theft, lying, truancy, and other purposeful violation of rules. Hence they are often viewed as "bad" or "delinquent" youth, rather than being identified as having a mental illness.

**Abuse and Neglect**

- Child abuse and neglect are defined by state and federal statutes. Certain individuals and professionals are legally required to report suspected or known child abuse/neglect to a designated agency in their state.
- Abuse can be physical (hitting, burning, shaking, etc.), emotional (name calling, shaming, rejection, withholding love, etc.), or sexual (engaging a child in sexual acts or exposing them to inappropriate activities). Neglect is the failure of a parent or other caregiver to protect a child from harm or to provide for a child's basic needs (physical, medical, educational, or emotional). Youth can exhibit: poor self-esteem, hyperactivity, depression and/or anxiety, alcohol or substance use, developmental delays, cognitive impairments, delinquent and other risk-taking behaviors, or PTSD.



## Sean's Story: My life torn apart by firesetting

### Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Toolkit



#### Post-Traumatic Stress Injury "Disorder" (PTSD)

- PTSD is a specific type of anxiety that can develop when a person is exposed to a dangerous or traumatic event in which they or others are harmed; it can also develop if a person perceives a threat of harm to themselves or others. Youth with PTSD become fearful or stressed even when they are no longer in danger, and may: startle easily to certain voices, noises, or images; have flashbacks of the event during the day and/or nightmares; socially withdraw or become detached; feel emotionally numb; lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed; act out; or develop destructive behaviors.

#### Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

- ASD refer to a group of disorders (e.g., autism, Asperger syndrome, etc.) that include a wide range of symptoms, degrees of impairment, and levels of functioning. Hallmark signs include difficulties with social interactions, impaired communication, and repetitive behaviors. Youth may exhibit: lack of eye contact, echolalia (repeating words they hear), delayed language development, use of odd gestures or unique words to communicate, lack of recognition or response to social cues, inability to read facial expressions and other nonverbal communications, become easily agitated especially if their routine is upset, become preoccupied or fixated on certain items, and "stereotyped" or repetitive actions (flapping their hands, head or body rocking, walking in a specific pattern).

#### Learning Disabilities (LD) and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

- LD are a group of neurological disorders in which intelligence is not impaired, but a child's brain has difficulty receiving, processing, storing, or communicating information. Youth exhibit a gap between what is expected they would understand for their age vs. their actual performance in reading, speaking, reasoning, emotional maturity, social skills, etc. It is common to have more than 1 LD (e.g., difficulty writing and reasoning) and also have ADHD.
- IDDs refer to limitations in mental functioning or cognitive impairments that cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child. IDD can be caused by injury, disease, or birth defects (e.g., Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, premature birth, fetal alcohol syndrome, etc.). Youth can exhibit mild to severe limitations in speaking, walking, taking care of themselves, learning, and social skills.

#### Treatment

- For all of the above conditions, treatment focuses on reducing symptoms, changing behavior, and improving functioning. Treatment may include: education, medications, various types of psychotherapy (CBT - cognitive behavioral therapy, talk therapy, family-focused therapy, behavior therapy, etc.), interpersonal or social skills training, parent training, emotional regulation (anger management, coping skills training, stress management), or a combination of these.

#### Finding local counseling, assistance, and resources

Mental health evaluation and treatment may be an essential part of helping a child involved in firesetting. Youth may benefit from counseling, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and/or anger management, impulse control, and social skills training. Utilize the following list to find resources in your local area.

- Health Insurance or Medicaid:** If you have health insurance or Medicaid that might pay for evaluations and therapy, contact your insurance company to identify the names of local preferred providers.
- United Way:** Contact to obtain a list of local agencies that provide counseling and assistance to children/families.
- Schools:** School counselors and social workers can provide referral information on recommended local agencies or counselors.
- Community or Public Mental Health (County and State-Specific Community Assistance):** Individual counties and states may have additional youth and family assistance resources and programs available through their Departments of Human Services or Departments of Community/Public Health [www.hhs.gov/about/](http://www.hhs.gov/about/) or [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/international/relres.html](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/international/relres.html)
- Clergy:** Contact local religious centers and ask if they have staff who are trained to provide counseling.
- Universities:** Some university departments of psychiatry or psychology may offer sliding-scale fee clinics.
- To find a NACBT (National Association of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists) Certified Therapist: [www.nacbt.org/find-a-therapist/](http://www.nacbt.org/find-a-therapist/)

#### Additional Resources

- National Institute of Mental Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health: [www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml)
- Family Voices: <https://familyvoices.org/>
- U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Child Welfare Information, Systems of Care: [www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Child and Adolescent Action Center: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): [www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Child Development: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/index.html)
- Parent Training and Information Centers: [www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/)
- National Center for Learning Disabilities: [www.ncld.org](http://www.ncld.org)





## **APPENDIX D**

### **ADD AND FIRESETTING: THE CONNECTION**

This page intentionally left blank.

ADD AND FIRESETTING: THE CONNECTION

by

**Carol Rea - Retired**

Escondido Fire

Department

[carolrea@aol.com](mailto:carolrea@aol.com)

When children play with fire the results can be devastating, impacting their families and their communities as well as the children themselves. According to United States Fire Administration statistics, playing with fire is the leading cause of death for preschoolers and the second leading cause of accidental death for 5- to 14-year-old children in the United States.

In order to more effectively address this deadly problem, fire departments across the country have established juvenile firesetter intervention programs. Of the juveniles referred to these programs, higher percentages have ADD and other learning disabilities than are seen in the general population. Agencies in San Diego County, California are documenting that 20-40% of the juveniles who participate in their programs have been diagnosed with ADD or exceed the criteria described in DSM IV. Many interventionists suspect that the numbers are even higher. Why so many?

It appears that specific character traits common among kids with ADD and other learning disabilities can contribute to a child's interest in fire, including:

**Impulsivity**--Children who are highly impulsive tend to be unable to consider the consequences of their actions as quickly as they are able to act. They discover the matches or lighter and start a fire without realizing what the outcome may be.

**Risk taking**--Children who take risks crave that "adrenaline rush" and actively seek out activities and situations that can bring it on. Fire can offer the "ultimate" risk.

**Hyperactivity**--Children who are excessively active are so driven to physically move that they have their hands on matches or lighters and are using them, almost in a single action. The drive to move overwhelms the opportunity to think.

**High intelligence**--Children who are usually very bright and tremendously interested in the world around them often play with fire. Fire is fascinating and offers intellectual stimulation through experimentation.

**Learning styles**--Children who "learn by doing" are curious about fire. Merely hearing that fire is dangerous does not mean as much to them as handling it and seeing what it can do in their own hands.

**Difficulty retaining information**--Children who can be easily distracted and are very involved with multiple thoughts can forget previous experiences or lessons more easily. Memory problems can be inconsistent, depending on the situation and interest level.

**Weak social skills**--Children who have trouble making and keeping friends often use poor judgement. Their impulsivity means saying hurtful things without thinking first. Difficulty focusing means that they miss important social clues. As a result, they desperately try to make friends, often with children who can be negative influences and they can be especially vulnerable to peer pressure in order to be accepted. Setting a fire may be another child's idea, but the child who is eager to please may agree to set a fire without considering the consequences to his own life.

**Depression and other associated problems:** Being misunderstood by family, school teachers, and others; while not knowing, themselves, why they do what they do, can lead to depression and anger in children. Learning disabilities and/or ADHD left undiagnosed can put success in the classroom even further out of reach. Low self-esteem and other emotional difficulties can be inevitable. Unable to express their feelings, the depression and anger can lead to self-and property-destructive behaviors. Also, the control they feel they have over fire seems to compensate for the lack of control they feel in their life.

What can a parent do for a child with ADD who plays with fire?

**Acknowledge the problem**--While firesetting is serious; in fact, deadly serious, we often need to look at it as a symptom of other problems. Discovering that a child is playing with fire is no time to look the other way. It can be the opportunity to assess what is happening or not happening in the child's life.

If the parent has not done so already, **the local fire department should be contacted** and asked if they have a program for children who play with fire, staffed by persons who understand ADD and other learning disabilities. If not, a qualified mental health professional should be located.

**Medical professionals** should be consulted to rule out other health problems and for treatment options; making sure that the professional knows about the firesetting behavior.

**All matches and lighters must be locked up.** Smoke detectors should be installed in each bedroom and tested to make sure that they are working. Children with an interest in fire need constant, close supervision; necessary arrangements should be made to assure that it's available.

If he or she is mentally and physically capable, **the child can be allowed to use matches/lighters in appropriate situations**, like lighting candles or campfires, but only under close adult supervision. More importantly, the child's help should be enlisted to hunt for fire hazards around the home and act as a home "fire marshal" to heighten fire safety interest.

**Children with ADD should be involved in other activities** that they can enjoy to stay busy and fulfill the need for physical activity and risk taking. Sports, skateboarding, bicycle motocross racing, and karate are just a few options.

**Keep in mind that the best approach to ADD is often three-fold--**Behavior modification, counseling, and medication.

- **Behavior modification:** Behavior modification requires a thorough understanding of how ADD works and what works most effectively for a specific child. It takes patience, consistency, and structure in a loving atmosphere.
- **Counseling:** In addition to being depressed and angry, a child with ADD and/or other learning disabilities can have low self-esteem and difficulty expressing feelings. Allowing him or her an opportunity to meet regularly with a mental health professional who understands can help a child cope with those feelings. Parents involved in the counseling process can be given the tools needed to better assist their children.
- **Medication:** Medication often has a bad reputation among those who do not understand how it works, and yet it is the most consistently effective way to help most children whose lives are impacted by their ADD. Dosage, unfortunately, may need to be adjusted several times to achieve the best possible effect. Ritalin is the most commonly prescribed medication and one of the safest drugs around, but if it proves unsuccessful, one of a variety of other medications is likely to work in its place. It's important to resolve that when impulsivity and other ADD characteristics are driving out-of-control fireplay and firesetting, medication should be seriously considered in order to protect the firesetter and his family.

**If a child is not succeeding in school, testing should be requested in writing and, if indicated, an individualized education plan (IEP) initiated** to determine what assistance can be provided. An effective IEP can be vital for assuring the school success that leads to improved self esteem. Within the scope of an IEP, a behavior intervention plan or mental health intervention as well as support for the family should be provided by the school if indicated.

*Discipline as needed:*

ADD and learning disabilities are not an excuse; even a child with special needs is still responsible for his actions and should be disciplined to discourage further fireplay. But discipline should be:

**Immediate--**Waiting until Dad gets home or until there is time to take action means that the child is less likely to associate his misbehaving with the consequences. If too upset with the behavior and likely to overreact, however; time should be taken to withdraw and calm down or have someone else handle the situation.

**Short term--**A child with learning disabilities or ADHD can forget the reason he's being punished if the consequences go on too long. Being put on restriction for several hours or for the weekend can be effective, but for a month or more is non-productive and can fuel an already frustrated child's anger.

**Appropriate**--Being different because of learning disabilities and impulsivity problems causes enough shame for many children. Degrading the child further is not productive. Discipline should not be demeaning or humiliating, but educational and administered only in love.

*Reward positive behavior:*

- Parents and teachers should look for the positive things a child does, including any efforts toward changing a problem behavior.
- A child should be praised when he or she immediately hands matches/lighters to an adult or pursues other, non-fire related interests.
- Carefully limited opportunities should be provided to show responsibility and earn further praise.

Unfortunately, there is no way to guarantee that any approach will end a child's firesetting behavior, but, it is too important to give up on or ignore. A child who continues to play with fire needs the continuing support of his family, his school, and the community in order to re-direct his life.

*Carol Rea is a retired juvenile firesetting interventionist, formerly with the Escondido Fire Department in Escondido, California. She can be reached at (760) 735-8072 or [carolrea@aol.com](mailto:carolrea@aol.com).*

## **APPENDIX E**

### **WHAT ARE ACES? AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO TOXIC STRESS?**

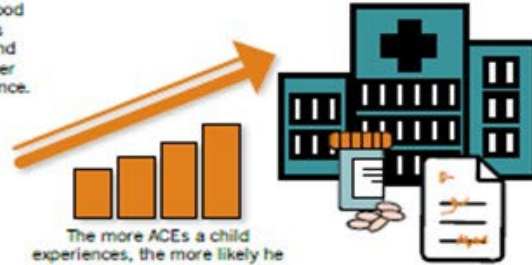
This page intentionally left blank.



# WHAT ARE ACEs?

## AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO TOXIC STRESS?

"ACEs" stands for "Adverse Childhood Experiences." These experiences can include things like physical and emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver mental illness, and household violence.



The more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely he or she is to suffer from things like heart disease and diabetes, poor academic achievement, and substance abuse later in life.

## TOXIC STRESS EXPLAINS HOW ACEs "GET UNDER THE SKIN."

Experiencing many ACEs, as well as things like racism and community violence, without supportive adults, can cause what's known as **toxic stress**. This excessive activation of the stress-response system can lead to long-lasting wear-and-tear on the body and brain.



The effect would be similar to revving a car engine for days or weeks at a time.

## WE CAN REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF ACEs AND TOXIC STRESS.



For those who have experienced ACEs, there are a range of possible responses that can help, including therapeutic sessions with mental health professionals, meditation, physical exercise, spending time in nature, and many others.

The ideal approach, however, is to prevent the need for these responses by reducing the sources of stress in people's lives. This can happen by helping to meet their basic needs or providing other services.



Likewise, fostering strong, **responsive relationships** between children and their caregivers, and helping children and adults build **core life skills**, can help to buffer a child from the effects of **toxic stress**.

ACEs affect people at all income and social levels, and can have serious, costly impact across the lifespan. **No one who's experienced significant adversity (or many ACEs) is irreparably damaged,** though we need to acknowledge trauma's effects on their lives. By reducing families' sources of stress, providing children and adults with responsive relationships, and strengthening the core life skills we all need to adapt and thrive, **we can prevent and counteract lasting harm.**

This page intentionally left blank.

# **UNIT 3: COMPONENTS OF THE YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION PROCESS**

## **TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

*The students will be able to:*



- 3.1 *Recommend intervention options for youth firesetting behaviors.*

## **ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

*The students will be able to:*

- 3.1 *Explain the identification component of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.*
  - 3.2 *Explain the intake component of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.*
  - 3.3 *Explain the interview/screening component of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.*
  - 3.4 *Analyze the level of risk for repeat firesetting behavior given a screening form and case studies.*
  - 3.5 *Evaluate the intervention options of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.*
  - 3.6 *Explain the follow-up component of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.*
-

This page intentionally left blank.

---

**UNIT 3:  
COMPONENTS OF THE  
YOUTH FIRESETTING  
INTERVENTION PROCESS**

Slide 3-1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

---

Recommend intervention options for youth firesetting behaviors.

Slide 3-2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

---

- Explain the identification component of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- Explain the intake component of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- Explain the interview/screening component of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Slide 3-3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Analyze the level of risk for repeat firesetting behavior given a screening form and case studies.
- Evaluate the intervention options of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- Evaluate the follow-up component of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Slide 3-4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**I. FIVE COMPONENTS OF YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION**

Foundational components.

A. While there are clearly similarities in all youth firesetting programs, each community/jurisdiction will have their own unique needs and processes for executing their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

**FIVE COMPONENTS OF YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION**

- Identification method.
- Intake process.
- Interview/screening process.
- Intervention services.
- Evaluation and follow-up.

**What is the purpose of each component?**

Slide 3-5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

B. However, all programs will share the same foundational components. These include:

1. Identification method.

The multitude of ways that youths involved in firesetting behaviors come to the attention of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

2. Intake process.

The process of collecting initial (not all-inclusive) information about the youth, their family situation and some details about the fire incident itself.

3. Interview/screening process.

a. A structured interview using a screening or interviewing template that is a reliable and consistent way to identify, record and evaluate factors contributing to a youth's firesetting behaviors.

b. The process also helps determine the needs of the youth and risk of future firesetting behavior.

4. Intervention services.

a. Services intended to stop future firesetting behaviors from occurring.

b. Interventions may include education, behavioral/mental health, youth justice and social service resources.

5. Evaluation and follow-up.

Monitoring the progress of youths engaged in youth firesetting prevention and intervention services and assessing if the program is reducing the occurrence of youth firesetting behaviors/impacts in the community.

**II. IDENTIFICATION OF YOUTH FIRESETTING**

**IDENTIFICATION OF YOUTH  
FIRESETTING**

---

Most youth come to the attention of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program through:

- Parents/caregivers.
- Schools.
- Law enforcement.
- Fire service.
- Mental and behavioral health professionals.
- Department of Human Services, Child Protective Services (CPS) and community social services.

Slide 3-6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Ways children involved in fire incidents come to the attention of a youth firesetting program.

- A. Primary consideration in identification of firesetting youths is understanding that early recognition will result in more successful interventions.
- B. When youths who misuse fire are identified early in the process, there is a greater chance that the chosen intervention(s) will be successful.
- C. There are myriad ways in which youths who misuse fire may be identified. The most common ways include:
  1. Parents/caregivers:
    - a. Frequently, the parents/caregivers are well aware that their child is misusing fire but often feel overwhelmed by this realization or do not know what to do about it.
    - b. Often, the adults contact the fire department so fire personnel can “fix” their child’s issue with a “tailgate” talk or a scared-straight approach.
    - c. While parents and caregivers may be the first to realize a problem exists, they may be at a loss as to what they need to do to address this issue.
    - d. Note: Compared to years prior, youths often have multiple caregivers, including grandparents raising grandkids, family members living together to make ends meet, and friends supervising youths who might not be related to the biological parents and perhaps have little to no experience in caring for youths.
    - e. Together, these adults may play an integral part in identification of youths who misuse fire and ultimately how intervention is accomplished.
  2. Schools:
    - a. Most states have mandatory reporting laws that require schools to report fires (even “cold” fires, or those discovered after the fire has been extinguished for a period and all that may be left are remnants of a fire) of any magnitude on school property.
    - b. This is very helpful to investigators and intervention staff who may not initially know who is setting fires but know the trends in the area may ultimately lead to the identification of the responsible youth(s).



- c. It should be noted that sometimes schools are reluctant to report fires found on their grounds for fear of retribution toward school leadership or giving their school a “black mark.”
  - d. The importance of using information gleaned for identification purposes and not to target locations is an important component when getting compliance from schools.
  - e. Intervention specialists need to realize this is never a blame game and that tarnishing a school will not help with future compliance.
3. Law enforcement, including school resource officers, diversion and restorative justice programs:
- a. Compliance in an intervention program when a youth has been arrested for the crime of arson or is in a diversion or restorative justice program, or has a Citation in Lieu of Arrest, which requires compliance or charges will ensue, is one of the most easily identifiable methods and least problematic for an intervention specialist.
  - b. While no one likes to see a youth get in trouble with the law, sometimes the intervention outcome is the most successful when the youth and their family are required to participate in the program.
  - c. Intervention specialists should be open to working with youth who have been identified and referred to as “firesetters” via the legal system, even if a youth was not charged specifically for fire misuse but perhaps involved in some other illegal activity, and the firesetting behavior was identified through this avenue.
4. Fire service:
- a. One of the most important steps in the identification of youths who are misusing fire is to ensure that the firefighters and fire investigators involved in an incident understand the importance of identification and referral of youths to an intervention program.
  - b. Firefighters often do not want to “play cop” and may minimize the fire setting behavior, especially if there is little or no property damage.
  - c. Investigators, who are focused on origin and cause, also may not understand the importance of taking the investigative information and including intervention specialists if there is a youth-set fire.

- d. It is important that fire service personnel be included in the training and understanding of the value of an intervention program.
  - e. One effective way to ensure that firefighters understand the purpose of a firesetting youth intervention program is for intervention specialists to spend some time with new firefighters while in their training academies to explain how important their part is with identification of youths and how small efforts on their part may make a big difference in community safety.
5. Mental and behavioral health professionals:
- a. There is an increasing trend of more youths involved in fire misuse who also have mental and behavioral health issues.
  - b. Ideally, the youth is receiving treatment for this, and the behavioral health specialist has identified via counseling, therapy, etc., that there is fire misuse, which also must be addressed.
  - c. While many intervention specialists are not behavioral and health professionals, identification of these youths ideally results in fire safety education and awareness for both the youth and their family.
  - d. Strong partnerships with mental/behavioral health professionals as an intervention specialist are imperative to a successful intervention program.
6. Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services (CPS) and community social services:
- a. While no one particularly likes to see youths and their families being investigated for issues in the home, these agencies can be the initial source of identification of a youth who is misusing fire.
  - b. It is not unusual for a parent/caregiver to already be aware that their child is misusing fire but may try to cover up or deny this out of fear of retribution on the family.
  - c. As a reminder, intervention specialists are mandatory reporters and need to know the process of both making referrals and receiving information from the Department of Human Services or CPS.
7. Other:
- An important consideration for identification is the practicality of referrals from adults, sometimes adults who do not even know the youth, other than these agencies and organizations listed.

III. INTAKE PROCESS

A. Index fire.

What is an “index fire,” and why is it critical to have adequate information about this event?

Slide 3-7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**INTAKE PROCESS**

- Process of collecting initial (not all-inclusive) information about the youth, their family situation and some details about the fire incident itself.

Locate the example intake form from the state of Minnesota (Appendix A: Youth Fire Intervention Assessment Forms) to use as reference material.

Slide 3-8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

B. Intake process.

1. Intake is defined as the process of collecting initial (not all-inclusive) information about the youth, their family situation and some details about the fire incident itself.
2. Usually, a form is used to complete this process, but everyone who is involved in the intake process must be trained to collect the required information and have knowledge about why this process is important.
3. These forms can be digitized (e.g., Adobe Acrobat PDF), transmitted, completed and stored electronically.

4. Those involved in the intake process may be vetting online requests, answering phones, firefighters or investigators on-scene, or the intervention specialist.

Representatives from allied agencies can also be trained as intake staff.

5. Those involved in the intake process may need to spend time promoting the program and gaining buy-in from parents/caretakers who may not understand the value of the program or may be fixated on blaming others (their child's friends, school, etc.).

Laying the groundwork for program expectations can begin in this step.

6. Gleaning more information is always helpful, but knowing that the point of the intake process is not to get full details but, more importantly, to ensure that there is enough information pertaining to the youth and their parents or caretakers so the screening/assessment goes smoothly is more important.

For example, if English is not the primary language spoken, it should be noted at intake that an interpreter may be necessary for future intervention sessions.

7. Accommodations for a youth or adult with special needs should be noted at intake to assist with a better intervention outcome.

8. This can be a fine line for the person conducting the intake because the goal is to get enough information necessary to assist with the process, but not so much that the parents/caregivers are "scared away" that this will be overly intrusive into their personal lives.

### INTAKE PROCESS (cont'd)

---

- Components include:
  - Point of entry.
  - Acceptable response time.
  - Identify family member primary point of contact.
  - Inquire about presence of safety equipment.
  - Isolate ignition materials.

Slide 3-9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- C. Components of intake process.
1. Point of entry:
    - a. Reviewing where the youth was first identified or their entry into the program.
    - b. This could include the fire service or partner agencies such as juvenile justice, social services, mental and behavioral health, schools, or law enforcement.
    - c. At this point, it is important to highlight the need to train all personnel involved in this process. Some programs train partner agencies to conduct the intake process.
    - d. Others direct all referrals to the lead agency.
    - e. This process may vary based upon the lead agency for the interdisciplinary team.
  2. Acceptable response (or “turnaround”) time after identification is made:
    - a. Timeliness does count; the success of an intervention (i.e., recidivism) is statistically better when it occurs immediately after a fire incident.
    - b. While individual programs clearly determine their own timelines, standard practice is that contact should be made within 48 hours of the fire incident.
    - c. Severity of the incident (e.g., loss of home, injuries, etc.) will be a factor in the intake process, depending on parents’ or caregivers’ frames of mind and emotional states.
    - d. All involved in the process must be cognizant of those suffering from a loss and show empathy.
  3. Identify primary point of contact:
    - a. The intake personnel from the intervention program as well as adult caregiver and their availability must be identified.
    - b. Over-communication is to the benefit of everyone involved.
    - c. Contact information should include phone numbers at a minimum, but also granting permission to communicate forthcoming information via text and email.

d. Multiple lines of communication are important for good communication.

4. Safety equipment and ignition materials.

**INTAKE PROCESS (cont'd)**

- It is **imperative** to inquire about the presence of operational safety devices like smoke alarms.

Slide 3-10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

a. As part of the intake process, it is **imperative** to inquire about the presence of operational safety devices such as smoke alarms.

b. It is also important to ensure the family is educated on the importance of isolating ignition sources.

D. Intake forms:

1. Intake forms may be written or electronic and must be established for each case.

2. A fire incident form should be attached to the intake form if it is available (if the referral is through an actual fire response).

- If a parent/caregiver walks into the fire or police station asking for help with addressing a youth firesetting situation, does your agency have a procedure in place for initiating the referral process in a rapid and reliable manner?
- If not, why not, and what are the potential ramifications of not having a procedure in place?

Slide 3-11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

#### IV. INTERVIEW/SCREENING PROCESS

**INTERVIEW/SCREENING  
PROCESS**

---

- Entails a structured interview.
- Utilizes a template (screening tool).
- Seeks why firesetting is occurring.
- Helps determine risk level and typology.

**Locate and peruse the example interview form  
from the state of Minnesota.**

Slide 3-12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

A. The interview/screening process.

1. The interview/screening process of a firesetting youth is a structured interview that utilizes a template. Using a vetted template is a reliable and consistent way to identify, record and evaluate factors contributing to a youth's firesetting behaviors.
2. The goal of the interview/screening process is to determine why firesetting is occurring; what satisfaction, if any, the youth receive from starting fires; and the need to prevent future firesetting behavior.
3. The process involves interviewing the firesetting youth and their parents/caregivers.
4. The interview/screening allows for objective exploration of the factors that may have influenced the firesetting behaviors and provides information about attitudes, behaviors, demographics and experiences of the youth and family that may present obstacles to the introduction of appropriate interventions.

B. The interview/screening tool.

1. The questions on the screening tool help the interviewer facilitate a structured interview. The questions on the screening form are assigned a numeric value, which generates a score.
2. Use of this process helps the youth firesetting prevention and intervention interdisciplinary team understand why fire misuse has occurred and what types of intervention to offer.

- 3. The interview/screening process should occur in a timely manner according to program protocol directive (we will discuss standard operating procedures (SOPs) and standard operating guidelines (SOGs) in Unit 6: Program Development and Evaluation).

Be advised that the interview/screening process should not be used as a determining factor for legal action, but it can assist your juvenile justice representatives with intervention recommendations.


- 4. In Appendix A: Youth Fire Intervention Assessment Forms, there is a sample interview/screening tool that the state of Minnesota utilizes. It contains the same questions and scoring process as the widely accepted tool utilized by the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s Office.

The tool directs its user to ask a series of questions and record specific information about the firesetting youth, their family and the specific incident(s) that has occurred.

- 5. Use of a vetted screening tool, a structured interview, and a practitioner’s education and level of experience will assist in deciding on possible intervention options.
- 6. Responses to the questions are assigned a numerical value and scored as indicated by the tool.
- 7. Once scored, most tools assign a value to help determine the next steps and intervention, leading to the determination of a simple or complex firesetting case.
- 8. Note that tools can use different terminology beyond “some,” “definite” and “extreme.” These terms are labels given to the scoring outcome of the form.

**INFORMATION GATHERED DURING THE INTERVIEW/SCREENING PROCESS**

- Intake is the process of gathering:
  - Basic information.
  - Age.
  - Name.
  - Family situation.
  - Fire incident details.
- The interview/ screening is more conversational and asks about:
  - The family and home environment.
  - Social environment.
  - Fire misuse history.
  - Feelings before and after the fire incident.



Slide 3-13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



C. Information gathered during the interview/screening process.

When establishing the protocols for your program, the form or tool that you use will be one that is accepted by the members of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force. This consistency is paramount to a successful program. Certain elements are necessary within your screening or interview tool, but how they are presented is clearly at the discretion of the interventionist. Information to include:

1. Basic information about the youth (name, age, grade, any medical or mental health diagnosis, etc.).
2. Family and home environment: parents, siblings, caregivers, how they interact and their relationships, what kind of discipline exists, if any; significant changes or trauma to said environment.
3. Social environment, such as school, interpersonal relationships, and any changes or traumatic events.
4. History of fire misuse, previous incidents, feelings before and after, any perceived benefits to the fire sets, any traumatic events that influenced said fire misuse.

This page intentionally left blank.

## ACTIVITY 3.1

### Creating a Positive Interview/Screening Environment

#### Purpose

Describe best practices for conducting an interview/screening process given various environments.

#### Directions

1. The instructor will divide the class into four groups and assign each group an environment for an interview/screening setting:
  - a. Group 1: office.
  - b. Group 2: firehouse.
  - c. Group 3: neutral environment (e.g., library, school).
  - d. Group 4: home.
2. In your small groups, you will have 20 minutes to discuss:
  - a. Why may an intervention specialist choose the environment you have been assigned?
  - b. Given your assigned environment, what preplan activities must take place in advance of the interview/screening?
  - c. What potential challenges might good preplanning discover?
  - d. Given your assigned environment, what strategies would you engage to create an environment conducive to good information exchange?
3. After 20 minutes, your group's spokesperson will have approximately two minutes to share the findings from your assigned environment (10 minutes).

This page intentionally left blank.

## V. CREATING A POSITIVE INTERVIEW/SCREENING ENVIRONMENT

### A. Arranging for the interview/screening.

1. When planning to conduct an interview/screening, we must look at our ultimate goal: getting the most information from the youth.
  - a. As a result of this, we must schedule a time that is convenient to all involved, recognizing that timeliness is important, but certainly appreciating schedules.
  - b. As you ascertain information about the individual, their firesetting behaviors, history and ability to learn, there is no set amount of time that an interview/screening takes.
2. Let the adults know exactly what you aim to accomplish through this step in the process and your desire to have them participate in the interview/screening as well.
  - a. This can help to ease any trepidation that may be present and assure them of your transparency.
  - b. Once trust is gained, schedule the interview/screening.

### B. Location of the interview/screening.

1. Some program protocols may allow home visits, while others might require the interview/screening to take place in an office setting or at a fire station. Others may encourage the process to occur in a neutral setting such as a school or library. Regardless of the setting, the environment where the interview takes place must include a balance between comfort and support for the youth and their family. The goal of the process is to maximize the exchange of information between the interviewer and the youth/family. In addition, there must be a balance between safety and the mandates established by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) and/or program procedures.
2. There is no mandate on where an interview/screening should take place, but there are certainly advantages and disadvantages to each location.
  - a. Check with your agency if there is a requirement for the youth and parental figures to come to the fire station, police station or a specific office.
  - b. If there is not, these are all appropriate locations, as well as a school or the youth's home.

3. Our priority is to have an environment or go to a location that will be the most conducive to accomplishing our goal of information gathering.
4. In an ideal situation, it is best to have two individuals conduct the interview/screening (preferably from two different disciplines) together so that each can have a different focus.
5. Above all, make sure that your safety is never compromised.

As an example, if conducting an interview in a private home, identify where the exits are, find out if there are weapons in the home and ensure that your department knows where you are when you arrive and when you clear the location.

6. Additionally, follow your department's procedures regarding interviewing a member of the opposite sex.

C. Preparing the environment.

The following section provides suggestions for facilitating an environment conducive to information-sharing.

1. Formal setting (such as a fire station or office).
  - a. Be sure that the room ensures privacy.
  - b. Make sure there are enough chairs for everyone involved.
  - c. Try to arrange a comfortable setting. Remove distractions.
  - d. Turn off all electronic equipment, scanners, radio, pagers, etc.
  - e. Be aware of physical barriers in the room.
  - f. A semicircular pattern creates an open seating arrangement and facilitates communication.
  - g. Since the parents'/caregivers' screening and the child's interview should take place separately, it is beneficial to have an area where the child or youth can wait.
    - In the case of a small child, there will be the need for someone to stay with the child.

2. Informal setting (such as a family's home).
  - a. Ask parents/caregivers if all electronic devices, such as televisions, computers, games, etc., can be turned off for the duration of the screening.
  - b. Ask if there is an area where you can talk uninterrupted, such as a dining room, kitchen or office.
  - c. If the family has other children, the screeners may wish to ask the parents/caregivers in advance of the meeting to plan for some sort of child care arrangement. The same strategy applies to pets.
  - d. While the screener has less control over the environment in the home, it is extremely beneficial to observe the family in their environment.
  - e. **Always** preplan the environment from a situational assessment perspective with safety as a priority.

## VI. CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW/SCREENING

- A. Preparing for the interview/screening.
  1. Finding out the characteristics of your target audience (the interviewees) and the circumstances surrounding the firesetting incident(s) is crucial background information. This is the information that will be used to help create the needed intervention(s). (Refer to Appendix B: Using What We Know About Child Development To Enhance the Interviewing Process for more information.)
  2. Prior to conducting the interview/screening process, the interventionist must be fully aware of the information obtained as part of the intake process, including, but not limited to, information about the youth and their family and the details of the firesetting incident(s). If incident reports are available, review these as well.
  3. Remember, this is an interview, not an interrogation. Do not have an accusatory tone or cast judgment on the interviewees.

B. Describe the process.

- How do you explain the interview/ screening process to youth and their parents/care providers?
  
- What are the main objectives of the interview/screening process?
  
- An interview is **not** an interrogation. What's the difference?

Slide 3-17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1. During the interviews with both the youth and the parental figures, thoroughly explain the youth firesetting intervention program, its history and why you believe they could benefit from said program.
  
2. Discuss the interview/screening process and how the information will be utilized to identify intervention strategies to help the youth and the family.
  
3. If possible, speak to the parents or caregivers first and then the youth, providing activities for the youth if they must wait.

C. Perform the interview/screening.

1. The main objective of the process is to gather information related to the firesetting incident, the child and the family.
  
2. The process allows for the opportunity to gather pertinent information, provide education, and determine continued needs to interrupt and prevent future firesetting behaviors.
  
3. The primary reason for performing the interview/screening with each child and firesetting adolescent of any age is to be able to identify (at an early stage) children and parents who are in need of intervention services or other existing community services.



D. Steps to building rapport.

- How do you begin and sustain the process of building rapport with your interviewee?
- What's the difference between a leading and an open-ended question?
- What is nonverbal communication and how does it apply in a youth firesetting interview/screening?

Slide 3-18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1. Arguably, the most important aspect of conducting your interview/screening is to be a good listener.
  - a. Do not judge information that may be revealed to you, but listen.
  - b. Do not assume what's considered "normal" for you is the same for your interviewees.
2. Attentive listening sets the tone and lets the person know that you have an interest in what they have to say. Likewise, people communicate with people that they feel are like them, especially in a safe and secure environment.
3. This is where building rapport comes in when speaking to our youths (of any age) and the adults.

To establish rapport:

- a. Be respectful.
- b. Be on time.
- c. Dress appropriately.
  - How you present to the individual will generate a different response or perception of you.
  - Will you wear a badge? Carry your weapon?
  - If you feel wearing your uniform is imposing, how will you minimize that?

- Are you wearing shiny or distracting accessories that might impact a youth with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)?
  - Be aware of your personality and presence.
  - d. Be prepared; do your homework on the case.
  - e. Avoid prejudices.
  - f. Be respectful (especially in their homes).
  - g. Start with small talk to establish a baseline of communication.
  - h. Be aware of surroundings/fire safety issues.
  - i. Be comfortable with the process.
  - j. Do not be surprised by anything.
4. Assess the level of understanding of the individual(s) across from you:
- a. Can the child and family understand the language of the interviewer?
  - b. Can the child follow simple directions or perform a simple task?
  - c. **You** are the expert in making this decision.
5. During the interview/screening, explain that children set fires for many reasons.
6. Describe your multiagency program and invite the family to participate as partners toward a common goal of interrupting the firesetting behavior and changing behavior.
7. If interviewing a child, speak at the level of the child's vocabulary and at their physical level. Be aware of your body language (e.g., towering over them versus sitting down with them).
- a. Interrogation tools and techniques are not useful here; this is an interview!
  - b. Nonverbal communication is just as important as verbal communication.

8. There is no single way to interview a youth.
9. Speaking to children is very different from speaking to an adult, but there are some similarities.
  - a. With frequency comes proficiency.
  - b. The more that you do this, the more comfortable you will become.
  - c. Remember that each youth is an individual.
  - d. Find out what works for you and become comfortable with various techniques, but recognize that the person sitting across from you more than likely has a very different upbringing.
10. Do not judge; listen and be aware of your own limitations.
11. Specifically, as interventionists, we must be aware of inhibitions we all possess:
  - a. We must recognize and accept our own prejudices and implicit biases.
  - b. We must recognize how individuals from other cultures respond to authority.
  - c. If physical contact occurs, then you must be thoughtful and willing to do so without offending or making the person uncomfortable. Be aware that physical contact can trigger an emotional response from the other person.
12. A few things to keep in mind when speaking to youth:
  - a. Youths are usually truthful when relating matters of a sexual nature, as those under the age of 12 “physiologically, cognitively and emotionally are not ready for sexual activity ... have little knowledge and awareness about sex and sexuality” (Ramaswamy & Seshadri, 2017). They are unlikely to “make up stories” about sexual abuse, as they know little about the issue (Ramaswamy & Seshadri, 2017).
  - b. Do not ask leading questions; allow the youth to relay facts.
  - c. Make sure that the youth comprehends what you are saying.

- d. The preference is to interview youth alone and allow them the opportunity to speak first. However, if this interferes with disclosure of pertinent information and the best outcome for the youth, parents can be present with youth.
    - Youth may need to “warm up” to the situation and be interviewed second.
    - With particularly young children, parents should always be present.
  - e. Do not rush or appear anxious; this may cause a child to clam up or say what will please you.
  - f. Many youths have a fear of police because they see them as authority figures, such as their parents. You should be empathetic and prepared with strategies to overcome barriers to intervention.
  - g. Use the parents as a vehicle to pursue the truth; juveniles may display a tough image, but when they are in trouble, they generally look for help from their parents. You may say to them, “Your parents will understand you making a mistake, but they will not accept you lying about it.”
  - h. Try to understand how the youth feels. Explore the relationship between the incident and the youth’s family life, and you might identify the reason why the fire occurred. Collect background information on the parents, and it might give you insight into the suspect’s relationship with them.
  - i. Remain flexible with how this process unfolds.
13. There are many styles and techniques for interviewing individuals. How you conduct your screening interview will set the stage for your communication with said individuals as the intervention strategies are established from this screening interview.
- a. Rapport building is crucial to your communication success.
  - b. One way of positively impacting the interviewee is to communicate with them in a fashion that is “strength-based.”
  - c. Remember, we are primarily conducting the interview/screening to gather a body of facts to help us make determination of risk for repeat firesetting behaviors.

- d. While you are not a mental health expert, the concept of strength-based communication is simply talking with another and allowing the individual to retell their personal history of various traumas, stressors and pain with more emphasis on them as a survivor rather than as a victim, and more emphasis on their strengths and survival skills than on their weaknesses.
  - e. The goal is for them to recognize that they already have the skills and strength to survive and can use those same strengths to deal with tough situations in other areas of their life.
14. Remember that you may be the only person that has given undivided attention to this individual, as the previously mentioned typologies identified neglect, lack of supervision, family dysfunction and chaos as common characteristics.
15. Pay attention to the individual's body language.
- a. For this reason, it is beneficial to have a second person from the youth firesetting prevention and intervention team working with you during the interview/screening.
  - b. One can be a scribe while the other can pay attention to what the youth does not say out loud.
  - c. Placement of chairs and obstacles can make a big difference in this regard.
  - d. Nonverbal communication can speak much louder than verbal communication, and you would be doing a disservice to the youth, your case and the community to not pay attention to what they are conveying to you nonverbally.
16. Remember: **We are mandatory reporters**, and as such, are required to report to the necessary agencies within our state any information that is revealed pertaining to any actions of abuse or neglect perpetuated against the youth.

**CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW/SCREENING**

The **IRONIC** method:

- Introduction.
- Rapport.
- Opening Statement.
- Narrative.
- Inquiry.
- Conclusion.

The instructor will walk through the IRONIC method of interviewing.

Slide 3-19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- E. IRONIC — a method of screening.
1. Another method of interviewing is the IRONIC method, which has been developed as an easy-to-remember method that identifies the procedures involved in conducting an interview and determining the facts surrounding the occurrence of an event. IRONIC stands for Introduction, Rapport, Opening Statement, Narrative, Inquiry and Conclusion.

**VIDEO PRESENTATION**

**“THE IRONIC METHOD – COLORADO SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT”**

Slide 3-20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- a. **Introduction:** The person or people conducting the screening introduce themselves before the process begins. They can easily do this by showing credentials (photo identification, a fire or police department badge, or a business card).
- b. **Rapport:** This requires the interviewer to find some common ground that the youth enjoys discussing. Examples include sports, pets, travel, family or hobbies. This critical phase begins immediately on contact with the interviewee and continues throughout the interview.

- c. **Opening Statement:** This step informs the youth of the reason for the screening. For example, “I am here today because of the fire next door to your house.”
  - d. **Narrative:** This step allows the youth the opportunity to provide a full account of what happened. Allowing the youth to describe the incident provides a wealth of information to the intervention specialist. The specialist should closely analyze the youth’s words verbatim. This narrative of the event should not be contaminated with leading questions.
    - Leading questions are suggestive of the answer the person is seeking. For example, “You set this fire with a lighter and pieces of paper, didn’t you?” “You were in the woods at the time of the fire, weren’t you?” “You took the lighter from your grandmother’s purse, right?”
    - Use open-ended questions. For example, “Tell me about how the fire got started.” “Where were you when the fire got started?” “How did you get the lighter?”
    - Follow-up questions may be asked to determine who, what, when, where, why and how.
  - e. **Inquiry:** This step serves to document the answers to specific questions asked of the interviewee. Using an approved interview/screening tool, the intervention specialist should ask the questions listed and document the answers. This is where having two specialists work in tandem is very helpful, as one can ask questions while the other records information.
  - f. **Conclusion:** This is the wrap-up of the interview. The intervention specialist should thank the youth and parent(s)/caregiver(s) for their time and ask if they will be available for a second interview, if necessary. They also should provide the family with information on how to maintain contact with the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. Be sure to ask if the youth or their parents/caregivers have any questions. The intervention specialist should then explain the next steps that will occur as part of the intervention program.
2. Keep in mind that the screening interview is your best opportunity to learn about the people you are interviewing, their cognitive abilities, their understanding and their strengths in the creation of an intervention that best suits their specific needs.

This page intentionally left blank.



## ACTIVITY 3.2

### Levels of Risk

#### Purpose

Describe the presentation of the three levels of risk for repeat firesetting incidents.

#### Directions

1. The instructor will divide the class into three groups and assign each group a level of risk:
  - a. Group 1: some risk.
  - b. Group 2: definite risk.
  - c. Group 3: extreme risk.
2. Prior to responding to the directives, you should read the section titled Determining Levels of Risk in your SM.
3. Next, in your small groups, you will have 15 minutes to discuss:
  - a. How might your assigned level of risk commonly present itself?
  - b. What are common factors, challenges or characteristics you might encounter with this level of risk?
4. After 15 minutes, one spokesperson from each group will have approximately two minutes to share your group's findings from your assigned level of risk.
5. The instructor will debrief the activity by articulating the value of an effective interview/screening process and how it assists the intervention specialist with gathering objective information about the firesetting situation.

This page intentionally left blank.

## VII. DETERMINING LEVELS OF RISK

- A. The purpose of the interview/screening process is to determine the potential level of risk for repeat firesetting incidents. By determining the level of risk, an appropriate intervention strategy can be developed.
- B. There are three recognized levels of risk: some, definite, extreme. The risk levels represent the likelihood that youth will become involved in future firesetting or misuse or intentional firesetting.
  1. Some risk.
    - a. “Some risk” is the most common and lowest of the risk levels.
    - b. For this level, the youth has engaged in at least one unsupervised fire, motivated by curiosity.
    - c. Fires resulting from these incidents are often unintentional and are generally not a significant fire event.
    - d. Young children will often attempt to put these fires out or go for help. Some may hide or run away.
    - e. Curiosity and experimentation with lighters and matches are the most common motive of children involved in unsupervised firesetting.
    - f. If these firesetting youths are identified and evaluated at an early age, and if they receive proper supervision and educational intervention, recidivism is unlikely.
    - g. However, some young children may exhibit more serious psychological problems or be exposed to stressful circumstances that increase their likelihood of repeated, inappropriate use of fire.
      - These children may require additional clinical assessment and intervention.
    - h. The characteristics and age of a child/youth may or may not correspond with the characteristics described in the level of risk.
      - Interventionists may have contact with very young children who have serious clinical problems and an extensive history of firesetting.
      - Likewise, an adolescent with a recent interest in fire but very few other problems and no prior history of firesetting could be encountered.

2. Definite risk.
  - a. Some youth go beyond experimentation and set fire with other motives.
  - b. Consider the influence of today's electronic age; youth are exposed to the negative aspects of fire to a vast degree. Those aspects are seen on television, in the movies and on the internet, and they can portray power, control, revenge and rage as well as inappropriate problem-solving skills, to the child's detriment and to those around them.
  - c. Inappropriate fire use or acts of burning can provide a youth with feelings of satisfaction as well as a sense of power and control over their lives and others.
    - The misuse of fire may also be a form of communication where verbal skills are lacking.
    - Firesetting could be a means to seek attention, express anger and possibly even be used as a weapon of revenge.
  - d. When firesetting progresses to repeated and intentional firesetting activity, underlying psychological or social problems and issues may be factors influencing that activity.
    - These types of fires are deliberate and may include the gathering of fuels and the possible selection of a target to be affected by the fire.
    - The fires may be set for different reasons, including anger, revenge, attention-seeking, malicious mischief, concealment of a crime, problem-solving, intent to harm people or destroy property, or to make something or someone go away when youths have no other solution.
  - e. Youths engaged in this type of firesetting rarely attempt to put the fire out and will often retreat from the fire but may remain close enough to watch its effect.
  - f. This type of emotionally motivated firesetting is referred to as a crisis, troubled or cry-for-help typology.
  - g. Fire safety and primary education may help the emotionally motivated firesetting youth.

- However, they should also be referred to the appropriate mental health service for thorough screening and intervention. In addition, protocol may mandate a referral to juvenile justice officials based upon age and circumstance.
  - With timely and broad-based support, there is a reasonably good chance that future recidivism can be prevented.
3. Extreme risk.
- a. Youths in this category may reflect the same aspects as listed in the definite risk category.
  - b. Their behaviors usually involve more severe forms of firesetting influenced by psychological, social and environmental factors.
  - c. These youths generally reflect a small subgroup of firesetting, but they are often considered at-risk for engaging in future firesetting incidents.
  - d. Youths in question can exhibit patterns of aggressive, deviant and criminal behaviors that occur with greater frequency as the juvenile matures.
  - e. The longer the behavior continues, the harder it is to reverse.
  - f. Early identification intervention from an interdisciplinary team of professionals is critical.
  - g. Fire safety education may positively impact but not always reverse this type of antisocial behavior.
  - h. Youths who are of extreme risk are often beyond the scope of immediate educational intervention services from a youth firesetting intervention program.
  - i. Youths included in the extreme risk category demand a broad-based approach to solving their firesetting pathology.
  - j. This includes a combination of justice system, educational, clinical and social service interventions.
  - k. Extreme-risk firesetting youths may pose a significant danger to themselves or others.
  - l. The youth firesetting interdisciplinary team should be consulted immediately if a risk level of extreme is noted.

- C. As earlier identified, the goal of an intervention program is always to stop the firesetting behavior.
- D. There is usually not a “silver bullet” method that will accomplish this goal but often a combination of factors.
- E. Determining a typology of the youth is important in determining what type of intervention is appropriate and will have the best outcome.
- F. It should be noted that this typology assignment should not be subjective, especially if the youth enters the problem with already-identified “labels” (mental health diagnosis or other additional criminal charges).
- G. A thorough intervention is needed to determine the firesetting typology.
- H. Simple and complex fire setting behaviors.
  - 1. As discussed in Unit 2: Who Sets Fires and Why?, we will briefly revisit the concept of simple and complex firesetting behaviors.
  - 2. Simple firesetting refers to youth firesetting conduct that can most likely be resolved through an educational intervention regarding consequences for actions, better decision-making skills and the risks associated with the misuse of fire.

This education is applicable for both the parents/caregivers and the youth.
  - 3. Complex firesetting refers to an intervention necessitating additional services beyond simply education and an understanding of consequences.
    - a. These can include, but are not limited to, assistance from a mental/behavioral health specialist, juvenile justice and social services.
    - b. Consulting the members of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force for complex firesetting situations is paramount for the youth and their family.

## VIII. SELECTING INTERVENTION OPTIONS

- A. Once the screening is completed and the level of risk determined, the proper interventions can be recommended for the firesetting youth and their family.

The involvement of the interdisciplinary team (youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force member agencies) becomes crucial in final determination of the risk level and appropriate interventions. Most specifically in complex cases.

**SELECTING INTERVENTION OPTIONS**

- Education.
- Behavioral and mental health.
- Juvenile justice.
- Social services.

**Summarize your group's assigned intervention's purpose, value, and how it is designed to interrupt youth firesetting behavior and prevent recidivism.**

Slide 3-23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

B. There are four major categories for intervention:

1. Education.
2. Behavioral and mental health.
3. Juvenile justice.
4. Social services.

C. Educational intervention.

1. Nearly all youths involved in firesetting and their families can benefit from fire safety and prevention education. Educational intervention is particularly successful with the firesetting youth in the “some risk” category.
2. If a simple (i.e., some risk) firesetting case is obvious, the screener may wish to score the assessment instruments on-site and schedule (or perform) fire safety education intervention immediately following the interview.
3. If educational intervention is the sole medium being recommended, the intervention specialist may choose to discuss options with the entire family as a group.
4. Educational interventions must include all members of the household. However, if other intervention services are being recommended, the education component may need to wait until a more appropriate time.

5. Youth firesetting prevention and intervention program personnel should never assume that the parents or caregivers (or youths) know the basics of fire safety and fire survival.
  6. Youth firesetting prevention and intervention program personnel must assess what the parents or caregivers and youth know about fire prior to conducting educational intervention services. This assessment often entails use of a pretest or other survey form. Additional material on pre/post-tests will be covered in Unit 5: Education as a Prevention and Intervention Component.
- D. Behavioral and mental health.
1. When firesetting goes beyond curiosity or experimentation (or if there is repeat firesetting), it might be necessary to refer the family for mental health support. The youth firesetting prevention and intervention program interdisciplinary team needs to be consulted before this referral is made to ensure that it is handled according to program protocol.
  2. In complex situations, it may be wise to schedule a second meeting to discuss intervention options with parents/caregivers after scoring the assessment instrument privately and consulting with the interdisciplinary team.
  3. A youth involved in firesetting and their family may (or may not) be receiving service from a support agency. Youth firesetting prevention and intervention program personnel need to be aware of the support services available in their community and any fees or costs associated with these services.
  4. Families may benefit from training in parenting/caregiving skills, anger management, or dealing with a particular loss or change in lifestyle. Clinical staff may be able to help with referrals for these services.
  5. While supportive services are always suggested for definite and extreme-risk firesetting situations, they can also be helpful for families of some-risk firesetting youth as well.
- E. Juvenile justice.
1. Invoking legal sanctions ensures that the youth and their families participate in the program.
  2. How this is accomplished will depend upon the laws and ordinances of the AHJ.



3. The decision to recommend legal sanctions may not be in the control of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
4. The decision to take this action may depend upon:
  - a. Violations of local or state laws.
  - b. Deaths, injuries or property loss associated with firesetting.
  - c. Local operating procedures of the fire department.
  - d. Age of accountability.
  - e. Firesetting history of the youth.
5. An effective juvenile justice system combines accountability and sanctions with increasingly intensive treatment and rehabilitation services.
6. Graduated sanctions are designed to interrupt the progression of delinquent and criminal activity. There are two components to graduated sanctions, rehabilitation and corrections, which provide an integrated program.
7. Initiating a legal action for firesetting is a very serious matter.
8. This decision is best made by an interdisciplinary team who can, in cooperation with the justice system, develop a protocol for action.
9. Once legal action is initiated, the defendant's civil rights must be recognized and honored.
10. This means that families must be informed of the decision and juvenile Miranda rights must be read.
11. Again, it is important for each youth firesetting prevention and intervention program to consult with the local district attorney regarding the protection of a juvenile's legal rights.
12. There are significant benefits to having a youth petitioned to the juvenile court for offenses relating to firesetting.
  - a. The action helps ensure that parents/caregivers will participate and follow through with recommended program services.
  - b. Parents/caregivers of children with serious firesetting behavior problems are sometimes reluctant to pursue services when offered through normal voluntary course of programming.

F. Social services:

1. There are two distinct branches of social services: CPS, also known as Children and Youth Services, and Family Services.
2. CPS is the unit that investigates and intervenes in child welfare, neglect and abuse issues. This branch of social services has the authority to impose sanctions on parents and care providers, and in extreme situations, can authorize removal of a youth from a family unit and order placement in foster care/a safe environment.
3. Family Services provides supportive services to the family unit such as parenting classes, social skills training, vouchers for ancillary support services such as transportation to appointments, etc.
4. In most states, youth firesetting is a mandatory referral to CPS.
5. If the family requests supportive services, Family Services will provide them.
6. CPS and Family Services should work in tandem. Many interventionists don't often consider the available support from Family Services, but they are important partners.

## ACTIVITY 3.3

### Case Study Analysis

#### Purpose

Explore case studies of youths who set fires to determine the level of risk for repeat firesetting behavior given a screening form.

#### Directions

1. The instructor will assign your table groups three case studies.
2. You will work in your table groups to analyze each case and complete the screening forms with the information you have available. Discuss your cases and determine the following:
  - a. The level of risk for repeat firesetting.
  - b. The potential typology of firesetting.
  - c. An appropriate intervention strategy (consider all levels of intervention).
3. You will have 60 minutes for case study review and small group discussion.
4. When the work period is up, your table group will provide a brief high-level summary of your conclusions pertinent to the three cases you explored.
5. The instructor will debrief the activity by articulating the value of:
  - a. A complete case file that includes the intake summary, interview/screening summary and narratives from those who have delivered services to the youth and their family.
  - b. Utilizing a screening tool to help guide the intervention process.
6. This activity should be completed in 90 minutes or less.

This page intentionally left blank.

## **ACTIVITY 3.3 (cont'd)**

### **Case Studies**

#### **Firesetting Case Study 1**

##### **David Davis**

##### **Fire Incident No. 10-2321**

##### **Incident location: Charles Middle School, 2002 Lewis Highway, Millton, Georgia**

On March 20, you, the fire safety educator at Millton Fire Department, received a telephone call from a distraught mother, Mary Davis. Her 13-year-old son, David, had been expelled from Charles Middle School for conducting an “experiment” in the school bathroom. Ms. Davis wanted her son to learn about the dangers of fire, but she also wanted to get him back into school. The family is a middle-to-upper class family, with both biological parents present in the home. Ms. Davis did not work outside the home.

Ms. Davis said that her son has never been in trouble at school before. He is a good student, getting A’s and B’s on his report cards. She reports no pertinent medical history. David lives at home with his parents and his younger sister, Ashley, age 8. To her knowledge, David has never used matches, lighters or other tools of ignition in this manner before. You schedule a convenient time for Ms. Davis to bring David for a screening.

They come to your office at the fire station (bypassing the apparatus bay) and arrive promptly for the interview. Ms. Davis seems a little harried having to take this time to bring David for the screening. David presents as a neat, somewhat friendly 13-year-old, but seems to act like a big deal is being made from a simple incident. He also seems a bit embarrassed about coming to the fire department.

David enjoys sports, mainly basketball. He says that he doesn’t really like school and that he finds it boring. He enjoys hanging out with his friends that live in his neighborhood. He says that he has never really been interested in fire or setting fires. He says that he has not started any fires before this one and that he really didn’t consider this a fire. “After all, no damage was done, and if it hadn’t been for the stupid janitor, I wouldn’t be in trouble at all.”

David tells you that he, along with two of his friends, wanted to see if gasoline would burn when it was in water. One of them had brought some gasoline to school in a water bottle, and one had brought a lighter. They gathered in the boy’s bathroom, poured the gasoline on top of the water in the toilet, and then dropped a piece of toilet paper lit on fire by the lighter in the water. There was a flash fire, but luckily none of the boys was injured. They were caught by the janitor at the school and were reported to the principal. The fire department was not notified, nor was there any damage to the bathroom or the school. The school was not evacuated, and there was no interruption to the school day.

All three boys were subsequently expelled from school until an expulsion hearing could be held before the school board (part of the school system's disciplinary process). David says what his mom wants is doing this (bringing him to the fire department) to try to get him back in school. He said that she is worried he won't get back in.

Ms. Davis says that David is just a typical 13-year-old, influenced heavily by his peers and social media. She does seem more concerned about the effects of his act than the act itself. She does realize that he or his friends could have been injured, or an actual fire could have started causing damage to others and/or the school.

## **Firesetting Case Study 2**

**Alex Smith**

**Fire Incident No. 10-2321**

**Incident location: 145 Serene Shores Drive, Lanier, Alabama**

On a weekday afternoon, during the summer, the Lanier Fire Department responded to a reported woods fire on Serene Shores Drive. The fire was located behind several houses in the quiet subdivision, Serene Shores. Upon arrival of Engine 8 personnel, they extinguished the woods fire, which was extensive. The neighbors reported that it had been set by a youth that lived in a house directly in front of the woods where the fire started. The youth is 13 years old and lives with their mother and younger brother.

The fire lieutenant, recognizing the seriousness of the problem, refers the family to the firesetting intervention program sponsored by the Lanier Fire Department. The lieutenant contacts the intervention specialist, and he reports to the scene to conduct the screening.

Alex Smith appears angry about the incident but does show some remorse for what happened. They said that the fire only burned trees and grass and that it really didn't hurt anyone. They said that they help their mom burn leaves behind their house all the time, and they were just trying to help her out. They started this fire with the leaves they had gotten to try and help their mom. According to Alex, the only reason the fire had gotten out of control was because it was a windy day and because of the dry weather they had been experiencing during the summer. They said that they could have put the fire out if the neighbors hadn't called the fire department.

Alex goes to Jones Middle School and will enter the eighth grade when school starts again. They like school because they have friends there. Alex identifies as nonbinary. There are no other children their age in the neighborhood to play with. They are an average student, making B's and C's on their report card. They like playing soccer. Alex denies setting other fires, stating that they had just graduated from the fire safety program at school and has a certificate stating that they are a Junior Fire Marshal.

Alex's mother, Sara Smith, works as a dietician at an elementary school in a neighboring county. She said that she and her husband, Alex's father, had recently separated. Since then, she noticed that Alex had been sad and somewhat angry, though they never acted in an aggressive manner. They have also been trying to act grown-up and help her around the house. She had been trying to pick up extra work since Alex's dad moved out, which meant there was less time to spend with her children, and that Alex was often tasked with watching their younger brother, Charlie, who is 7. She says she tries not to leave them alone, but sometimes she has no choice. She was taking a nap when Alex started to burn the leaves and didn't know about the fire until she was awakened by the sirens.

She said that she has burned leaves before in the yard and sometimes left Alex "in charge" of the fire once it had died down. They were always interested in the fires in the yard, but she did not believe that they had used ignition tools before. Once, they had placed the lighter up high when their younger brother was trying to get it.

She said that Alex has no medical issues and has never given her any trouble. She said that she and her husband are trying to work on their issues, and she is hoping for reconciliation.



### **Firesetting Case Study 3**

**Brandon White**

**Fire Incident No. 08-4501**

**Incident location: 1455 Barrett Road, White Sulphur, Georgia**

Firefighters in the suburban community of White Sulphur were called to a residential structure fire at 1459 Barrett Road at approximately 6:00 p.m. on a weekday. The fire caused approximately \$100,000 in damage to this four-bedroom ranch-style home. No one was at home at the time of the fire, and no injuries were reported. There was extensive fire damage to the garage, kitchen and dining room. The remainder of the house received substantial smoke and heat damage. Fire investigators determined that the fire started in the garage but were unable to determine an ignition source, and the fire cause was ruled undetermined.

Approximately three weeks after the fire, the department's fire marshal (lead fire investigator) received a call from the principal at Sweetbriar Elementary School. She asked if a fire had occurred on Barrett Road in the last few weeks. He stated yes, and she continued to say that a bus driver had reported to her that he overheard a conversation between two boys on the bus, where one (Brandon White) was telling his friend about the fire on Barrett Road and that he thought he had caused it. He was scared that he was going to go to jail, and he hadn't told anyone.

The fire marshal and the intervention specialist went to the school to meet with Brandon. The school's counselor had contacted Brandon's mother, Roxy, to be there as well.

Brandon is a polite 10-year-old boy. He is in the fourth grade, having been held back a year due to his grades. He says that school is okay, but it is hard. His grades are adequate, though he does get math tutoring one day a week at school. He doesn't really enjoy playing sports, but he does like to ride his bicycle.

Brandon lives with his mother, Roxy, and her partner. According to him, he doesn't have a dad. He has no siblings. His mom works at the local Dollar General store and isn't home when he gets off the bus. He is supposed to stay at the house with his mom's partner, but he doesn't always do that because she is sick a lot.

When asked about the fire, he said that he didn't mean to burn the house down and felt bad. He said that he didn't want to go to jail. He said he was riding his bike down the street and went up the driveway to the residence. He said he knew that an Asian American family lived there, and they had always waved and said hello. He said they were always cooking on a "fancy grill" in their garage and that their food was different. He saw no cars in the garage and wanted to check out their "fancy grill." He said that he found a lighter, which was like a gun, so he picked it up and started playing with it. He said that he lit some papers on fire but thought he had put the fire out. He realized that his mom would be home soon, so he left.

Once informed about the situation, Roxy White showed her distress about this situation. She didn't want her son to get in trouble, nor did she want social services called. She also didn't have any money to pay restitution to the family that lost their home, and she felt very bad about what he had done. She said that he was going to be grounded forever.

Roxy is a struggling single mom. When she got pregnant, she was 16 years old and unmarried. She lives with her partner, who receives disability as her only form of income. Roxy works for minimum wage, and she tries to pick up overtime whenever possible. She said that Brandon has never really had many friends, but he seems okay to play alone. She said she wishes she had more time to spend with him, but that just isn't possible. She said that Brandon has had trouble with his grades in school, and she helps him with his homework whenever she can. She said that he is a sweet boy and takes good care of others. She said that she has never seen him set other fires or shown any interest in fire. She said that she has met the Asian American family and that Brandon has always talked about their grill and the different foods that they eat.

She does want to know how much of her time this is going to take because she doesn't get paid when she is not at work. She wants to help Brandon, but the financial stresses are really getting to be too much for her.

## **Firesetting Case Study 4**

**B.J. Nicholas**

**Fire Incident No. 09-23867**

**Incident location: 18646 Lagrange Hwy, Mount Pleasant, North Carolina**

The Mount Pleasant Fire Department received a call from Katie Williams, mother of B.J. Nicholas. She stated that her son, B.J., had been setting fires, and he had recently set some items on fire in his bedroom. She was scared and didn't know what to do. An appointment was scheduled for them to come for a screening.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams arrived promptly with B.J. and his sister Andrea. B.J. is 6 years old, and his sister is 10. B.J. is a typical 6-year-old child.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams stated that they had been married for approximately three years. She said that she and Mr. Nicholas, the children's father, divorced when B.J. was about a year old. Mr. Nicholas lives in the area and sees the children every other weekend. Mr. and Mrs. Williams said that the children love their stepfather, and Mr. Williams said that he treats them as he would his own biological children. Both parents/caregivers work, and the children participate in the afterschool program at Callaway Elementary school, where B.J. is in the first grade and Andrea is in fifth grade. B.J. is a good student, making average grades. He gets in trouble occasionally for talking in class or not staying in his seat. Katie Williams said that B.J. is in good health and seems to be a happy child.

Mrs. Williams stated that recently she has found evidence of burning around the house. She found some papers on the floor of B.J.'s closet, and he had also tried to ignite the back steps to the house. The most recent incident caused damage to B.J.'s bedspread. The damage was minimal, and the fire department was not called. She put the fire out with some water from the bathroom.

Both she and her husband smoke and have tried to "do better" with their lighters and matches. She doesn't understand the interest that B.J. is showing in fire. She said that Andrea never showed any kind of interest like this.

B.J. says that he likes school OK, but he doesn't like getting in trouble when he talks in class. He said that he enjoys helping his stepdad work in the garage on cars and other stuff like that. When asked about his firesetting, he says that he only starts small fires. He sees his parents'/caregivers' lighters, and he thinks it is cool to use them. Sometimes he tries to be like his parents/caregivers because they both smoke cigarettes. He denies trying to damage the house, himself or others with the fires.

He said they live in the country, and there aren't really any other children around to play with. He said that he likes his sister, except sometimes he gets mad because she "tattles on him."

This page intentionally left blank.

## **Firesetting Case Study 5**

**James Jacobs**

**Fire Incident No. 11-56745**

**Incident location: Smith Middle School, Madison School District, Anytown, New York**

On April 15, at 9:30 a.m., you were contacted by Principal Abrahamson of Franklin Middle School located at 555 W. Oak Street Anytown, New York, regarding a school bathroom fire that occurred at 8:30 a.m. in the eighth grade boys' bathroom. The principal said that the fire alarms began to ring at 8:30 a.m., and the school was evacuated to the school playground. He said that the janitors were checking the school when they saw smoke coming from the eighth grade boys' bathroom. Custodian Johnson immediately called 911. The Anytown Fire Department arrived and found the soap dispenser and toilet paper rolls on fire in the bathroom. The fire department extinguished the fire before it spread. Principal Abrahamson said that the fire investigator reviewed the tapes from the video cameras located in that hallway and found that the only student seen going in and out of the bathroom right before the fire was an eighth-grade student named James Jacobs. Principal Abrahamson said that the fire investigator, Mike Blaire, was currently interviewing James Jacobs and his mother, Cassandra Jacobs, in the assistant principal's office.

On April 15, at 11:30 a.m., you contact Fire Investigator Mike Blaire who provides you with the following information: Today at about 8:30 a.m., James Jacobs (a 14-year-old male) walked into the eighth-grade boys' bathroom and lit the soap dispenser and six toilet paper rolls on fire using a lighter he stole from the neighborhood convenience store, after receiving an "F" on his math test. Fire Investigator Blaire stated that James told him that if he brought home an "F" on his math test, he would be grounded for a month by his mother and not be able to go on his family's vacation to Florida. James also said that if the school burned down, his mother would not find out how poorly he was doing in school because all the papers would burn up, and he wouldn't have to go to school anymore. He also told Fire Investigator Blaire that he was glad he set the fire and closed the school for the day and didn't think that the fire was that big a deal because the building didn't burn down.

Fire Investigator Blaire stated that due to James' age and admission to setting the fire, he would be charging James with arson of a school and submitting the charging documents to the district attorney. The total fire damage estimate is \$21,000.

On May 18, you receive a telephone call from Cassandra Jacobs, James Jacobs' mother. She states that as part of James' court requirements, he is required to attend a youth firesetting intervention program and that you should be receiving a referral document from Probation Officer Julie Johnson. Cassandra went on to say that she doesn't know what to do with James. He has an older brother Jeff (16 years old) who is a high school honor student and on the lacrosse team. Jeff loves school and has never been in trouble. Then there is James, who has been suspended from school, fights with other kids in the neighborhood, has been arrested for

shoplifting and hates school. She says that she does not understand where James' anger comes from because they have a great home life. She said that they even had James tested by a psychiatrist for depression, attention deficit disorder/ADHD and bipolar disorder. The doctor said that James is a very healthy 14-year-old with no disabilities. When asked about James' firesetting history, she said that to her knowledge, he has never experimented with fire, and they have never had a house fire; the family has been practicing their home escape plan three times a year since James and Jeff were in elementary school. James is responsible for testing their home's 10 smoke alarms once a month, and no one in the home smokes. Cassandra states that she is very perplexed by James' behavior.

You schedule a date and time to interview James and his mother at their residence located at 115 Harbor Drive Anytown, New York, telephone number 000-123-4567.

## **Firesetting Case Study 6**

**Mia Keppler**

**Fire Incident No. 10-6756**

**Incident location: 1246 Temple Street, Madison, Montana**

**Telephone: 901-555-4321**

On July 4, at approximately 1608 hours, the Madison Fire Department responded to a fence fire located at 1246 Temple Street, Madison, Montana. Upon arrival, the fire captain, Mark Valenzuela, contacted resident owner Kathryn Phillips. Kathryn stated that she was in the house when her 12-year-old charge Mia Keppler ran inside the residence to tell her that the wooden fence caught on fire. Kathryn stated that she looked outside and saw the fire and then called 911. Kathryn stated that she asked Mia how the fire started, and Mia stated that she did not know. After extinguishing the fire, Captain Valenzuela observed a burned towel and melted lighter on the ground near where the fire started. He informed Kathryn of this, and she again asked Mia how the fire started, and Mia said that she did not know. Captain Valenzuela stated that someone had to light the lighter and the towel for the fire to have started. Captain Valenzuela wrote down Mia and Kathryn's information and referred the family to the youth firesetting intervention program.

On July 5, Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist Angela Wong received Captain Valenzuela's fire report and contacted Kathryn by telephone in reference to the fence fire. Kathryn stated that she did not know how the fire started but thought that Mia may know more than she was telling anyone. She related that she had Mia since she was two months old. She said Mia's mother (Maggie Keppler) was a drug addict, and after Mia was born, she gave her to Kathryn because she could not take care of her. Kathryn related that she has had guardianship of Mia since she was given to her. She stated that she is very healthy and very intelligent. She related that she gets A's and B's in school, has many friends at school and in the neighborhood, and has few, if any, behavioral problems. She said that if Mia set the fire, it was her first fire. Kathryn said that the family is very fire-safety conscious, has smoke alarms and has drawn a home escape plan. She did state that her boyfriend and Mia do not get along, so there is some stress in the household. She also stated that when Mia gets home from school, she is not allowed inside the house until she takes care of the 12 dogs that they own and breed. She is responsible for feeding, watering, exercising, washing and grooming all the dogs. After receiving this information, Angela scheduled the family for a youth firesetting intervention class including a family interview. Kathryn was not very receptive to the class and said the family would probably not attend because the fire department could not prove that Mia set the fire.

On Aug. 10, Mia, Kathy's boyfriend, Scott, and her 5-year-old son, Calvin, attended the youth firesetting intervention interview and class. During the interview, Mia admitted that she had set the fence fire but refused to say why she did it. After the interview, Mia attended the youth firesetting intervention class with eight other firesetting youth. When the adults left for the parents/caregivers group, Mia related that the reason she set the fire might be for revenge but

refused to say anything else. At the end of the class, the counselor facilitator for the parents/caregivers group sat down with Mia and asked her about the fence fire. She related that the neighbor behind them squirts water on the dogs, curses at the dogs and throws things at the dogs. She stated that she has asked her to stop numerous times, but the neighbor just ignores her. Mia stated that she got so angry with her that she lit a towel on fire with a lighter and tried to throw the towel over the fence, but the towel got caught on the fence and started the fence fire. Mia said that she was sorry, but that the neighbor just got her very angry. Mia stated that this was her first and only fire and that she would never do it again. She also told the counselor that she might like to attend counseling to work on her anger issues and her relationship with Scott so that they could be a real family.



## **Firesetting Case Study 7**

**Jose Sanchez**

**Fire Incident No. 11-200234**

**Incident location: 11234 Palmer Street, Everytown, Alaska**

**Telephone: 011-543-2100**

On Feb. 5, at approximately 0801 hours, Everytown Fire Department Dispatch received a report of a house fire at 11234 Palmer Street. Upon arrival, the residence was found to be engulfed in flames on the northeast side. After the fire was extinguished, Fire Investigator Megan Miller began her investigation.

Investigator Miller found that the area of fire origin was the guest bathroom and the 12-year-old resident's bedroom. She also located multiple pour patterns of a flammable liquid throughout the residence that had not been ignited. She found the flammable liquid to be Jim Beam whiskey. She also located the empty bottle of Jim Beam lying on the living room floor. During her examination of the fire scene, she was advised by Everytown Police Detective Joe Morse that the only person at home at the time of the fire was 12-year-old Jose Sanchez and his dog, Bomber. Jose is the son of the homeowners Alma and Jorge Sanchez. Upon completing her fire scene examination, Investigator Miller interviewed Jose Sanchez about the fire.

Jose is a 12-year-old Hispanic male who attends the sixth grade at Alhambra Middle School and is an "A" student. Jose is very small for his age, and he stated that he has only one friend and the rest of his class picks on him because of his size and intelligence. Jose stated that he lives with his mother and father, and that his older sister Maria, who is 16 years old, sometimes lives with them but mostly lives with her biological father. Jose stated that he suffers from asthma but does not take medicine and has no other medical conditions. He also stated that he has never been in trouble at school or with the law.

When asked about what happened this morning in reference to the house fire, Jose related the following story. On Feb. 5, at about 0745 hours, his mother left for work, and he was getting ready to walk to school. He stated that a man wearing a ski mask, black-hooded robe and white tube socks with red stripes pulled over police-type black boots broke into his residence through the back sliding glass door. He stated that the unidentified man went through the kitchen drawers until he found a lighter and then went to his parents'/caregivers' liquor cabinet and took out a bottle of Jim Beam whiskey and poured the whiskey all over the house. He stated that the man then came into his bedroom and grabbed a pocketknife from Jose's dresser and cut Jose on the underside of his left forearm, causing a scratch. Jose stated that during the assault, he was able to get away from the man and get his dog Bomber, Bomber's collar and leash, and leave the house with Bomber to run down the street to his friend's house where he called 911. Fire Investigator Miller asked Jose if he was upset by the fire and the fact that his property had burned, and Jose responded that he could always get new stuff and that it was "no big deal."

An investigation of the scene showed no forced entry into the residence from the rear sliding glass door. There were no footprints found in the muddy backyard. Two of the local power company's service workers were in the alley behind the house from approximately 0730 on and did not see anyone in the rear yard of this residence or in the alley. The service workers also related that they were working directly behind this residence the whole time and saw no movement in the backyard and heard no noise from the backyard. The knife that Jose stated the intruder used to cut him was found on the dresser of Jose's burned room, and a lighter was found on Jose's bedroom floor. It also should be noted that the only two rooms in the house burned were Jose's bedroom and bathroom.

When Jose was interviewed again, with the lack of evidentiary information regarding his story, he still would not admit to setting the fire; however, he did agree to go to any type of class or do any type of community service that was asked of him.

Investigator Miller interviewed Jose's mother, Alma Sanchez, who related that Jose is a very well-behaved boy and does excellently at school. She stated that he rarely gets into any trouble. She stated that he does not have many friends and recently got into a fight with his only friend from down the street. When she was told about the story Jose gave about an intruder and then given the information about the lack of evidence that would verify his story, she stated that she believed that he did start the fire but did not have any idea why he would do it. Mrs. Sanchez went on to say that to the best of her knowledge, Jose has never set fires inside or outside the house because he always talks about the firemen coming to his school to teach his class about fire safety and reminds his father that smoking is unhealthy. She said that he is even in charge of testing their smoke alarms every month. Alma could provide no further information. Fire Investigator Miller was just about to leave the Sanchez residence when Mr. Sanchez arrived home and immediately began to yell at Jose telling Jose that he was a "good-for-nothing spoiled brat." Mrs. Sanchez had to calm him down before he could talk with Fire Investigator Miller.

Fire Investigator Miller referred Jose and his family to the youth firesetting intervention program.

## **Firesetting Case Study 8**

**Kyle Spellman**

**Fire Incident No. 10-44689**

**Incident location: 634 Concho Way, Hertown, Oklahoma**

On Sept. 12, at about 0300 hours, the Hertown Fire and Rescue was dispatched to a garage fire with burn injuries located at 634 Concho Way. Upon arrival, it was found that the homeowner had attempted to extinguish the fire with a garden hose, but the fire spread to the neighbor's garage. Fire Captain George Hook contacted homeowner Dory Spellman who told him that her 14-year-old grandson Kyle had awakened her and told her that the garage was on fire. She stated that she and her boyfriend Alvin immediately went to the rear yard and grabbed a garden hose and tried to extinguish the fire, but the fire was too big and had spread to the neighbor's garage. She stated that Kyle had received second- and third-degree burns on his legs and that no one else was injured. She said that the paramedics transported Kyle to the Hertown Burn Unit and that her boyfriend Alvin (Kyle's father) was on the way to the hospital. She stated that Kyle told her that he and his friend Trent found the garage on fire. Captain Hook contacted Fire Investigator James Newman and requested that he respond to the fire.

Investigator Newman examined the area of the fire and found a can of WD-40 lying under a bush behind the garage along with a BBQ igniter. After Fire Investigator Newman investigated the fire scene, he went to the burn unit to interview Kyle.

Kyle stated that he had been igniting WD-40 with a "BBQ clicker" and accidentally lit a plastic bottle containing gasoline on fire that had been lying near the garage. The "BBQ clicker" was an igniter switch from a BBQ grill that sparked when squeezed. He stated that he went to pick up the plastic bottle and move it away from the garage, and he dropped it, burning his legs and catching a pile of rags on fire that caught the garage on fire. He stated that he then went to get the garden hose and tried to put the fire out but couldn't, so he awakened his mom and told her about the fire. When asked what role Trent had in the fire, Kyle stated that Trent just watched but did not play with any fire. He also stated that Trent told him not to play with fire because he could get hurt. Kyle then stated "I lied to you. Trent was never there. I told my mom that so I wouldn't get into trouble."

The burns on Kyle's legs were second and third degree, and he would be in the hospital about one month for treatment.

Kyle is a 14-year-old male who attends Sunbeam Middle School. He has a "C" grade point average and states that school is "OK" and the most fun part is being with his friends. He lives with his mother, her boyfriend (his father) and a 6-year-old sister named Heather. Kyle has no known medical problems and has no criminal history. Kyle states that he has experimented with fire on numerous occasions but has never been caught, and the fire has never spread. So, he thought he could control all fire and that only stupid people get burned. He stated that he was making a torch at 0300 hours because he was bored and could not sleep. He stated that he likes to build fires when he is anxious because it calms him down and makes him feel good. He set this fire because he thought it would calm him down and help him sleep.

This page intentionally left blank.

## **Firesetting Case Study 9**

**Nathan Adams**

**Fire Incident No. 09-8795012**

**Incident location: 1534 W. Tether Trail, Truetown, Illinois**

On March 10, at approximately 1343 hours, Officer Coker responded to 1534 W. Tether Trail in reference to an incorrigible juvenile call. The complainant stated that a young juvenile male had been starting fires under the carport of his residence. Upon arrival, Officer Coker was contacted by Fire Captain Adam Ellis who stated that 12-year-old Nathan Adams had been burning a cardboard box in the carport area of his residence. Captain Ellis also stated that he and the fire company had gone into the residence and found it to be very unsanitary, with old food lying in the kitchen on the counters and floors, and trash, clothing and clutter strewn throughout the residence. The conditions were so severe that rats had run over the boots of two of the firefighters who responded to the residence.

Officer Coker then contacted Nathan Adams, a 12-year-old male. Nathan had shaved his head and applied some type of red makeup in a flame pattern on his head, placed black makeup around his eyes and painted his fingernails black. Nathan stated that he was cooking eggs on the stove when the box caught fire, and he took the box outside and watched it burn. Officer Coker asked if this was true and Nathan said no, he just wanted to see fire, so he burned the box using a torch lighter.

When asked if this was his first fire, Nathan stated that he sets fires in the woods behind his house all the time but is always able to put them out with a water hose. Nathan was also asked about the condition of his residence, and he stated that his mom is always drunk and knocks things on the floor and never picks them up. He also stated that his mother blows marijuana smoke and cigarette smoke in his face and tells him that someday he will be a smoker. He stated that the house always looks like this because his mom is always drunk and never cleans, does laundry, takes out the trash or picks things up off the floor. Nathan also related that he must cook his own food and wash his clothes and that sometimes his mother is gone for days at a time and there is nobody to watch him (Nathan is an only child).

Nathan told Officer Coker that he likes death metal music and that is why he dresses like he does. When asked why he was not in school, he stated that he hates school, dropped out, and his mother does not make him go anymore. During the conversation with Nathan, his mother arrived at the residence. She smelled of alcohol and was slurring her words when contacted by Officer Coker. Mrs. Adams became very belligerent and refused to answer any questions after she was told why the police and fire personnel were at her residence.

Officer Coker took custody of Nathan and transported him to the police station so the fire investigators could interview him about the fire. Social Services was contacted and responded to the scene to offer their assistance to Mrs. Adams. Upon the social workers' contact with Mrs. Adams, she promptly spit in their faces and slammed the door on them.

Fire Investigator Trenton responded to the police station to interview Nathan about his alleged firesetting activities. During the interview, Nathan told Fire Investigator Trenton that he had been arrested seven times for setting fires to dumpsters, shopping carts and playground equipment. Nathan said that fire is his best friend because he hates people; people are mean to him. He said that he sets fires every day but doesn't get caught very often. He said that he hasn't been to school for two years and that he has been expelled from three school districts because of beating up teachers and students. He said that he suffers from ADHD, but his mother never buys him his medicine because she uses the money to buy her drugs instead. Fire Investigator Trenton found during the interview that Nathan was on intensive probation for the sexual assault of a 10-year-old neighborhood girl. Upon completion of his interview, Nathan was turned over to the custody of Officer Coker. Nathan was arrested for his probation violation and taken to the county juvenile detention facility for processing.

Based on the living condition of his residence, Nathan was placed in the custody of Child Social Services without the consent of his mother, who refused to sign the custody notice.

## **Firesetting Case Study 10**

**Mel Bridges**

**Fire Incident No. 11-23589**

**Incident location: 543 Elm Street, No. 60, Yourtown, Michigan**

On Jan. 5, at approximately 0835 hours, the Yourtown Fire Department responded to an apartment fire at 543 Elm Street #60. Upon arrival, they found a bedroom fire in apartment No. 60 with smoke alarm and sprinkler activation. When Fire Captain Randy Rodriguez found out that an 8-year-old girl had started this fire, he immediately contacted Fire Investigator Marcy Johnson and requested that she respond to the fire scene. Investigator Johnson contacted apartment resident, Courtney Bridges, who related the following fire history: On Dec. 23, 2010, between 0820 and 0828 hours, Mel Bridges used a cigarette lighter she stole from her mother's bedroom and set fire to her 9-year-old brother Ben's bedding and/or mattress because she was mad at him for looking at her. She then returned to her own bedroom and hid under the covers without making any attempt to extinguish the fire. Ben discovered the fire as he left the bathroom. Upon discovering the fire, Ben attempted to get Mel to leave her room because of the fire, but she would not respond to get out from under her covers. When he pulled her from her bed and out into the hallway, she pushed him down into the doorway of the burning bedroom. She then returned to her bedroom. He escaped down the stairs alerting his mother, who was sleeping on the couch. Ben exited the apartment and Courtney ran upstairs to Ben's bedroom. She attempted to put the fire out by dousing it with water but was unsuccessful. She then attempted to get Mel to leave her room. However, Mel refused to leave her bed until her mother screamed and cursed at her. Courtney then went downstairs and retrieved a fire extinguisher and attempted to put out the fire. Ben contacted 911 from the residence next door, and the Yourtown Fire Department responded and extinguished the fire.

Courtney went on to say that on Dec. 28, 2010, between 0800 and 0830 hours, Mel was the only person on the second floor of the apartment when she was seen walking down the steps. A few minutes later, Ben walked upstairs to find papers he had put on his bedroom door in flames. He yelled for Courtney, and when she arrived, the fire had burned itself out. It was then discovered that a folding pocketknife had been stabbed into the wall of Ben's room with a handwritten note attached that read "YOU WILL DIE." The cumulative damage for the two fires was \$1,500. However, Mel was never referred to a youth firesetting intervention program.

On Jan. 5, 2011, at approximately 0930 hours, Investigator Johnson conducted a taped interview with Mel regarding the two fires. Fire Investigator Johnson advised Mel of her juvenile Miranda warnings, for which she waived her rights and agreed to talk with Investigator Johnson. Mel admitted to three incidents of firesetting: the two previously mentioned fires that had damaged her brother's bedroom and another fire. She stated that she set these fires because she was angry with Ben and wanted to scare and kill him. She also admitted to writing and stabbing the death threat note into his bedroom wall. Mel also stated that she didn't have any friends at school or at home because she likes to beat them up and set their hair on fire with lighters she steals from her mother's bedroom. Mel also told Fire Investigator Johnson that she likes to see people hurt and, "Fire is the best way to hurt someone really bad."

Mel is an 8-year-old female and is reported to be in good health. She is an excellent student receiving straight A's in her second-grade class at Campus Elementary School. She lives with her mother, Courtney, and her brother, Ben. She is currently under psychiatric care regarding issues of alleged prior sexual abuse and molestation by a stepfather. She is currently taking Zoloft and Depakote for her psychiatric condition. Mel was referred to the Yourtown Firesetter Program in January for lighting matches and dropping them on her brother's bedroom floor. She and her mother and brother attended the program two years prior. At that time, she was already in counseling through a nonprofit counseling agency. Mel has had numerous behavioral problems to the extent that her mother has placed an alarm on her bedroom door and video cameras throughout the apartment to monitor Mel's activities.

Upon consultation with Mel's psychiatrist, Mel was referred to a 23-hour locked mental health facility for evaluation of her behavior. The attending psychiatrist contacted Courtney to tell her that Mel had been evaluated and was determined not to be a danger to herself or others, and she could be picked up from the mental health facility.



## **Firesetting Case Study 11**

**Michael Capman**

**Fire Incident No. 09-56678**

**Incident location: Carson Middle School, Histown, Indiana**

On Nov. 15, Carson Middle School Psychologist Jada Smoot contacted the Histown Fire Department about one of her students, 15-year-old Michael Capman. She stated that she found Michael's notebook covered with drawings of people on fire with the written message, "Life sucks, then you burn." She stated that when she found this, she contacted Michael's mother, Jeri. Jeri told Jada that she had found burned school papers, schoolbooks and other items burned in Michael's bedroom closet. She also stated that she found 15 lighters and a long PVC pipe tube under Michael's mattress. She stated that when she asked Michael about the burned items, lighters and PVC pipe, he told her to "f--- off." Jeri went on to say that Michael was sneaking out of the house in the middle of the night dressed in black, carrying a black backpack, and she didn't know what she should do because every time she confronted him, he punched her in the face. Jada also stated that after speaking to Michael's mother, she contacted the Histown Police Department to report the possible bomb and abuse.

Jada related that Michael had been having problems in school for the past six months. She stated that his grades had dropped from A's and B's to D's and F's. She also stated that he had been skipping classes or walking in halfway through a class. He had stopped turning in homework assignments and had begun to disrespect his teachers. A urine test was requested by the school, and when done, showed no signs of drugs or alcohol in his system. She went on to say that Michael had become very distant and appeared to be very depressed. She stated that he no longer talked to his friends and did not hang out with anyone from the school. He also failed to try out for the track team this year even though he got first in the 6.2-mile run last year at the state meet. Michael has no known medical problems and had never had a behavior problem in school until six months ago. She stated that no one knows why he is acting like this. Per his mother, nothing in his life has changed over the past three years; no deaths, no moves, no family problems and no known problems with friends. It is a mystery as to why he has changed so dramatically.

Jada stated that she contacted the fire department at the request of the bomb squad detective.

Contact was then made with Michael's mom, Jeri Capman. Jeri stated that the bomb squad just left her residence located at 1615 State Street with three PVC tubes. The bomb squad detective, Mark Morris, had advised her that these PVC tubes were actual explosive devices, and that the police were out looking for Michael and that he would be arrested for bomb making. Jeri went on to say that she had no idea what had happened to Michael. Up until about six months ago, Michael was involved in sports, school clubs, Boy Scouts and church. Then one day he just changed. She said that he began to build things that blew up in the backyard, put burn marks on his arms, yell and scream at her and his father Matt, and push and hit both. He also started to steal money from his 17-year-old sister, Valerie. She said that he even threatened to kill them if they called the police. Jeri stated that she and her husband are willing to do anything to help their son, including having him locked up.

This page intentionally left blank.

## **Firesetting Case Study 12**

**Robert Welsh**

**Fire Incident No. 10-67543**

**Incident location: 7810 E. Ribbon Lane, Stocktown, Mississippi**

On June 5, at approximately 0800 hours, the Stocktown Fire Dispatch Center received a frantic 911 call from Jasmine Welsh. Jasmine was heard screaming that her residence was on fire and that she and her two children, Robert, 5 years old, and Natalie, 2 years old, were trapped in the bedroom by fire and could not get out. The dispatcher could hear smoke alarms ringing in the background, along with Jasmine screaming. The dispatch center immediately dispatched the Stocktown Fire and Rescue Service while staying on the telephone with Jasmine to give her instructions. The fire department was on the scene within two minutes. However, during that time, telephone contact had been lost with Jasmine. Fire crews found Jasmine, Natalie and Robert unconscious in the bedroom and removed them from the home. Jasmine died at the scene, Natalie died at the Stocktown Hospital Emergency Room, and Robert was in critical condition at Stocktown Hospital's Burn Unit with third degree burns over 40% of his body.

Fire Investigator Damien Peters responded to the scene and oversaw the investigation. During his investigation, friends of the family told him that Robert had been caught setting fires during the week prior to the fatal house fire. He had set fires in the family room, to a pile of clothes near the washer and dryer, and outside on the deck. His firesetting had begun after his mother's boyfriend was arrested for molesting him. Robert is a 5-year-old white male who resides with his mother, sister, mother's girlfriend and her children. He attends Stocktown Headstart and is an average student. He suffers from no known medical or psychological illnesses and has not been reported to have any behavioral problems. Fire Investigator Peters contacted Robert's grandmother Nellie at the scene, and Nellie told Investigator Peters that under no circumstances did Robert start the fire and that Jasmine's ex-boyfriend must have started the fire even though he lives 50 miles away and has no means of transportation.

Fire Investigator Peters' investigation revealed that the fire started in the middle of the family room floor, and the ignition point was not near any electrical outlets or appliances. He also found a burned pack of matches under the remains of the burned sofa, near the point of origin, and numerous burn marks near the washer and dryer and on the family room floor. Throughout his investigation, Peters found that the family was what he considered "very dysfunctional." Robert's mother was divorced from Robert's father because her best friend had run away with Robert's father. After a year, the best friend "dumped" Robert's father and started dating Robert's mother. Robert's mother Jasmine was recently diagnosed with severe depression and would sleep up to 18 hours a day. Because of this, Robert and Natalie were left unsupervised up to 18 hours per day.

Robert was released from the burn center approximately five months after the fire. Fire Investigator Peters finally was able to interview Robert. Robert stated that he was sorry that he burned up the house, but that fire made him feel better and was pretty to look at. When asked if

he set fires before the house caught on fire, he stated: “Lots of them. I like fire.” When asked what he knew about fire, he said that it was pretty, warm and colorful. When asked if he would play with fire again, he said, “yes.”

**IX. ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS THAT SUPPORT THE INTAKE, INTERVIEW/ SCREENING AND INTERVENTION PROCESS**

**MANDATORY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Type of abuse	Signs/symptoms
<b>Physical abuse</b>	Unexplained burns, cuts, bruises, welts, bite marks, antisocial behavior, problems in school, fear of adults.
<b>Emotional abuse</b>	Apathy, hostility or stress, lack of concentration, eating disorders.
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	Inappropriate interest or knowledge of sexual acts, nightmares, bed wetting, drastic changes in appetite, overcompliance or excessive aggression, fear of a particular person or family member.
<b>Neglect</b>	Unsuitable clothing for weather, dirty or unbathed, extreme hunger, parent/caregiver lack of supervision.

Slide 3-26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. Mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect.
1. All 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories have statutes specifying procedures that a mandated reporter must follow when making a report of child abuse or neglect.
  2. Mandated reporters are individuals who are required by law to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. Members of a youth firesetting program would be classified as mandated reporters.
  3. Most states require mandated reporters to make a report immediately upon gaining knowledge or suspicion of abusive or neglectful situations.

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS**

- Confidentiality of information.
- Release of liability.
- Release of information.

**Locate and peruse the example release forms from the state of Minnesota.**

Slide 3-27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- B. Confidentiality of information.

1. Program personnel need to assure parents/caregivers that information obtained through the screening process will be kept confidential.
  2. Referrals may be made, such as to behavioral and mental health and/or counseling agencies, and information released appropriate to those professions only if the referral is made and/or it is relevant to their care and treatment of the child and/or family.
  3. If information is obtained from the youth that indicates they are being harmed or intend to harm themselves and/or their family, this information must be released to the proper authorities.
  4. Parents/caregivers/guardians should be informed that they will be required to sign a release of liability before the youth can be interviewed by program personnel. This is for the protection of the program personnel and the agencies involved in the firesetting program.
- C. Release of liability.
1. Liability refers to the potential for firesetting intervention programs to be at risk for legal action because of the behavior of the firesetting youth and their family.
  2. It is important that programs protect themselves from being held liable for the actions of firesetting youths.
  3. Liability waivers that release the intervention program from being responsible for the actions of youths should be developed and implemented. Parents/caregivers of children or youths participating in the program must sign this form prior to the screening process.
  4. This release of liability should be written with advice from the AHJ's legal counsel and the local district attorney.
- D. Release of information.
1. When working with children and/or youths and their families, confidentiality of information is an important aspect to protect.
  2. When a juvenile is referred to an intervention program, it is essential to obtain a signed "Release of Information" form from the parents/caregivers.
  3. The "Release of Information" form provides the program officials the right to release information received to those persons and/or agencies necessary for intervention.

4. Without an official “Release of Information,” no information may exchange hands, thereby preventing any intervention from taking place and thus wasting the time and energy of the program.
5. Jurisdictions have specific procedures for the proper release of information. The legal counsel for the AHJ and the local district attorney should be consulted.

**X. FOLLOW-UP**

---

- What is the purpose and value of follow-up?
- What actions are typically taken as follow-up to a youth firesetting case that’s received service from the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program?

Slide 3-28

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. Our youth firesetting intervention programs are only as good as the data shown through our evaluation process.
- B. Though evaluation is covered in a later unit, information is ascertained in the follow-up information that you can gather with your youths and families.
- C. It is important that follow-up contact be made with each family who participates in a youth firesetting intervention program.
- D. Unfortunately, follow-up is a program component that is often overlooked, and for various reasons, parents/caregivers may not always report a repeat incidence.
- E. Preferred methods of communication.
  1. Follow-up can be conducted in various ways to include telephone calls, written contacts (hard copy or electronic) or home visitations.
  2. There is no specific requirement for when your follow-up should be conducted, but as you will learn in a later unit, make sure you are able to complete said follow-up as spelled out in your SOP/SOG.

F. Recidivism.

1. Challenges with follow-up often involve the transient nature of today's society.
2. Due to many factors — some beyond our control — recidivism is very difficult to assess.
3. As kids become adults and move away, we can no longer follow up on their activities. Additionally, juvenile records are sealed to most agencies, and we must recognize that aggressive behaviors may not continue with firesetting but may present in other criminal activities and therefore not show firesetting recidivist tendencies.
4. While follow-up takes time and effort, it helps to reinforce the elements of your program and demonstrates that the youth firesetting team is interested in the well-being of the youth and their family.
5. Follow-up is an essential component of program evaluation that must be performed to prove the youth firesetting program is working.



## ACTIVITY 3.4

### Identify Simple Versus Complex Firesetting Cases

#### Purpose

Distinguish between simple versus complex youth firesetting cases, recommend appropriate interventions, and compose an essay that describes and compares simple and complex firesetting. Then ascend to suggesting interventions for both types of cases.

#### Directions

##### Part 1



1. This is a graded activity.
2. Working individually, you will compose an essay that describes and compares simple and complex firesetting and specifically contains:
  - a. One distinct description of what is a simple firesetting case and a complex firesetting case.
  - b. Include the circumstances and factors that make it a simple versus complex case.
  - c. Support descriptions with:
    - Examples (evidence).
    - Relevant terminology.
    - Identification of relevant typologies and motivations.

##### Part 2

1. Then build on your essay by recommending a common intervention(s) for a simple firesetting case, as well as a common intervention(s) for a complex firesetting case. You should support intervention recommendations with:
  - a. Examples (evidence).
  - b. Relevant terminology.
2. While there is no word limit to the assignment, the essay should be thorough and in alignment with the criteria set forth in the grading rubric. Arial or Times New Roman, 12 pt. font is preferred.
3. There is a copy of the grading rubric in the Student Manual (SM) for reference.

This page intentionally left blank.

**XI. SUMMARY**

 **FEMA**  U.S. Fire Administration

## SUMMARY

- Identification components of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- Intake and interview/screening components of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- Best practices for interviewing youths and caregivers.

Slide 3-32

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

 **FEMA**  U.S. Fire Administration

## SUMMARY (cont'd)

- How to evaluate the level of risk for repeat firesetting behavior given a screening form and case studies.
- Intervention options of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- Follow-up component of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Slide 3-33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

This page intentionally left blank.

**APPENDIX A**

**YOUTH FIRE INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT  
FORMS**

This page intentionally left blank.



# YOUTH FIRE INTERVENTION

Assessment Forms

## CONTENTS

This packet includes all the forms needed to complete a youth fire intervention assessment and determine an appropriate intervention strategy. Thank you to all of the Minnesota YFPI Professionals who helped make this project possible.

## Youth Fire Intervention Team

Supported by:

Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division

Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association

This page intentionally left blank.



## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This packet contains the forms needed for a complete youth fire intervention assessment. Thank you to all of the Minnesota Fire Service Professionals who contributed to creating the supplemental forms. The Oregon Assessment Tool, included in this packet, is designed for use by youth fire intervention specialists to screen youth referred to them for a fire-related incident. This is a basic assessment tool. It is used to decide if a youth needs fire education intervention or needs to be referred to other community agencies. This tool is only the first step in the evaluation process for a youth who is using fire. It is not a risk inventory, nor does it attempt to predict recidivism.

The Oregon Assessment Tool reflects the work of many fire and mental health professionals in Oregon. The format of the interview is based on the work of Laurie Birchill, LCSW. Birchill developed a screening tool for youth applying for entrance into residential treatment in 1989. Her instrument proved to be user-friendly and stood the test of time. Birchill made a significant contribution to this project by refining many of her original questions. We are grateful for her expertise.

The Oregon fire service participated in the research that formed the basis for the assessment tool. They recognized the need for a tool based on empirical data. During the course of the project, interventionists from over 20 fire departments participated in the development of this tool. We are grateful for the dedication of the many men and women from the Oregon fire service who worked so hard to make this a reality. Additional funding and facilitation for the assessment tool project was provided by the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Unit, where Judy Okulitch was the program coordinator and Carol Baumann was the program specialist.

The Oregon Assessment Tool entailed the creation, collection and formatting of public documents. All rights to the tool are reserved and protected. Duplication of any or all of the tool must be with the express written permission of the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal. Any changes to the tool will affect its integrity and are prohibited.

\*The Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team is using this tool with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

Please check the Minnesota State Fire Marshal website regularly for updates on materials.  
<https://sfm.dps.mn.gov>

This page intentionally left blank.



**Youth Fire Intervention (Form #1)**  
**INTAKE INFORMATION**

**Youth Information:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name - First: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle: \_\_\_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Age at time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the youth a smoker? Yes No

What is the youth's primary language? \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

School attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

What types of social media does the youth use? \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Youth Medical History:**

Does the child have any medical or mental health conditions? Yes No

If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the youth receiving treatment for those conditions? Yes No

If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the child on medication? Yes No

Is yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_

Other agencies working with the family? \_\_\_\_\_

Has there been a stressful event in the youth's life over the last six months? \_\_\_\_\_

**Caregiver Information:**

Family type (Birth parents, single parent, divorced, adopted, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible Adult #1: Lives with child? Yes No Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Highest level of education: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible Adult #2: Lives with child? Yes No Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Highest level of education: \_\_\_\_\_

**Youth / Family Residence Information:**

Number of children in primary residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Does youth participate in free lunch program? Yes No

Smokers in the household? Yes No

Type of residence (Single family home, apartment, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

---

**COMPONENTS OF THE YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION PROCESS**

---

**Fire Scene Information:**

Date of fire: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Run number: \_\_\_\_\_

Did the child or anyone else sustain any injuries? Yes No

If yes, what type? \_\_\_\_\_

Location of fire: \_\_\_\_\_

If location was a structure, was it occupied? Yes No

Type of fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Ignition device: \_\_\_\_\_ Novelty lighter? Yes No

Dollar loss: \_\_\_\_\_ Flammable liquids? Yes No

Other details:

**Accomplice(s):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Information:**

This page intentionally left blank.



**Youth Fire Intervention** (Form #2)

**PARTICIPATION RELEASE AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

The Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT) uses the youth firesetting assessment tool that was developed by the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office. This tool evaluates a child's involvement in fire activity.

The assessment evaluates the firesetting behavior by reviewing six types of individual characteristics: demographic, physical, cognitive, emotional, motivation and psychiatric.

Based on the results of the evaluation, your child's tendencies will place him/her in one of the following areas of concern:

- Some concern**            Needs educational intervention.
- Moderate concern**    Needs referral for evaluation by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist and educational intervention.
- High concern**            Needs immediate referral for evaluation by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist and educational intervention counseling.

If educational intervention is indicated, the YFIT will offer further educational activity for your child. Participation in the program is not a guarantee that firesetting behavior will stop.

Depending on the individual case, the school your child attends, local law enforcement, social services, mental health or other agencies may become involved.

Upon request, the questions asked in this evaluation may be viewed prior to signing this release.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the previous statement and do hereby grant permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention program. Although I understand that YFIT does everything in its power to protect juvenile information, I authorize release of information regarding my child to such other governmental entities and agencies as may be deemed appropriate by the intervention specialist.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date / Time

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness signature

This page intentionally left blank.





**Youth Fire Intervention (Form #3)**  
**RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

Youth's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Case #: \_\_\_\_\_

***Authorization for Release and Receipt of Confidential Information***

By signing below, I agree to the terms of the release form.

I understand that the Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT) includes representatives of fire and police departments, the juvenile justice and probation systems, public and private mental health facilities and their associates, public and private children-and-youth social services, the state mental health care consultant and the local school system.

I hereby authorize YFIT, including all of the agencies listed above, to receive any and all information deemed necessary from the sources listed below:

- \*Referral/admission information
- \*Education reports
- \*Comprehensive evaluation reports
- \*Fire/police/probation reports
- \*Psychiatric assessment
- \*Progress notes
- \*Individual education plan
- \*Assessment interview
- \*Psychological testing
- \*Social history
- \*Discharge summary

For the purposes of:

- \*Planning intervention
- \*Reporting problems/concerns
- \*Coordinating services

I hereby authorize YFIT to provide the following types of information to agencies deemed appropriate:

- \*Referral information
- \*Intervention plan assessment
- \*Progress notes
- \*Case reports

Furthermore, I hereby release YFIT and its authorized agents from any and all legal responsibility or liability stemming from the release of information indicated and authorized herein.

Information released with this authorization will not be given, sold, transferred, or in any way be relayed to any other person or agency not specified above, without written consent.

I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time by submitting a written request to the Minnesota Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program.

Counseling provider name: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date / Time

This page intentionally left blank.

## YOUTH INTERVIEW

Youth Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Place a check mark next to the scoring level that best describes the situation for this youth. Expand the questions as you feel necessary to complete the interview with confidence. Use the comment line for anything that seems out of the ordinary or supports your impressions.

**A.** Is the youth experiencing any school problems?

Suggested questions:

*How's school?*

*What do you like about school?*

*What don't you like? Do you get in trouble at school?*

*Do you have lots of friends at school?*

*Who is your best friend?*

**Scoring:**

- \_1 The youth likes school and has minimal problems.
- \_2 The youth has some trouble in school either socially or academically.
- \_3 The youth has frequently been in trouble at school, hates the teachers, doesn't like the classes, has been expelled or suspended, etc.

Comments:

**B.** How does the youth get along with the others in the neighborhood?

Suggested questions:

*Do you have any friends in the neighborhood that you hang out with?*

*Do you like them?*

*Do they like you?*

*Do you ever get picked on by the kids in the neighborhood?*

**Scoring:**

- \_1 The youth has friends in the neighborhood.
- \_2 The youth gets into fights frequently or has few friends. The youth may get bullied.
- \_3 The youth is involved in a gang or hanging out with others involved in delinquent or criminal behavior.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

C. What was set on fire? Was there anything significant about the object?

Suggested questions:

*Tell me about what was burned?*

*Tell me about the fire.*

*I wonder why you wanted to burn?*

*Have you ever burned this before?*

*What other types of things have you burned?*

*Whose stuff did you burn?*

**Scoring:**

- \_1 The object that was burned had little emotional significance for the youth. (i.e. toilet paper, leaves or trash).
- \_2 The object that was burned had some emotional significance for the youth (i.e. plastic army figures, other person's possessions).
- \_3 The object that was burned had emotional significance for the youth or someone else (i.e. sibling's crib or favorite toy, a parent's or caregiver's possession).

Comments:

D. Where was the fire set? Was there significance to that location?

Suggested questions:

*Where did the fire start?*

*If at home: What room were you in or were you outside?*

*If not at home: Do you go to this place often? Do you like it there?*

**Scoring:**

- \_1 The fire was started in a place where the youth plays such as his/her bedroom, a closet, a fort, a hiding place.
- \_2 The fire was started in a place with community significance i.e. church, a school, a park, in the forest.
- \_3 The fire was set in a building occupied with people with the intent to place people at-risk.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

E. How much planning was done prior to the fire?

Suggested questions:

*Tell me what you were you doing right before the fire?*

*Did you think about how you were going to start the fire?*

*Where did you get the things that were burned?*

*What was used to light the fire? Where did it come from?*

**Scoring:**

\_1 The fire was started using available materials; the act of firesetting was spontaneous and done without planning. Matches and lighters were readily available.

\_2 There was some pre-planning for the fire and some gathering of materials; however, the fire was not especially thought out.

\_3 There was definite planning for the fire, materials were sought out, and matches and lighters were stashed and/or hidden at the site beforehand. Accelerants may have been used.

Comments:

F. Who was with the youth at the time of fire?

Suggested questions:

*Was anyone with you when the fire started?*

*If yes, who?*

*What did they say about the fire?*

*Did the person with you do anything as the fire started burning?*

**Scoring:**

\_1 The youth was with many peers/siblings when the fire was set.

\_2 The youth was with other peers/siblings and this youth might have instigated the fire.

\_3 The youth was alone when the fire was set.

Comments:

G. What was the youth's response to the fire?

Suggested questions:

*What was the first thing you did when the fire started to burn?*

*What was the next thing?*

*Did you tell someone (an adult) about the fire?*

*If so, who was it: When was it?*

**Scoring:**

\_1 The youth tried to extinguish the fire and called for help.

\_1 The youth engaged in match or lighter play.

\_2 The youth may have made some attempts to extinguish the fire, but called for help only after others discovered the fire.

\_3 The youth ignored the fire, did not call for help, stayed to watch, or left the fire scene.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

H. How did the youth feel after the fire?

Suggested questions:

*What did your caregiver say about the fire?*

*Was anyone angry with you about the fire?*

*Do you care what others think of you after starting the fire?*

*Do you feel like you did something bad or did the fire scare you?*

*Did you think you would get into trouble?*

**Scoring**

1 The youth shows remorse for the fire.

2 The youth showed interest in how others reacted.

3 The youth is unconcerned about others' reactions or is pleased with the fire.

Comments:

I. Was the youth supervised when the fire occurred?

Suggested questions:

*When you were playing around with the matches and lighters, where was mom or dad?*

*Was anybody at home at the time? Who was taking care of you?*

**Scoring:**

1 Parents or caregivers were home at the time or youth was under appropriate supervision.

2 Parents or caregivers were home but unavailable or not directly supervised.

3 The youth was left alone or with younger children.

Comments:

J. How knowledgeable is the youth about fire? How much does the youth understand about the dangers of fire? Does the youth use fire for power or control?

Suggested questions:

*Did you think that the fire could get out of control and get really big?*

*Do you feel you can control a fire that you start?*

*Can you determine how big the fire will get? How?*

*What did you want to have happen when you started the fire?*

**Scoring:**

1 The youth is knowledgeable about some aspects of fire survival but is unaware of the destructiveness or speed of fire.

2 The youth may indicate some concern about the dangers and risk of firesetting but thinks they can control it

3 The youth does have an understanding of fire and uses it to defy authority, gain attention or express anger

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

**K.** Has the family experienced any kind of crisis in the past six months?

Suggested questions:

Tell me about home

Do you like being at home?

Is there anything about home that you don't like?

Has anything happened at home in the last six months that upset you?

Is there anything different about home lately?

**Scoring:**

\_1 There has been no major crisis in the family in the last six months.

\_2 There have been some changes in the family structure in the last six months, ie: divorce, death, moving, etc.

\_3 The family is in a state of crisis or chaos.

Comments:

**L.** Does the youth have a fire history?

Suggested questions:

*Tell me the other times you have burned things?*

*What was the smallest fire? What was the largest fire?*

*Have you ever used an accelerant like gasoline or lighter fluid?*

*How about fireworks? Have you ever altered fireworks?*

**Scoring:**

\_1 This is the first known incidence of firesetting.

\_2 The youth admitted to setting from 2—5 fires.

\_3 The youth has started more than 5 unsupervised fires.

Comments:

**M.** Has the youth ever been burned?

Suggested questions.

*Have you ever been hurt by fire?*

*Tell me what happened?*

*Where did it happen? Who was involved?*

**Scoring:**

\_The youth has never been burned.

\_The youth has been burned unintentionally.

\_The youth has been burned by another person and may have scars from this burn.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

**N.** How concerned was the youth for accepting responsibility for the fire?

Suggested questions:

***Now the fire is out and you have had a chance to think about what has happened, would you do it again?***

***Tell me your reasons or why this fire occurred?***

Scoring:

\_1 The youth acknowledges the seriousness of the firesetting and accepts help appropriately.

\_2 The youth acknowledges the seriousness of the firesetting but seeks to blame others and denies his/her own responsibility.

\_3 The youth denies the seriousness of the firesetting and his/her own responsibility for it or takes full responsibility for it because he/she intended to cause destruction or injury.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*



PARENT CHECKLIST

Youth Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to youth \_\_\_\_\_

My child takes medication for a behavioral problem. Y N

Are there smokers in the home? Y N

Please check if any of the following statements are true for your child.

- | Yes | No  | Sometimes |   |
|-----|-----|-----------|---|
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child has set fire or played with fire tools more than once.                 |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child has set fires outside of the home before.                              |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | Other people in the home have set fires.  |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child is fascinated by fire (for example, often stares at flames).           |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child has altered or misused fireworks.                                      |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child has easy access to lighters and/or matches.                            |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | There is a wood stove, fireplace, candles or incense frequently in use at home. |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child fights with brothers and sisters.                                      |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child argues with parents/caregivers.  |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child has witnessed parents arguing.   |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child spends as much time as desired with father/male caregiver.             |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My child spends as much time as desired with mother/female caregiver.           |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | There has been a traumatic event in my child's life or family in the last year. |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | There has been physical or sexual abuse in the family.                          |
| ___ | ___ | ___       | My family moves frequently.   |

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

---

**COMPONENTS OF THE YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION PROCESS**

---

- My child has been suspended from school.
- My child has few friends.
- My child is often picked on or bullies by others.
- My child has friends who are a bad influence.
- My child has a history of lying.
- My child has stolen or shoplifted.
- My child destroys their own possessions.
- My child has special needs.
- My child has been in counseling.
- My child is physically aggressive or hurts others.
- My child has intentionally harmed or injured an animal.
- I feel like I have no control over my child.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

## PARENT INTERVIEW

Youth Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Place a check mark next to the scoring level that best describes the situation for this youth. Expand the questions as you feel necessary to complete the interview with confidence. Use the comment line for anything that seems out of the ordinary or supports your impressions.

A. What was the parents' or caregivers' response to the fire?

Suggested Questions:

***Mom, Dad, what was your reaction to the fire?***

Scoring

1 The reaction of the parents to the fire was immediate and appropriate response, with concern for any victims.

2 The reaction of the parents to the fire was one that appears too lax or too punitive.

3 The reaction of the parents to the fire was either nonexistent or was an immediate and overly punitive response (such as burning the youth's hands).

Comments:

B. Is there a family history with fire?

Suggested questions:

***Did anybody else in the family ever play with fire or get burned from a fire that got out of control?***

***Have you ever had a house fire?***

Scoring:

1 There is no traceable history of fire in the family.

2 There is some history in the family that the youth has or may have heard about.

There is a fire history about which the youth has direct knowledge.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

C. Does the youth have a history of fire play or firesetting?

Suggested questions:

***How many other times has your child lit matches, played with a lighter or burned things of little or no value?***

***Do you know if he has ever threatened anybody with fire or if he/she has been hurt by fire himself/herself?***

Scoring:

\_1 This is the first known incidence of unauthorized use of fire for the youth.

\_2 The youth has a sporadic history of unauthorized use of fire. There was little or no damage from previous.

\_3 Family members have used fire inappropriately. The youth's home is not fire safe.

Comments:

D. What kind of modeling is going on in the home? How did the parents/caregivers teach their youth about fire? What kinds of fire safety practices occur in the home?

Are there any cultural or traditional ways the family uses fire?

Suggested questions:

***How did you teach your child about fire?***

***Do you have a working smoke detector?***

***Do you have candles or a woodstove? How do you store matches and lighters?***

***How does your family use fire?***

***Are there smokers in the home?***

Scoring:

\_1 Appropriate fire safety is observed in the home. Smoke detectors work, woodstoves are safely installed. Parents, siblings or other family members avoid modeling fire play.

\_2 There is modeling of using fire for fun at home and fire safety is only moderately observed by parents and siblings.

\_3 Family members have used fire inappropriately. The youth's home is not fire safe.

Comments:

E. How is the youth supervised?

Suggested questions:

***When you are not at home, who takes care of the child?***

Scoring:

\_1 The youth has good, continual parental and/or caregiver supervision.

\_2 The youth has some supervision, but the supervision is often sporadic.

\_3 The youth has minimal supervision.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

F. Does the youth have any problems in school?

Suggested questions:

***Is the youth having any problems in school?***

***Does your child have any learning problems?***

***Is your child in any special classrooms or programs?***

Scoring:

\_1 The youth has minimal problems in school.

\_2 The youth gets some school referrals.

\_2 The youth receives special education services.

\_3 The youth has been suspended or expelled from school.

Comments:

G. Has the youth ever been in counseling?

Suggested questions:

***Has your child ever seen the school counselor or other mental health provider for problems?***

Scoring:

\_1 The youth has never been in counseling.

\_2 The youth has been in counseling in the past.

\_3 The youth is currently in counseling or has been referred for counseling.

Comments:

H. How would you describe your youth's friends?

Suggested questions:

***Do you like your kid's friends?***

***Are they a positive influence on your child?***

Scoring:

\_1 The youth has a healthy, supportive peer group.

\_2 The youth has some peer support, but his/her behavior is influenced by peers (bad friends).

\_3 The youth has little or no peer support, is shunned by peers and is isolated and withdrawn.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

I. Has any kind of crisis or traumatic event happened within your family? Please describe.

Scoring:

- \_1 There has not been a traumatic family experience in the past year.
- \_2 There has been a major traumatic family experience in the past year.
- \_3 There has been a major traumatic family event in the past that may be influencing the youth's behavior.

Comments:

J. Would you be willing to seek additional help for your child such as taking him/her to counseling?

Scoring:

- \_1 The youth's family acknowledges the seriousness of the firesetting and seeks help appropriately.
- \_2 The family protects the child, seeks to blame others and denies their own and the child's responsibility for the fire.
- \_3 The family doesn't seem to take the behavior seriously and simply wants the fire department to "fix" the youth and/or doesn't see the need for other services.

Comments:

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

## SCORING AND REFERRAL PROCEDURE

**Add the face value of the checked responses for both the youth and the parent interview. Enter the total on the lines provided below:**

Total Score: (Youth Interview) \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent Interview) \_\_\_\_\_

**If youth questions D, J and / or L were scored with a 3 response, consider referring this youth for a crisis evaluation.**

**If the total number for the youth interview is from 14-19 then:** The fire behavior appears to be basically experimental in nature. This youth does not have a history of fire behavior. The intervention for this category is fire education for the youth and the family. There are numerous fire education intervention curricula available to use with this child. The family should set clear rules about fire use in the home and practice home fire safety. YFPI Specialists should emphasize the importance of working smoke alarms and home escape planning for these families. Younger firesetters do not understand the consequences of their actions so it is important that parents/caregivers increase their knowledge of fire safe practices.

**If the total number for the youth interview is 20-42 then:** The youth has a sporadic history of firesetting and needs to be referred to other community agencies that serve children and their families. Many of these youths will require a more comprehensive mental health evaluation to determine the motives for his/her behavior. Youth who score in this range are setting fires as a cry for attention, as a response to a crisis event, to express anger or to defy authority. Many youth use fire because they are seeking power and control. The firesetting in this case is often a symptom of other family, school or peer group problems.

In addition to referring the family for further evaluation, YFPI Specialists need to provide fire science education. Families often do not understand the power of fire and need to increase their knowledge of home fire safety practices. Again, emphasizing the importance of working smoke alarms and practicing home escape planning. Helping educate the youth about how their firesetting behavior affected the community and the risk involved is another way YFPI Specialists can provide a service to the youth and their family and hold youth accountable for their behavior. Curricula for educating adolescent are available.

**If the total number for the parent interview is from 10-15 provide fire safety education to the youth and family.**

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*

**If the number for the parent interview is between 16-30** provide fire safety education to the family and recommend to the family that they seek the services of other community agencies to further evaluate the youth's firesetting behavior.

**A referral should consist of:**

1. A cover letter including
  - a. Statement of the fire incident
  - b. Observations of the interviewer
  - c. recommendations
2. A copy of the release of confidential information form
3. A copy of the fire report
4. Copies of both assessment interviews and parent check list
5. A brief summary of the education provided

\*Used with permission from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal\*





## Youth Firesetting Intervention Program Knowledge Test (14+-year-old learning level)

Please circle the best answer.

1. **An electric space heater**
  - a. Should be placed close to the wall so people won't trip over it
  - b. Should be placed at least 36 inches from walls, furniture, or curtains
  - c. Can be used as a permanent heat source
2. **Smoke from fires**
  - a. Stays on the ground
  - b. Rises to the ceiling
  - c. Goes around the wall
3. **Most people die in fires from**
  - a. Flames
  - b. Breathing too much smoke
  - c. Hiding from fire
4. **If the smoke alarm is sounding outside a closed door, you should**
  - a. Open the door to see if there is a fire
  - b. Hide
  - c. Feel the closed door to see if it is hot
5. **When you go to bed, it is safest to**
  - a. Close the bedroom door
  - b. Leave the bedroom door open
  - c. Know where the fire extinguisher is
6. **To prevent harm to yourself and your family in a fire, you should**
  - a. Get a fire extinguisher
  - b. Have an escape plan and practice it
  - c. Know where the smoke alarms are
7. **If you commit arson**
  - a. You may be charged with a felony
  - b. You cannot be charged with a crime
  - c. You will be charged with a crime that is not very serious
8. **The most important thing to do when using legal fireworks**
  - a. Is to have sand near by
  - b. Is to only use them on public property
  - c. Is to use them only under adult supervision.
9. **To prevent candle fires**
  - a. Make sure the candle is placed 3 feet from combustibles
  - b. Use candles in holders with a small base
  - c. Let the wick get low
10. **You should have smoke alarms**
  - a. In the areas you spend the most time
  - b. In the kitchen
  - c. Outside the bedroom areas on the ceiling and inside the bedrooms
11. **The three elements necessary for fire to occur are**
  - a. Matches + leaves + gas.
  - b. Oxygen + nitrogen + hydrogen
  - c. Heat + fuel + oxygen
12. **If you get a minor burn, the first thing you need to do is**
  - a. Put cool water on it
  - b. Wrap it in a towel
  - c. Put lotion on it
13. **Very young children should**
  - a. Learn how to light a fire with matches
  - b. Practice using matches and lighters safely
  - c. Never use matches
14. **The leading cause of fires in Minnesota is**
  - a. Cooking
  - b. Heating
  - c. Smoking
15. **If there is smoke or fire in your home, you should**
  - a. Grab an extinguisher and try to find out what is causing the smoke or fire
  - b. Call the fire department from your home
  - c. Shout "Fire!" to alert everyone to get out and use your family escape plan

This page intentionally left blank.



## Youth Firesetting Intervention Program

### Knowledge Test (7—13-year-old learning level)

Please circle the best answer.

- 1. An electric space heater**
  - a. Should be placed close to the wall so people won't trip over it
  - b. Should be placed at least 36 inches from walls, furniture, or curtains
- 2. Smoke from fires**
  - a. Stays on the ground
  - b. Rises to the ceiling
- 3. Most people die in fires from**
  - a. Flames
  - b. Breathing too much smoke
- 4. If the smoke alarm is sounding outside a closed door, you should**
  - a. Open the door to see if there is a fire
  - b. Feel the closed door to see if it is hot
- 5. When you go to bed, it is safest to**
  - a. Close the bedroom door
  - b. Leave the bedroom door open
- 6. To prevent harm to yourself and your family in a fire, you should**
  - a. Have an escape plan and practice it
  - b. Know where the smoke alarms are
- 7. If you commit arson**
  - a. You may be charged with a felony
  - b. You cannot be charged with a crime
- 8. The most important thing to do when using legal fireworks**
  - a. Is to have sand nearby
  - b. Is to use them only under adult supervision
- 9. To prevent candle fires**
  - a. Make sure the candle is placed three feet from combustibles
  - b. Use candles in holders with a small base
- 10. You should have smoke alarms**
  - a. In the kitchen
  - b. Outside the bedroom areas on the ceiling, and inside the bedrooms
- 11. The three elements necessary for fire to occur are**
  - a. Matches + leaves + gas
  - b. Heat + fuel + oxygen
- 12. If you get a minor burn, the first thing you need to do is**
  - a. Put cool water on it.
  - b. Put lotion on it
- 13. Very young children should**
  - a. Practice using matches and lighters safely
  - b. Never use matches
- 14. The leading cause of fires in Minnesota is**
  - a. Cooking
  - b. Heating
- 15. If there is smoke or fire in your home, you should**
  - a. Hide
  - b. Shout "Fire!" to alert everyone to get out and use your family escape plan

This page intentionally left blank.

**CIRCLE THE TOYS ~ X THE TOOLS**



This page intentionally left blank.



\_\_\_\_\_’s **PROMISE**  
**CERTIFICATE**

I promise to always follow fire safety rules. I promise never to play with matches, lighters, or fire. If I find matches or lighters lying around I will not touch them. I will get a grown-up and I will take them to the matches or lighters. The grown-up will put the matches or lighters in a safe place. If I am with other children who are talking about playing with fire, matches or lighters I will leave fast and tell a grown-up.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This page intentionally left blank.





**Youth Fire Intervention** (After assessment is complete)  
**INTERVIEWERS OBSERVATIONS**

Does parent appear indifferent or unconcerned about the firesetting?  Yes\*  No  
 Does child appear neglected or abused?  Yes\*  No  
 Is residence sloppy?  Yes\*  No

Youth behavior and mannerisms:  nervous  stubborn  good eye contact  shy   
 open  polite

Youth mood:  angry  sad  happy  calm  depressed  excited

Youth way of thinking:  rational  appropriate  scattered  logical  illogical

Parent(s) behavior and mannerisms:  fidgety  nervous  stubborn  
 good eye contact  shy  open  polite

Parent(s) mood:  angry  sad  happy  calm  depressed  excited  defensive

Parent(s) way of thinking:  rational  appropriate  scattered  logical  illogical

Characteristics:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 Age appropriate Assertive, low self-esteem Defiant, fights, unfeeling

Family environment:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 Two parents, concerned Inattentive parents / Single parent, inattentive

School experiences:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 No problems Learning problems Problems, suspended

Circumstances of fire:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 At home, matches/lighter Outside, for attention Malicious, flammables

Motivation for firesetting:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 Accidental Peer pressure Anger, peer pressure

Age:  Low risk  Moderate risk  High risk  
 3 to 10 years 5 to 13 years 10 to 17 years

Overall rating:  Some risk  Moderate risk  High risk

This page intentionally left blank.



**Youth Fire Intervention** (After assessment is complete)  
**YOUTH FIRE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

Youth Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

People present: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification: Curiosity Delinquent Thrill Seeking Crisis Special Problem

Pre-test Score: \_\_\_\_\_ Family Risk Score \_\_\_\_\_ Child Risk Score \_\_\_\_\_

Action Plan: \_\_\_\_\_ No need for further action  
\_\_\_\_\_ Fire Education Class  
\_\_\_\_\_ Community Impact Report  
\_\_\_\_\_ Education one on one  
\_\_\_\_\_ Follow up (to be completed 3 months after initial interview)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Homework assignment  
\_\_\_\_\_ Refer to other agency (see below)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sent to Police for charging  
\_\_\_\_\_ Business card given  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred to: \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact name Telephone number

Will file be transferred to referred agency? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**If yes, release of confidential information form must be completed!**

Summary of assessment- start with summary of parent information, then juvenile information, finish with overall summary and recommendation. (use additional pages)

\_\_\_\_\_

This page intentionally left blank.



**Youth Fire Intervention** (Final steps – record outcome)

**6-, 12- & 18-MONTH FOLLOW-UP**

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of completed intervention: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Has your child had additional incidents of firesetting or does he/she continue to show curiosity about fire since the class? If yes, explain.
2. Has your child demonstrated changes in safety-related behaviors since the class? (i.e. checking smoke alarms)
3. After the program, did you discuss with your child what he/she learned about firesetting, fire prevention and fire safety?
4. Do you feel the program was beneficial?
5. What was the most important concept you learned as a parent?
6. Do you practice a home fire escape plan?

This page intentionally left blank.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **USING WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT TO ENHANCE THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS**

This page intentionally left blank.



## Using What we Know about Child Development to Enhance the Interviewing Process Brad Jackson, PhD

Juvenile Firesetting Evaluation and  
Treatment Program Burn Programs  
Children's Hospital Colorado

*Special thanks to Dr. Katie Mattei, Dr. Lisa Billings, Stefanie Curry LCSW, and Dr. Diane Reichmuth for their contributions to our program and the development of the concepts and approaches presented in this section.*

*Limited copyright permission for use of materials in National Fire Academy Training*

Interviewing children and adolescents can be one of the most challenging and yet most interesting and rewarding experiences. They are simultaneously curious, confusing, and clever creatures. But, if you can let yourself enjoy the opportunity to get to know how they think and feel, you will be immeasurably rewarded. This section is dedicated to the belief that if you can tailor and match your interviewing approach and questions to the child's developmental level, then you are guaranteed to gather more information...and have more fun.

I saw a video on YouTube recently of three dogs standing together on white carpet. When their owner asks "who made this mess?", two of the dogs immediately look at the third dog who then shyly turns and tries to escape the questioning by hiding in the next room. If only it were that easy every time.

### Interviewing Stances

In every evaluation, interrogation, or assessment, it is critical to consider the "interviewing stance" that you are planning to adopt. There are of course some classic interviewers out there to consider and borrow from liberally – Sherlock Holmes, Cagney and Lacy, any of the numerous duos from the Law and Order series, and one of my personal favorites Columbo. Each of these interviewers approached the task with a particular style and stance when asking questions, following leads, gathering information, and obtaining confessions. Here's a short list of interviewing stances to consider, however you have to "believe" the stance you are adopting and trying if you hope for it to work at all.

1. Absent minded professor. Presenting yourself as slightly confused can be disarming and likewise confusing to youth being interviewed. For example, shuffling through papers to try and find the referral or asking them to clarify why they are there because you can't recall the details. This puts you in a perceived one-down position where youth do not find you threatening because they assume you do not know what you are doing. This stance allows you to ask 'stupid' questions and jump around in the questioning in a manner that can make you harder to predict and thus harder to fool.

2. Sherlock Holmes. You bring all your deductive reasoning and expert information to bear on the interview. You are simply asking the youth to follow the logic to the inevitable conclusion. This is where fire scene evidence and information from witnesses puts you in the driver's seat. This stance is also less emotional and more logical, which can be helpful for youth who are more emotionally dysregulated or struggle with cognitive sequencing. Your questions are about making sense of the obvious and filling in the blanks.
3. Authoritarian. This stance often fits for those in an actual position of authority. Uniforms, badges, offices, statements of your role in the investigation will all reinforce this stance. However, your manner of communicating will be the major indicator of this stance. It is harder for some of us to pull this one off. Again, you must believe it for it to work. Each of these stances can be very effective for various types of interviews.
4. Empathic therapist. This stance emphasizes understanding and empathy for the feelings and experiences of the individual. Sometimes situations have gotten out of control and that can be frightening or worrisome. Exploring the concerns and dilemmas the youth is facing can be very supportive and provide the opportunity for more open discussion and disclosure.
5. Columbo. This stance does not require the use of a tan trench coat, but it's a nice touch. This master of interviewing approached the task with a sense of bemused curiosity. He definitely had the information and held the cards, but asked questions in a curious and non-threatening manner that encouraged everyone to help fill in the blanks. Most of us do not actually have all the answers before we begin the interview, so this stance allows us to join the youth in trying to figure out what happened and how it happened – together.

### **Firesetting Assessment Domains**

When it comes to assessing youth firesetting behavior, Dr. Rob Stadolnik (2000) recommends that it is critical to ask questions and gather information about the following six areas if we are going to truly understand the behavior and the context: parent/family functioning, school/cognitive functioning, behavioral functioning, social/emotional functioning, firesetting behavior history, and fire scene evidence. Through your interview, observation, and gathering of collateral information, it is critical that you gather some sense of the youth's functioning in these areas in order to have any chance of understanding their firesetting behavior.

### **Question Formats**

The seasoned clinicians on our team at Children's Hospital Colorado have encouraged a method of asking questions that flows from open-ended questions to more focused questions and back again to open-ended. You should always establish what the child or adolescent should do if he or she does not understand a question and remember to allow time for the child to formulate answers before moving on or trying to clarify. Finally, they have coined the term "widening questions". This is when you take something the child has said and ask a follow up question that widens the conversation even further to gather more information. Here's an example. If a child said, "I was

afraid I would get in trouble if I told on my friend”, you could widen by asking “What did you think would happen if you did?” This question helps to gather information about cognitive functioning, sequencing ability, peer relationships, and possibly worry and guilt. As always, you should be mindful about avoiding “leading questions” unless you are using a specific approach to interrogation that relies on leading questions. Otherwise, consider non-leading questions a more opening and widening approach. These question formats are also a great way to build respectful rapport.

## **How Child Development Informs Interviewing**

### **Cognitive Development**

Children and teenagers think differently than adults. This is not huge news, but it is very important to keep in mind when you are interviewing children and youth of different ages and at varying developmental stages. Models of child development often propose grand theories about what develops and how development occurs across the lifespan. This section will consider what a couple of these famous models tell us about children and teenagers.

But first off, why is this relevant for fire investigation? Primarily, because children’s explanations for events are influenced by their cognitive level and emotional understanding. Secondly, because the laws we have regarding accountability and culpability are based on our beliefs about child development -- when children know right from wrong and can be held responsible for their behavior.

If you were asked to describe atypical groups of 1 – 2 year olds, what would you say? Curious, energetic, exploring, “NO”. What might you say if you were trying to capture an image of a preschool classroom? Bustling with energy, careful, silly. Now think about elementary school age, middle school, and high school. Our descriptors change dramatically across these important developmental transitions. Interests, attitudes, behaviors, emotions, and thoughts all change across these age groups. The changes continue even as we grow older into adulthood and old age, but the rapid and enormous changes that occur during childhood and adolescence capture our attention and force us to constantly scratch our heads and try to figure out how to react.

Let’s start with cognitive development or how children’s thinking changes as they grow. Jean Piaget (1969, 2000) proposed a model of cognitive development that highlighted the child’s primary way of thinking and critical thinking advances. These advances occur when a new thinking skill emerges – the skill literally does not exist at earlier ages and then it does. Piaget is one of the most well-known theorists regarding cognitive or thought development in childhood. His theories and experiments have captivated generations of cognitive scientists, students, and teachers. What’s great is how Piaget’s theories have become popularized with information available on the internet and experiments pictured on YouTube, so that you don’t have to be a child psychologist to quickly tap into information about developmental changes. Even though cognitive neuroscience has advanced our understanding of human thought in new and exciting directions and although Piaget’s cognitive theories may not stand up in every detail under scientific rigor, his theories provide an interesting framework for understanding the cognitive changes that occur across various developmental ages and help us conceptualize why children might respond variably at

different ages.

The proposed stages are: Sensorimotor (ages 0 – 2), Pre-Operational (ages 2 – 7), Concrete (ages 7 – 12), and Formal Operations (ages 12 - ). The name of the stage describes the child’s primary way of thinking. So for infants the world is experienced and understood through senses and motor movements, while for school age children thinking is very concrete and based on actual experiences. In adolescence, the ability to think abstractly develops. Each stage describes the emergence of a completely different way of thinking.

Let’s look at some examples of some of the critical thinking advances and how they might be important for firesetting, fireplay, and misuse of fire.

### **Thinking Skill 1 – Object Permanence**

This skill involves the ability to realize that objects hidden from view still continue to exist. This ability emerges between ages 0 - 2. Babies are fascinated, surprised, or at times frightened by the game of “peek-a-boo”. This is because they experience that the person hiding has in fact disappeared and then suddenly reappears! This game is really fun, until you gain the skill of object permanence. At that point, the child realizes you are simply covered or hiding, but still exist. Thus it becomes terribly not fun for older children and adults because they know you are still there. (I’m just saying to try it with your adult friends, it’s not that fun anymore.) This awareness or skill emerges with cognitive development as young children gain more experience coordinating their senses with their motor activities, e.g., looking for things, reaching for things, finding things.

### **Why might this be important for fireplay at young ages?**

Even though the matches are hidden, the child now knows they still exist. This developmental stage is critical for parents to understand since hiding matches or putting them up high will no longer be adequate protection. In fact, discovering things that are hidden becomes a favorite activity whether as a game or looking for things “hidden” in someone’s purse.

### **Thinking Skill 2 – Perspective Taking**

During early childhood, ages 2 – 6, children are in the process of developing the skill of “taking another’s perspective”. This is the ability to realize that what you see and what you experience may not be exactly the same as what others see and experience. As they develop language, young children will often start telling a story about their day as if you were there and already knew the context. They assume that you know what they know, that you share the same perspective. There are some great experiments where a child and an adult sit opposite each other across a table. In the middle of the table is a barrier that blocks the view of some items from both sides of the table, so really only one person can see some of the objects and no one can see all of the objects. Young children will say that the adult can see what they see, while older children realize that the adult sees something different because of their position, their perspective. This skill is critical to start developing a sense that other people can have a different viewpoint, a different perspective, another

way of thinking.

### **Why might this be important for firesetting?**

When my mom is gone, she doesn't know what I'm doing. A child can begin to anticipate the other person's point of view, plan for what someone else might observe, become a bit more sneaky knowing that he or she will not always be caught. Although children of this age cannot really imagine what others may be thinking in the same way that adolescents and adults can think abstractly, they can begin to describe what another person is thinking and see it as something separate from themselves.

Another tragic example of this error in thinking occurs when younger children think that closing the door on a closet or even hiding in a closet will protect them from a fire that is on the other side of the door. If I can't see the fire, it's OK. If you can't see the fire, no one is in trouble.

Starting at this age and continuing through childhood and adolescence, we have become big fans of using drawings to help children express their thoughts and recollections. As verbal skills are developing, drawings can provide something visual and concrete on which to base the conversation and questions. It can help to sequence events and place the child and their misuse of fire in context. When perspective-taking is a challenge, be sure you are seeing things the way the child does.

### **Thinking Skill 3 – Conservation**

A third major developmental advance in cognition around the ages of 7 - 11 is the concept of "conservation". This occurs when children are able to realize that an object remains fundamentally the same even when it changes shape, size, or form. Piaget's classic experiment demonstrating one aspect of this concept involved pouring water from a short, wide beaker into a tall, slender beaker. Younger children will only pay attention to one variable – height – and say that the taller beaker has more water, even when they have watched the same amount of water being poured from the short, wide beaker into the tall, slender beaker right in front of their own eyes. Children are developing this sense of conservation regarding many things simultaneously. The amount of water stays the same regardless of the shape of the container...and water remains fundamentally the same regardless of form (liquid, ice, steam).

### **Why might this be important for firesetting?**

As children are learning the concept of conservation, they often make mistakes in their thinking. "If I spray a little bit of hairspray or cologne, the fire won't get very big", "This firework is small, so it won't do much damage", "Gas is only dangerous if the flame gets too close to the liquid". Children and sometimes teenagers and to be perfectly honest adults at times often do not consider that one extra variable that then leads to disaster. Children will focus on how flammable liquid gas might be, but will not realize they might be surrounded by the other form of gasoline that they can sometimes smell but not see – fumes.

## **Thinking Skill 4 – Abstract Thinking**

The final cognitive developmental leap that I would like to consider is the emergence of “abstract thinking”. This is the fantastic move from only being able to consider things that you have seen, heard, felt with your senses into considering things that you have imagined, considered, theorized, and wondered. Suddenly, the world is no longer bound by what you have seen and done, but is expanded into the hypothetical and eventually becomes quite limitless. Abstract thinking allows the older child/adolescent, ages 12 and beyond, to mentally manipulate their own perspective and those of others. They can imagine “what if…” questions – both regarding the past and the future. What if this had happened differently or that could change down the road. Conversations can become infinitely more complex, but the struggle for understanding and answers may become more elusive.

### **Why might this be important for firesetting?**

Older children and adolescents can begin to plan things they have never seen before. They can imagine how others might react and plan accordingly. However on the positive side, they can also imagine more complex outcomes and consequences that can be a powerful deterrent that doesn't have the same impact for concrete thinkers. The natural curiosity continues to drive thinking and behavior, but the planning can become more complex and intriguing.

Each of these cognitive advances is amazing, but can also be somewhat overwhelming. I like to think of this growth as presenting both a gift and a challenge.

## **Emotions and Developmental Drives**

Developmental theories give us some hints about what to expect and how to prepare for developmental transitions. Erik Erikson (1950, 1959, 1963, 1968) proposed a theory of psychosocial development to help us understand and prepare for developmental changes. If we can harness the powerful internal motivations at each age, then we can gather more useful information in our interview and intervention approaches!

After presenting a brief description of the theory, we will consider how these stages are particularly relevant for understanding firesetting behavior in childhood and adolescence.

Erikson's theory of development describes a basic conflict or psychological task to achieve at each stage of growth. This theory has been summarized in popular media, such as Wikipedia and about.com, so that it is easy to find when a new developmental shift begins to occur and to describe to parents when discussing their child's behavior. This chart describes the proposed age ranges, what we are trying to attain psychologically at each stage, and what contributes to positive outcomes. So for example, during infancy we are looking around the world to determine if it is predictable and caring so that we can develop an internal sense of trust that we will carry forward with us into later development. In the original theory, the stages build on each other. In real experience, these stages may take longer and we may cycle through them more than once if we face a struggle along the way. This model can provide an interesting framework within which to consider and make sense of individual experiences.

**COMPONENTS OF THE YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION PROCESS**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Basic Conflict</b>	<b>Important Events</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Infancy (birth to 18 months)</b>	Trust vs. Mistrust	Feeding	Children develop a sense of trust when caregivers provide reliability, care, and affection. Lack of this care, early neglect or abuse can lead to mistrust and feelings of unpredictability in the world.
<b>Early Childhood (18 months to 3 years)</b>	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Toilet Training	Children need to develop a sense of personal control over their physical skills and a sense of independence through exploration. Patience and encouragement foster autonomy – a sense of being able to handle many problems on their own. Too many demands, ridiculing early attempts, or refusing to let children perform tasks they are capable of can lead to shame or doubt in their ability to handle problems.
<b>School Age (6 to 12 years)</b>	<b>Industry vs. Inferiority</b>	<b>School</b>	Children need to cope with new social and academic demands. They become more aware of themselves as individuals and may work hard at being responsible, being good, and doing it right. Success leads to a sense of competence, while failure to meet expectations can result in feelings of inferiority about their capabilities. Kids at this age will do lots of comparing. Encouragement and praise for accomplishments and interests can encourage industry, perseverance, and diligence.
<b>Adolescence (12 to 18 years)</b>	<b>Identity vs. Role Confusion</b>	<b>Social Relationships</b>	Teens need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Teens continue to compare to others, but as a way of determining what fits for them personally. They may also try out or experiment with various identities along the way. Appearance develops even greater importance, coinciding with pubertal changes. Success leads to an ability to stay true to yourself versus role confusion and a weaker sense of self. Opportunities and space for self-exploration are important. In our industrial society and culture, identity formation and development may take much longer as it takes more time to gain the skills to transition into adulthood in our technological world.
<b>Young Adulthood (19 to 40 years)</b>	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Relationships	Older adolescents and young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. We all want to fit in with friends. Success leads to strong, intimate, reciprocal relationships, while struggles can result in loneliness due to feelings of rejection or isolation related to avoiding the possibility of rejection. Developing accurate reflections of oneself from loving and caring family and friends is critical for finding and securing these intimate relationships.
<b>Middle Adulthood (40 to 65 years)</b>	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Work and Parenthood	Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them, often through family, having children, or creating a positive change that benefits other people. Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure with this task can lead to feeling uninvolved or stuck. It is nice that there are ongoing opportunities to redefine oneself throughout this developmental stage.
<b>Maturity(65 to death)</b>	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Reflection on Life	Older adults need to look back on life and feel a sense of fulfillment. Success at this stage leads to feelings of wisdom, while failure can result in bitterness or regret. Developing an accurate sense of one's contributions to others in our time can help to create a sense of peace about one's place in the world.

(chart adapted and modified from Erikson, psychology.about.com, and Wikipedia)

Knowing that these developmental tasks are on the horizon and will arrive with incredible energy and drive helps to make them less surprising, although not necessarily easier to handle. Regardless, the urge will emerge and social and emotional interactions become organized by this drive during this developmental time period.

I'd like to consider three of these stages with particular importance for youth firesetting.

### **Preschoolers' Drive for Initiative**

Children in the preschool age range are organized by the following feelings and motivations during this developmental period: curiosity, trying to master the world, "I can do it myself", courage and developing independence, some risk taking, and guilt. We can use these motivations to help tailor our questions for younger children. For example, if we can tap into their underlying strong curiosity or desire to do things on their own, then we will automatically get more information.

Here are some questions that we've used that directly link to the developmental drives at this age.

- What do you help with at home? Anything in the kitchen?
- Have you ever seen your mom light a fire? Did you wonder how it worked? Where are the matches kept at your house?
- Did you ever get caught for something you weren't supposed to do?

### **School Age Children's Drive for Industry**

Children in elementary school are fueled by the following underlying drives and motivations: work at doing it right, comparing self and others, eager to learn and accomplish things, understanding cause and effect, becoming aware of the self as an individual, development of self-confidence. Tapping into these organizing drives and motivations at this age will help to engage school age children and gather more information.

Here are some examples of the types of questions that work well with school age children.

- What's cool about fire? What do you notice about it? What about fire is interesting to change or control?
- How did you get so good at handling fire?
- When you saw what other kids have done with fire, when did you know something might go wrong?

By treating school age children as "experts", they will be powerfully drawn to share more information with you. In fact, they almost can't help it because the drive is so strong.



## Adolescents' Drive for Identity

Teenagers are driven to develop a sense of personal identity. There is a heightened concern for appearance – physical and social. Questions of “how will I fit in?” and “who am I?” take on greater importance. There is experimentation to help figure out limits. Peer pressure plays a greater role as youth are seeking closeness. Questions that respect and explore these important developmental issues will often lead to more sharing. Real curiosity and interest in who they are and who they are becoming taps into the adolescent’s desire to question and find answers as well.

Here are some questions that we’ve used.

- Do a lot of your friends mess with fire?
- What’s your opinion on teenagers and smoking?
- What are the best fireworks? What about them is so great? How might you make them even better?
- What do you think about the rules or laws regarding fire or fireworks? How did you develop that opinion or belief?

Adolescents are gaining the ability to think abstractly as well, so hypothetical questions and dilemmas can be useful for assessing their knowledge and reasoning as well as their actual experience.

## Summary

Increased awareness of the cognitive changes and the developmental drives that children and adolescents are experiencing at different ages can help to tailor our questions and interview approaches. You are guaranteed to gather more information by matching your questions to the child’s developmental level. I promise!

For additional academic reading, see also:

- Erikson, Erik H. *Childhood and Society*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1950, 1963. Erikson, Erik H. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York: International Universities Press, 1959.
- Erikson, Erik H. *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*. New York: Norton, 1968.
- Gruber, H.E. & Voneche, J.J. (Eds). *The Essential Piaget*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, 1982, Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1995, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.
- Harter, Susan. *Construction of the Self*. New York: Guilford Press, 2001, 2012.
- Piaget, Jean & Inhelder, Barbel. *The Psychology of the Child*. New York: Basic Books, 1969, 2000.

- Stadolnik, Robert. Drawn to the Flame: Assessment and Treatment of Juvenile Firesetting Behavior. Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Press, 2000.

Brad Jackson, PhD

Brad is a psychologist with the Burn Programs at Children's Hospital Colorado, directs the Juvenile Firesetting Program at the hospital, and has a private practice in Denver. He lectures nationally and internationally on self-esteem, self-concept, juvenile firesetting intervention, and burn camps. He is an avid snowboarder in winter, cyclist in summer, and singer year round.

# APPENDIX C

## FIREFACTOR<sup>2</sup>

This page intentionally left blank.



Date of Referral	
Referral Received From	
Date of Assessment	
Assessment Conducted By	
Risk Level	
Currently in Mental Health	
Referred to Mental Health	
DHS Referral	
School Fire Report	
Final Outcome of Case	
FF Class Date Attended	
Submitted to YFIRES	
Follow-up Completed	
Case Closed Date	
NOTES:	



Date of Referral	
Referral Received From	
Date of Assessment	
Assessment Conducted By	
Risk Level	
Currently in Mental Health	
Referred to Mental Health	
DHS Referral	
School Fire Report	
Final Outcome of Case	
FF Class Date Attended	
Submitted to YFIRES	
Follow-up Completed	
Case Closed Date	
NOTES:	

This page intentionally left blank.

## **UNIT 4: ABRAXAS YOUTH CENTER**

### **TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

*The students will be able to:*

- 4.1 *Summarize the ascension of firesetting typology and prevention and intervention strategies after interviewing a youth who has exhibited high-risk firesetting behaviors.*



### **ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

*The students will be able to:*

- 4.1 *Interview a youth who has engaged in firesetting behavior.*
  - 4.2 *Compare typologies of a firesetting youth.*
  - 4.3 *Summarize findings after interviewing a youth who has engaged in firesetting behavior.*
-

This page intentionally left blank.



 FEMA  U.S. Fire Administration

---

**UNIT 4:  
ABRAXAS YOUTH CENTER**

Slide 4-1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

---

Summarize the ascension of firesetting typology and prevention and intervention strategies after interviewing a youth who has exhibited high-risk firesetting behaviors.

Slide 4-2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

---

- Interview a youth who has engaged in firesetting behavior.
- Compare typologies of a firesetting youth.
- Summarize findings after interviewing a youth who has engaged in firesetting behavior.

Slide 4-3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **I. ABRAXAS YOUTH CENTER — INTRODUCTION**

- A. National Fire Academy (NFA) students will be interviewing youths (through virtual medium) from the Abraxas Youth Center.
- B. The purpose is to allow students the opportunity to interview youths who have been adjudicated as being delinquent and detained at the Abraxas Youth Center in South Mountain, Pennsylvania.

## **II. ABRAXAS YOUTH CENTER — OVERVIEW**

- A. Abraxas Youth Center is a secure residential treatment program that provides firesetting treatment services to males between the ages of 12 to 18. The Center has approximately 24 beds available for firesetting youths. Many residents at Abraxas have substantial histories associated with firesetting. Some residents have associated histories involving experimentation and use of explosives. A subset of the population has a history of sexual offending.
- B. Abraxas uses a comprehensive approach in providing treatment services for its residents. Upon entry to the program, youths are comprehensively screened and assessed to accurately determine the most appropriate treatment direction. The Abraxas treatment plan focuses on cognitive behavioral restructuring, reprocessing of trauma and neglect (if possible), the formation of appropriate boundaries and the development of healthier coping mechanisms.
- C. There is a strong emphasis placed on juveniles being accountable for their actions and praised for their successes. Abraxas uses a status and privilege system to provide immediate feedback and reward for prosocial behaviors. Treatment at Abraxas includes individual, family and group counseling. Abraxas conducts a private, certified school year-round, which includes basic courses such as English, mathematics, reading, science, geography and art appreciation, as well as secondary courses including English, mathematics, reading, computer literacy and General Equivalency Diploma (GED) preparation.

## **III. INFORMATION FOR NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY STUDENTS**

- A. Students must sign the confidentiality agreement and return it to the instructor prior to departure for Abraxas. Instructors will also need to complete the form. Forms should be returned to the NFA training specialist.
- B. The following are prohibited during the Abraxas Youth Center virtual experience:
  - 1. Cellular telephones, cameras, recording devices and other electronic devices.

2. Department uniforms or collared shirts with the department name and/or the student's name and rank imprinted on them.
  3. Baseball or other types of hats.
  4. Use of profanity.
- C. Abraxas residents will not use their real names during the interviews. NFA students must follow all guidelines provided by the Abraxas staff. This is a culture of high respect. The residents will treat NFA students with respect, and the same is expected in return.

This page intentionally left blank.

## ACTIVITY 4.1

### Abraxas Youth Center

#### Purpose

Interview adjudicated firesetting youth and explore prevention/intervention options for firesetting behaviors.

#### Directions

##### Part 1

1. In advance of the trip to Abraxas, you should review the interview form and prompting questions that will be used during the visit. It is recommended that this review occur after Day 3 of class.
  - a. The interview form contains a comprehensive list of information that you are ultimately seeking to obtain during the interaction with Abraxas interviewees. A condensed list (short form, per se) of prompting questions is provided for the primary interviewer. The primary interviewer should use the prompting questions while the secondary interviewer/partner takes notes on the main interview tool.
  - b. Should conditions warrant, a third person can be assigned to the interview team whose sole job will be filling in the interview form. This person does **not** participate in the actual interview.
  - c. The interview form and its associated prompting question sheet are not approved youth firesetting screening tools. They are merely adjunct prompters to help students follow an organized process while interviewing the youths at Abraxas.
2. Instructors will assign student pairs who will be interviewing as a team. Student pairs should:
  - a. Review the interview form and prompting questions, and reach consensus on how the interview process will be conducted.
  - b. Each person should gain experience interviewing and documenting information. Each pair group will interview one youth.
  - c. If you do not serve on a specific team, you should select one of the interviews and complete an interview form, so you are prepared to write a summary of the interview during the graded assignment.

## Part 2

1. Upon reconvening as a class, the instructor will lead a discussion on the impact of the Abraxas experience. Discussion should include similarities/differences of the demographical characteristics of the youth's:
  - a. Family structure.
  - b. School performance when they resided at home.
  - c. Peer relationships/influences at home.
  - d. Origin and progression of firesetting history (include index incident).
  - e. Impact of the Abraxas experience on the youth to date.
2. Each table group should reach consensus on the three most important things that were learned/gained from the experience.

## ACTIVITY 4.2

### Abraxas Interview Essay

#### Purpose

Demonstrate ability to evaluate how a youth can ascend through firesetting typologies as well as being able to demonstrate where interventions could have taken place in the progression.

#### Directions

1. This assignment is an opportunity for you to apply what you have learned in the course thus far from your interview experience and background information given by the Abraxas staff.
2. Answer the following directives based on your interview:
  - a. Provide brief background information of the youth and their family.
  - b. Give a breakdown of the firesetting history beginning with the index fire.
  - c. If there were multiple fires, provide examples (if applicable) explaining how the youth progressed through the ascending typologies of firesetting.
  - d. Did your interviewee discuss any adverse childhood experiences? If so, please describe.
  - e. Identify prevention and mitigation actions that could have stopped the firesetting behavior before the situation escalated.
3. The assignment is to be typed and no more than two pages, single spaced (approximately 1,000 words) for each assessment area.
4. The assignment will be graded. See the grading rubric found in your Student Manual (SM).

This page intentionally left blank.



# **APPENDIX A**

## **ABRAXAS INTERVIEW FORM**

This page intentionally left blank.

**ABRAXAS INTERVIEW FORM**

**(Documentation of the interview)**

**Interviewee Identification**

1. First name of interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long at Abraxas? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How much longer (estimated) at Abraxas? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What are some things he enjoys and is good at doing (hobbies, school, work, etc.)?

---

---

---

**Family and Friends**

1. Parents married/divorced/known?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Siblings?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was home life like (social, cultural, economic, environmental)?

---

---

---

4. Has he had contact with his family since being at Abraxas? If so, what kind?

---

---

---

5. School life (grade level, grades, likes/dislikes, attendance, etc.) **before** Abraxas:

---

---

---

6. Friends at home/school:

---

---

---

**Firesetting History**

1. How old when he set his first fire? What was set on fire? \_\_\_\_\_

---

2. When he began starting fires, what kind of fire tools did he use?

---

3. Where did he get fire tools?

---

---

---

4. Did his firesetting evolve as he grew older? If so, how?

---

---

---

---

---

5. If firesetting evolved, what types of things did he burn and what tools were used?

---

---

---

6. Was his firesetting done alone or with peers? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Description of index fire (type, description, severity, discovery).

---

---

---

8. What type of involvement did he have with the legal system (i.e., what type of offenses, if any) before his index fire?

---

---

---

9. What events led to the fires (or other criminal activity) that brought him to Abraxas?

---

---

---

10. Does he understand the impact of what he has done?

---

---

---

11. How does he feel about the fires set and/or crimes he has committed?

---

---

---

---

---

12. Did he ever have any fire safety education during his school years? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

13. If so, what kind and from whom?

---

**The Future**

1. What is his goal for the future (i.e., what does he want to do when he leaves Abraxas)?

---

---

---

---

---

2. What impact has the Abraxas experience had on his life?

---

---

---

3. How will he prevent his involvement in firesetting/criminal activity upon leaving Abraxas?

---

---

---

**Additional Notes**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Interviewer(s)**

---

---

---

This page intentionally left blank.



## **ABRAXAS PROMPTING QUESTIONS**

**(Primary interviewer uses this form)**

### **Rapport Building**

1. Introduce yourselves and the purpose for visit.
2. Ask student his name and thank him for helping you learn how to do your job better.
3. What's a typical day like here at Abraxas (schedule, likes, dislikes)?
4. How long have you been at Abraxas and how long might you be here?
5. Tell us a little about yourself (age, likes, hobbies, things you enjoy, things you are good at doing, etc.).

### **Family and Friends**

1. Tell us about your family (mother, father, siblings).
2. Did you attend school when you lived at home? What was that experience like?
2. Do you have friends at home? Tell us about them.

### **The Past**

1. What brought you to Abraxas?
2. Tell us about your fires (how old were you at the time of first fire, fire tools used, alone or with peers, etc.).
3. Talk to us about your index fire or other behaviors that brought you to Abraxas.
4. How did you feel when you started fires?
5. How many fires have you started?
6. How do you feel about what you did that got you to Abraxas and what have you learned from the experience?
7. Prior to your firesetting, had you received fire safety education? If so, from whom, and how old were you?

## **The Future**

1. What are your goals for the future?
2. Impact of Abraxas on your life?
3. What will help you keep from starting any more fires?

## **APPENDIX B**

# **ABRAXAS A GEO GROUP COMPANY, RESIDENT CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

This page intentionally left blank.

# Abraxas

a GEO Group Company

## Resident Confidentiality Policy

To respect our clients and abide by HIPAA regulations, no information shall be released except to the child, parents, their respective legal counsel, the court, the Department of Public Welfare or one of its agents for the purpose of monitoring/evaluating the client. Anyone involved with these projects shall not disclose any information concerning a client during casual conversations outside the facility. Material from our records may be used for research or other similar educational purposes, provided that the Program Manager has approved the research design. I \_\_\_\_\_ understand this policy and will not release any information regarding a client to anyone other than the personnel described above or appropriate Abraxas Youth Center staff members.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature

Abraxas Youth Center

PO Box 334, 10058 South Mountain Road, Bldg. #3  
South Mountain, PA 17261

Phone: 717-749-3066

Fax: 717-749-3229

[www.cornellcompanies.com](http://www.cornellcompanies.com)

# **UNIT 5: EDUCATION AS A PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION COMPONENT**

## **TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

*The students will be able to:*

- 5.1 *Explain the relevance of an educational intervention in a youth firesetting program.*



## **ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

*The students will be able to:*

- 5.1 *Differentiate between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.*
  - 5.2 *Determine the format of the learning environment.*
  - 5.3 *Choose teaching materials to be employed.*
  - 5.4 *Analyze the components of an educational intervention.*
  - 5.5 *Design an educational intervention for a youth firesetting situation.*
-

This page intentionally left blank.



---

**UNIT 5:  
EDUCATION AS A  
PREVENTION AND  
INTERVENTION COMPONENT**

Slide 5-1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

---

Explain the relevance of an educational intervention in a youth firesetting program.

Slide 5-2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

---

- Differentiate between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.
- Determine the format of the learning environment.
- Choose teaching materials to be employed.

Slide 5-3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Analyze the components of an educational intervention.
- Design an educational intervention for a youth firesetting situation.

Slide 5-4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**I. LEVELS AND TYPES OF PREVENTION**

A. Levels of prevention.

1. Recall from Unit 1: A Strategic Approach to Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention and previous readings that there are three levels of prevention and five types of prevention interventions.

**LEVELS OF PREVENTION**

- Primary.
- Secondary.
- Tertiary.

How can each level be applied to youth firesetting?

Slide 5-5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. The levels of prevention are:
  - a. Primary.
  - b. Secondary.
  - c. Tertiary.
3. Primary prevention.

- a. In the youth firesetting prevention and intervention world, primary prevention refers to what actions are needed before an event occurs.
  - b. This is when education is needed for the youth, the parents/ caregivers and anyone else in the home regarding preventing fire incidents from occurring and proper fire safety overall.
4. Secondary prevention.
- a. Secondary prevention in a youth firesetting prevention and intervention situation necessitates intake, an interview/screening and participation in an educational intervention program.
  - b. This is when modification is needed to reduce the impact of firesetting behaviors by targeting groups that are at risk due to their activities, acknowledging the situation and reducing its future impact.
  - c. Secondary prevention is the mitigation of an event, often requiring emergency response, to reduce the long-term adverse effects.
5. Tertiary prevention.
- a. Tertiary prevention in youth firesetting prevention and intervention is when more serious intervention is needed — perhaps behavioral and mental health, juvenile justice, or social services interventions to mute the impact of the firesetting actions.
  - b. Additionally, medical treatment, rehabilitation or rebuilding may be involved if there are injuries and/or property damage.

**TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS**

- Education.
- Engineering and enforcement.
- Economic incentives.
- Emergency response.

**How can each be applied to youth firesetting?**

**Why is education the foundation?**

Slide 5-6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

B. Types of prevention interventions.

1. The five E's of prevention are:
  - a. Education.
  - b. Engineering.
  - c. Enforcement.
  - d. Economic incentives.
  - e. Emergency response.
  
2. Recall from Unit 1 that it takes all five types of prevention interventions working in tandem to effectively prevent deaths, injuries and property loss because of fire.  
  
It also takes all five to effectively work with a firesetting youth and their family.
  
3. Education.
  - a. Education is the foundation of prevention.
  - b. A robust youth firesetting prevention and intervention program will emphasize both school and community-based education targeting the prevention of, and intervention in, youth firesetting.
  - c. Most successful youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs typically have a measurable education component to determine if the youth and caregivers understood and applied the lessons learned in preventing and mitigating incidents.
  - d. This tends to be a difficult "E," as measuring what did not happen is challenging.
  - e. The goal of education is to provide awareness, change behavior and eliminate risky behavior through education.
  
4. Engineering:
  - a. Engineering efforts made to modify an environment or device enhance safety.
    - Example: fire-resistive building designs, sprinklers, etc.

- b. Firesetting prevention and intervention programs must ensure that the homes of firesetting youths are equipped with working smoke alarms and child-resistant lighters and that they are used as needed.
- 5. Enforcement:
  - a. Enforce or obtain compliance with fire laws and codes and other legal means to encourage and support appropriate behaviors.
  - b. For firesetting situations, this means involvement of the legal system.
- 6. Economic incentives: Connecting unsafe or illegal behaviors with financial (dis)incentives such as rewards for appropriate behavior or fines and restitution.
- 7. Emergency response.
  - a. This refers to an adequately staffed, equipped and trained cadre of responders to mitigate emergency incidents when they occur.
  - b. Emergency response is pertinent to the youth firesetting situations so available resources respond to an incident and refer the youth and their family for intervention.

This page intentionally left blank.

## ACTIVITY 5.1

### Education as Primary Prevention

#### Purpose

Explore the impact primary prevention can have on preventing youth firesetting behaviors.

#### Directions

1. Review your pre-course assignment that called for identification of school and community-based programs that your organization conducts to **prevent the occurrence of youth firesetting behaviors**.

2. Discuss the following in your small groups and be prepared to share with the class:

- a. Describe your school-based programs that are intended to prevent the occurrence of youth firesetting behavior. How effective are they?

---

---

---

- b. How are you measuring the outreach and impact of your school-based education programs?

---

---

---

- c. Describe your community-based programs intended to **prevent the occurrence** of youth firesetting behavior. How effective are they?

---

---

---

- d. How are you measuring the outreach and impact of your community-based education programs?

---

---

---

- e. What improvements could be made to improve the effectiveness of these programs?

---

---

---

3. You will have 20 minutes to discuss your findings with your small group and then 10 minutes to summarize them as part of a debrief with the instructor and the class.



**II. RATIONALE FOR YOUTH FIRESETTING EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS**

A. Youth firesetting education interventions.

1. Most cases (but not all) identified by a youth firesetting intervention program will be classified as “some risk.”

Curiosity or experimentation may be one of the potential motivations for firesetting as defined in the “some risk” category.

2. Based on current data, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), as well as mental and behavioral health impairments, are being seen more frequently as factors impacting youth firesetting.
3. Motivations that initiate intake into an intervention program will vary from one program to another. However, the recommended intervention strategy for “some risk” cases is intervention.
4. “Definite and extreme risk” firesetting situations will also require educational intervention. However, sometimes the education will follow a referral for other types of intervention such as clinical support or youth justice system actions.
5. Regardless of the level of risk, education should be considered for use as a key intervention component. When education is delivered will depend on the specific situation and level of risk assessed.

• Why do most (if not all) youths involved in youth firesetting benefit from educational intervention?

• Why must you never assume all children, adolescents and parents/ caregivers know the basics of fire safety and fire science?

Slide 5-9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

B. Do not assume youth firesetting primary prevention has occurred.

1. Youth firesetting prevention and intervention specialists must not assume that all children, adolescents and parents/caregivers know the basics about fire safety and fire science.

- a. Children may or may not have had a fire safety or fire science class in school.
  - b. The parents or caregivers may or may not have had a fire safety or fire science class at some point in their lives.
  - c. Children, adolescents and adults may be uneducated or misinformed about proper fire safety practices.
  - d. Similarly, all groups need to feel empowered to make the right decisions.
2. Children must rely on the experience and education of adults to understand the danger of fire. If parents or caregivers do not have this knowledge or experience, the likelihood of passing on information regarding fire safety and fire science is compromised.
- C. Parents'/caregivers' participation is essential.
1. Parents/caregivers are important students.
  2. Parents/caregivers may not consider fire to be a dangerous tool.
    - a. Parents/caregivers may minimize the danger associated with firesetting because they lack insight into what their children can (or often cannot) understand.
    - b. It should be suggested that parents/caregivers set the same kind of rules for fire that they have for guns, sharp knives, chain saws, etc.

### **III. COMPONENTS OF AN EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION**

- A. Regardless of additional types of intervention measures taken (behavioral/mental health services/law enforcement conditions, etc.), all intervention programs should include an educational component for both the youth and their parents/caregivers.

---

What is the goal of a youth firesetting educational intervention?

- For children/youth?
- For parents/caregivers?

Slide 5-10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Why do interventionists need good baseline knowledge of fire safety and fire science before they begin working with juveniles and their families?

Slide 5-11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- 
- Why may an authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) require youth firesetting prevention and intervention specialists to meet Level I Fire and Life Safety Educator (FLSE) certification?
  - Why is it beneficial for the interventionist to have this knowledge, skill and ability (KSA)?

Slide 5-12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

EDUCATION AS A COMPONENT OF A YOUTH  
FIRESETTING INTERVENTION STRATEGY

---

National Fire Academy's (NFA's) course: "[Fire and Life Safety Educator Fundamentals](#)."

Slide 5-13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- B. Developing an educational intervention strategy may vary between cases, however, the basic concepts remain the same:
1. Punishment alone does not teach a child about the dangers of fire.
  2. Similarly, getting burned, even if the youth is admitted to a burn unit, does not teach a child about the dangers of fire. "Scared straight" tactics are not useful.
  3. All children, adolescents and adults will benefit from fire science education.

EDUCATION AS A COMPONENT OF A YOUTH  
FIRESETTING INTERVENTION STRATEGY  
(cont'd)

---

- Four common factors that influence firesetting behaviors:
  - Easy access to ignition tools.
  - Lack of adequate supervision.
  - Lack of fire prevention/safety knowledge.
  - Easy access to information on the internet.

Slide 5-14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. From a primary prevention perspective, it is essential to include education that addresses the four common factors influencing firesetting behavior:
  - a. Easy access to ignition tools.
  - b. Lack of adequate supervision.

- c. Lack of fire prevention/safety knowledge.
- d. Easy access to information on firesetting and explosive construction information on the internet.

• Do your youth firesetting prevention and intervention educational interventions include content on:

- Easy access to ignition tools?
- Lack of adequate supervision?
- Lack of fire prevention/safety knowledge?
- Easy access to information on the internet?

• Why or why not? If not, what additions are needed?

Slide 5-15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

EDUCATION AS A COMPONENT OF A YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION STRATEGY (cont'd)

• Four key subject areas for most youth firesetting educational interventions:

- Fire safety.
- Fire behavior (science).
- Home fire safety.
- Consequences.

Slide 5-16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. In addition, all youth firesetting educational interventions should also include the following four key subjects:
- a. Fire safety and decision-making.
    - Having an understanding of fire safety benefits all ages, regardless of circumstances as to what brought them to program; this is an education opportunity that should be used.
    - As you learned throughout the course, the overall goal of a youth firesetting education intervention is to empower students of all ages to make better choices and decisions, so recidivism is prevented.

- This might involve providing a better understanding of fire behavior, communicating realistic consequences of fire misuse (for both youth and their parents/caregivers), correcting misconceptions that people may have about fire, and presenting an overall awareness of how impactful firesetting can be.
  - Intervention programs should go beyond just fire misuse and address risky behavior in general.
- This is prime opportunity to educate both youth and adults.
  - Empowering the parents/caregivers with knowledge has the natural consequence of positively influencing the youth as well.
- In other words, participation in a firesetting intervention program gives intervention specialists a rare chance to discuss with adults who share, often with humor, that “I did that too; they are just like me,” and how the outcome of that behavior is not the same as perhaps it once was.
  - Intervention specialists have the unique opportunity to discuss how risky behavior that the parents/caregivers may have engaged in is vastly different in today’s world.

b. Fire behavior.

- Fire behavior (aka fire science), in its most basic form, should be addressed. Just reviewing the three elements of fire (heat, oxygen, fuel) and what happens when even have ever learned.
- Reviewing the speed of fire (doubling in size every 30 seconds, etc.) and discussing how newer homes made with plastics and synthetics burn much faster and more toxically than traditional materials is impactful.

c. Home fire safety.

- Home fire safety is a must.

- The importance of smoke alarms, including placement (ceiling, on every level, in each sleeping area) and how long alarms are good for (10 years) and the importance of testing smoke alarms every month must be reiterated.
- Carbon monoxide alarms and use of fire extinguishers is also an important concept to review with adults.
- Advancements in the development and expense of home security and safety technology that allow for integration among smart-home automation hubs and mobile apps should be reviewed with adults, as well as the availability of low- or no-cost programs to protect the family home.
- Everyone in the home must know two ways out of the home and the family meeting spot once all members of the household have evacuated.
  - It is a great idea for participants to discuss right there — youth and adults as a family — a good meeting spot in the event of a home evacuation.
- This is a great venue to discuss appropriate use of 911 and how 911 operates in the locality (e.g., triangulation capabilities, etc.).
  - Even young children should know their address.
  - Teens and adults should know what happens when 911 is used inappropriately and how that affects others.
  - This can be made personal (e.g., what if it is your loved one needing help?), including delving into fire misuse and how this impacts first responders.

d. Consequences.

- Although families are already in the program because a fire incident has occurred, this is a great opportunity to discuss consequences of fire misuse, be it legal, financial or physical.

- Even reviewing what could have happened in their incident can be impactful and get both youth and their parents thinking about changing the behavior that brought them to the program in the first place.
  - Of note, sometimes youths (and parents/caregivers) do not care or believe what could have happened, but finding that “thing” which does get them to consider tangible consequences can be impactful.
  - For example, some youths do not care or believe that they could hurt anyone by what they are doing, but often there is a pet which might be impacted that they had never considered.
  - This is not a scare tactic but a method to point out a reality that might get them thinking.
- e. Often, parents/caregivers are justifiably upset about their child’s firesetting behavior and think that a “scared straight” approach will correct this behavior.
  - It is the responsibility of the intervention specialist to ensure that adults understand that this type of “education” is short-term and has been repeatedly proven ineffective.
  - Requests to use scare tactics must not be considered, and the message must be conveyed that this just does not work to correct firesetting behavior.

What is meant by “empower students of all ages to make better choices and decisions so recidivism is prevented?”

Slide 5-17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

- Do your youth firesetting prevention and intervention educational interventions include information on:
  - Understanding fire safety?
  - Fire behavior (science)?
  - Home fire safety?
  - Consequences?
- Why or why not? If not, what's missing and how can you work to incorporate the topics?

Slide 5-18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

DVD PRESENTATION

---

“GO BAGS”



Slide 5-19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**IV. LOGISTICS: PREPLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION**

PREPLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

---

- Rationale for preplanning:
  - Proper planning prevents poor performance.
  - All youth firesetting program formats require preplanning prior to execution.

Slide 5-20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

A. Rationale for preplanning the youth firesetting intervention.

1. Proper planning helps prevent poor performance.
  2. Fostering changes in a target population's awareness, knowledge level and attitudes takes planning for the desired outcome of behavioral change to occur.
  3. Since youth firesetting educational interventions are scheduled events, there is time to prepare in advance for the experience.
  4. This process is akin to pre-incident planning and similar to preparation for a successful youth firesetting interview/screening process.
- B. There are many options to format a youth firesetting intervention.
1. In some situations, it could be helpful to have all the youths involved in the firesetting event in the same classroom. In other situations, that may not be helpful.
  2. It depends on the situation itself. Some programs have a group or class setting, while others provide one-on-one training for a youth who misuses fire.
  3. If the families are cohesive and want to remain together, a group session may be appropriate.
  4. For others, a group session may not be appropriate.
  5. While there are many decisions left up to the fire intervention specialist and their program manager regarding the format of the educational intervention, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program protocols help guide the decision-making process.
- C. Step one: Possess a strong understanding of cognitive development and its impact on learning/accountability.
1. Cognitive development is the construction of thought processes, including remembering, problem-solving and decision-making from childhood through adolescence to adulthood.
  2. Cognitive development is not age specific. What this means is that while a person may be of late adolescence or even adult age, for some reason (and there are many), they may be unable to process higher-order cognitive tasks such as analysis, problem-solving, abstract thought and complex decision-making.

3. From an educational perspective, cognitive development impacts a person's ability to understand what is being taught and to interact with those who are presenting the information.

---

What is cognitive development, why is it not age specific and how can it impact a person's ability to understand subject matter related to a youth firesetting educational intervention?

Slide 5-21

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. There are many aspects of behavioral health that play into cognitive development. It is prudent for the Fire and Life Safety Educator (FLSE) to be familiar with the common disorders that may affect children who misuse fire.
5. In the context of youth firesetting, stages of cognitive development help us understand what a youth is capable of at various stages of their life and what they can be held accountable for.
6. Recall that accountability by definition means that one is held accountable for their actions or can be asked to render an account regarding a situation. The federal age of accountability is 11 years old.
7. Each state in the U.S. has varied ages of accountability. State ages vary from 6 to 12.
8. While it is recognized that children are individuals and not all children are the same in terms of cognitive development, understanding and maturity, the Supreme Court has determined that **at the age of 7, a basic comprehension of right versus wrong, cause and effect, and consequences for actions should be understood.**

**PREPLANNING THE  
EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)**

---

- Understanding levels of learning:
  - Preschool.
    - One topic at a time.
    - Repetition.
    - No abstract concepts.

Slide 5-22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- D. Step two: Possess mastery understanding of the levels of learning.
1. Learning at any age is a multistep process with increasing complexity as the cognitive levels progress.
  2. Be it using school grade levels as a starting point or “norms” for age-level expectations, the educator needs to have a good understanding of where youths fall cognitively.
  3. Children in the preschool learning level can only focus on one feature of an object at a time.
    - a. A match is small.
    - b. A house is big.
    - c. How one thing becomes the other is a mystery (i.e., object permanence).
      - Even if we show them how it happens, they may not understand.
    - d. Preschool-age children interpret the world around them literally. Be wary of using abstract concepts.
    - e. For example: Sparky the Dog as a mascot, wearing a costume. If the child sees the person underneath the costume remove Sparky’s “head,” that may be emotionally jarring for them because the child thinks that Sparky the Dog is real!

**PREPLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)**

"Feelings and emotions" cards may help younger children get in touch with their emotions.

Photo courtesy of Kathi Osmonson, Minnesota State Fire Marshal's Office

Slide 5-23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- f. Example: These "feelings and emotions" cards may be helpful for children who misuse fire to get in touch with their emotions around the fire itself. These cards are designed for children at the preschool level.

**PREPLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)**

"Tools not toys" cards for children.

Photo courtesy of Kathy Hook, Colorado Springs Fire Department

Slide 5-24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- g. Children at this level may have difficulty identifying their emotions or feelings; these cards provide a visual aid for assigning the appropriate word to how they feel.

What are some topics and best practices that you've discovered work well with preschoolers during youth firesetting educational interventions?

Slide 5-25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**PREPLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)**

- Elementary.
  - Understand relationships between things.
  - Cause and effect.
  - No abstract concepts.

Slide 5-26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. Elementary learning level.
  - a. Most elementary school children have a better, but limited, understanding of small fires.
  - b. They understand how fire can grow and have a limited understanding of cause and effect. Cause and effect is the relationship between two things or events; one thing or event initiates something else or another event to happen.
    - Adults may have issues understanding cause-and-effect relationships as well.
  - c. A normally developing child can identify cause-and-effect relationships by the age of 7.
  - d. Their understanding of cause and effect is based on their own experience and cannot anticipate events they have not experienced.

- e. If they have not seen a fire get out of control, they cannot imagine it, but they are good at following directions.
- f. If they are shown how to do something, most often, they can do it repeatedly.
- g. This may be why “stop, drop and roll” is remembered so well. However, if this action is taught to younger children, that is all they may remember about fire prevention.
- h. While each child is an individual, basic understanding of right versus wrong does not usually occur until the age of 7, as cognitive brain function develops and helps to discern action and reaction, cause and effect.

What are some topics and best practices that you've discovered work well with elementary-age children during youth firesetting educational interventions?

Slide 5-27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**PREPLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)**

- The next video demonstrates an example of teaching cause and effect relationships to elementary-age students.
- Second-graders are preparing to tour a burned home at a safety village.
- The video is an introduction shown in the safety village classroom pre-tour.

Slide 5-28

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

**VIDEO PRESENTATION**

---

**“WHAT HAPPENED TO PAPPY’S HOUSE?”**



Slide 5-29

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- What “ah-has” do you think second graders experience about cause-and-effect relationships as a result of watching the video and touring Pappy’s House?
  
- How could you use the video to supplement a youth firesetting educational intervention?

Slide 5-30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**PREPLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont’d)**

---

- Understanding levels of learning:
  - Adolescents.
    - Complex group — why?
    - Impulsiveness, decision-making skills, attention problems, initiative, etc., can be problematic.

Slide 5-31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. Adolescent learning level.
  - a. Middle- and high-school-age youth are a very complex group.

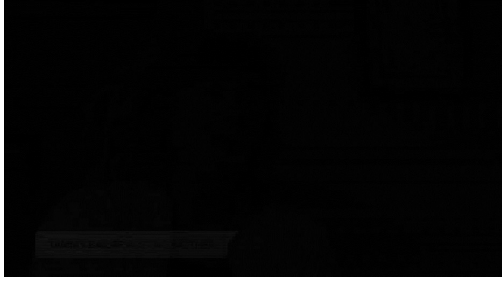




VIDEO PRESENTATION

---

[“AUSTIN BALIFF PART 2”](#)



Slide 5-34

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How could “Austin Baliff” be used to supplement a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program?

Slide 5-35

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

PREPLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)

---

- Adults.
  - Important youth firesetting intervention students — why?
  - May have a history of fire misuse.
  - Can also have cognitive development issues.

Slide 5-36

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

6. Adult learning level: Parents/caregivers are essential students in the youth firesetting educational intervention process.

- a. Caregivers are responsible for the safety of their children, no matter what age.
- b. Adult caregivers likely do not understand the power of fire.
- c. If the adults have been carelessly using fire without consequence, they may underestimate the potential dangers.
- d. Children learn about fire from the adults. If adult behavior is irresponsible, children will not understand potential consequences.

What are some topics and best practices that you've discovered work well with adults during youth firesetting educational interventions?

Slide 5-37

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**PREPLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)**

- Assess and understand target group:
  - Cognitive ability of the youth.
  - Age and special needs of youth.
  - Abilities of parents/caregivers.
  - Preferred language (if applicable).
  - Culture of youth and adults.

**What does each mean in the context of preparing for the educational intervention?**

Slide 5-38

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- E. Step three: Assess and understand the target group to be served.
  - 1. The goal of a youth firesetting educational intervention is ultimately to interrupt and stop youth firesetting behavior.
  - 2. In addition to the firesetting youth, a best practice is to target multiple people who can help prevent future acts of firesetting from occurring.



Increased awareness does not necessarily teach or change behavior. “Be Safe with Fire” on a pencil reminds us that fire safety is important; however, the message is not specific.

\_\_\_\_\_

Fire safety messages should be relevant, current, consistent and positive in nature. What does this statement mean? Provide some examples related to youth firesetting.

Slide 5-40

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Messages should provide information about the behavior you want the person to perform, not about what you do not want them to do.
  - a. Messages should be positive.
  - b. For example, “Don’t play with matches and lighters” does not tell a child what to do if they encounter matches and lighters. It only mystifies these tools and makes them wonder why they should not handle them.
4. Offer direction as to the desired behavior.

For example, “Go tell a grown-up if you find matches and lighters.”
5. Again, remember, scare tactics do not work, especially for the children we work with in the firesetting venue. Youths have been so desensitized by television and video games that attempts to “scare straight” may have little impact.

**PRE-PLANNING THE  
EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)**

- Select appropriate teaching materials, such as the following:
  - [Minnesota Department of Public Safety: Public Education Messaging Guide.](#)
  - [National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\) Educational Messaging Advisory Committee \(EMAC\).](#)

Slide 5-41

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

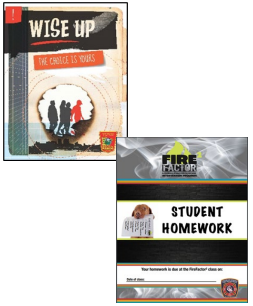
---

6. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety has a useful [Public Education Messaging Guide](#) that offers guidance on using brief messages to share important fire safety information.
7. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has several free resources through their [Educational Messaging Advisory Committee](#) (EMAC).
8. The intervention specialist should be mindful of special considerations when interacting with the youth and their families, like languages spoken in the household and religious and cultural sensitivities.
  - a. For example, some Hispanic or Latin American households may light candles in their homes as part of their religious practices.
  - b. This may, to some degree, normalize fire use, and the caregiver and youth may not see the potential risks and danger.
9. Each intervention program must evaluate the best educational tools for their audience, available resources and available facility.
  - a. Since a common age group for youth misuse of fire is tweens/teens, this media-heavy age group is used to videos and fast-paced information; this is a great way to catch and keep their attention.
  - b. Short appropriate video clips (e.g., YouTube, TikTok) with the desired message will be received much better than a PowerPoint or lecture-style delivery.
10. Another consideration, if possible, is to use multiple speakers to share their experiences with fire misuse or purposeful firesetting. This can be in video format if the speaker is not available in person.

11. If there are going to be multiple families in a session, consider planning to break the larger group into age-appropriate groupings.
  - a. For example, reviewing “tools not toys” is great for younger children but much too basic for tween/teens. “Sean’s Story” (from Unit 2: Who Sets Fires and Why? Appendix C: Sean’s Story: My Life Torn Apart by Firesetting) is appropriate for participants older than 12, but too much for younger participants.
  - b. A young child might be offered picture cards with adult “tools,” including hammers, drills, nails, and, of course, matches and lighters, and asked to separate out these cards from those cards with pictures of children’s toys. After cards are separated appropriately, discuss how adult tools are not to be touched by the child. This is a concrete, visible way to explain how some items are okay for adults but not for children.
  - c. Older youths might be asked to “role-play” by simply discussing ways to get out of a risky situation when they are unsure of what to do.
  
12. Many intervention programs require some type of homework or extension activities. These are not “spur of the moment” creations but rather well-thought-out assignments that engage youth/families and reiterate the importance of fire safety in the home.
  - a. Many programs require older youths to write a letter of apology to whomever they choose (even to themselves) pertaining to the fire incident or poor decisions they may have made.
  - b. Having the youth perform a safety check is a great way to involve the entire family in understanding the importance of home safety.
  - c. Performing mandatory safety checks in the homes of trusted family and friends is also a powerful component of a restitution process.

**PRE-PLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)**

- [Minnesota's Wise-Up Toolkit](#) is geared towards firesetting youth ages 12-17.
- [Colorado Springs Fire Department's FireFactor<sup>2</sup> Intervention Program](#) has several extension activities.



Slide 5-42

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

13. These are several examples of extension activities from youth firesetting intervention programs across the country:
- a. Minnesota: [Minnesota's Wise Up Toolkit](#) (Appendix A) is geared toward firesetting youth aged 12 to 17. Topics include fire science, consequences of firesetting, burn prevention and escape planning.
  - b. Colorado: [Colorado Springs Fire Department's FireFactor<sup>2</sup> Intervention Program](#) (Appendix B) sends students home with an extension activity packet that asks them to complete several checklists regarding the placement and function of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, electrical appliances, utilities and housekeeping, and the cooking and kitchen area.
    - There are several activities regarding a home escape plan, effects and consequences of fire, and writing an apology letter.
  - c. Remember, a huge part of being a good intervention specialist is being a good public educator.



---

- What is an example of a youth firesetting program extension activity you are using?
- Do your programs include extension activities? Why or why not? If not, what additions are needed?

Slide 5-43

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**PRE-PLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION (cont'd)**

---

- Facilitate an environment conducive to learning:
  - Audiovisual support.
  - Paper-based materials.
  - Seating and breakout areas.
  - Minimize distractions.
  - Special needs.

**Anything else you can think of?**

Slide 5-44

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

G. Step five: Facilitate an environment conducive to learning.

1. The first step in facilitating an environment conducive to learning is to be logistically prepared.
  - a. Before class, make sure audiovisual equipment works, including audio and internet access, if required.
  - b. It is usually best to download videos rather than rely on internet access to avoid interruptions during class.
  - c. If a fire station is being used, ensure that the room is set up in a way that participants will not lose their focus by firehouse distractions. Remember, this is **not** a firehouse tour.
  - d. Make sure adequate seating is available, and if breakout areas are planned for use, prepare these in advance.

2. If a youth or parent speaks English as a second language, an interpreter may assist with ensuring that the information is conveyed in a way that all participants can understand what is taught.
  - a. This requirement circles back to having the person performing the intake finding out if there is a language barrier so that an interpreter may be secured.
  - b. If a program includes more than one family or group of youths, setting up the interpreter's location in a manner that will allow others to hear and participate is important. If an interpreter is used, the timing of the educational material presented must be considered.
  - c. If the education is interactive, which ideally it is, it simply takes longer to ask a question and have the interpreter relay the question and the response.
3. If younger children are a part of the program, they are most likely unable to sit still for as long as a teen.
  - a. Educational material may need to be broken up into smaller sessions, perhaps even on multiple days.
  - b. This may also hold true of youths with learning or attention challenges; since behavior change is the goal, these youths may "shut down" and not glean any benefit if the session goes too long.
  - c. Again, consider the length of the education and the needs of your participants.
4. While most programs assure the youth and family of confidentiality, if the session involves multiple families, use only first names, and do not discuss specifics of the incident itself in front of others. This is a great time to remind everyone involved that the program is not about dwelling on the details of a particular incident(s) but learning from the mistakes made and making better decisions in the future.
5. If a youth and their parents/caregivers will be separated for some of the session(s), ensure that interventionists are never alone with a youth or in a difficult situation with a parent/caregiver who may feel animosity toward them or other participants.
  - a. If there are issues between families, the best approach is not to have the families attend the same session or, at minimum, physically separate families.

- b. Although in group settings there are occasions where youths and adults might know each other, this is not a time to catch up on “old times” or school.
  - c. A youth should sit with their parents/caregivers separate from others they may know.
  - d. Prohibit distractions such as using cell phones, tablets or other mobile devices to send text messages, browse the internet or check emails.
6. Be cognizant of both the youth and the adult participant’s time; always start on time and end the session(s) as scheduled.
- a. Timing can be arbitrary depending on class dynamics, so give families a conservative estimate of end time (e.g., “Class will run from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.”).
  - b. Do not run late, but in general, if you finish early, there will not be objections.
  - c. If sessions are on a school night, be respectful of the youth’s schedule.
7. Remember, there are many options for educational interventions including one-on-one sessions with youths and their parents/caregivers, group classes with multiple youths/families, separate youth-only sessions (either individual or youth groups) and parents/caregivers only.
- a. One-on-one sessions can usually be tailored specially for the individual needs of the youth/family, but it depends on caseload of the intervention specialist.
  - b. Grouping youths in classes is often more feasible than offering individual education; separation by age/abilities is best in this situation.
  - c. Group settings have the advantage of giving youths the opportunity to publicly take accountability for what they have done (while maintaining confidentiality about incident, etc.) and often gives overwhelmed adults the understanding that there are resources out there and that they are not alone in this.
  - d. Each program must decide what works best to meet set goals and utilize available resources.

8. While a face-to-face, physical learning environment is often the preferred environment — whether one-on-one or in a group setting — these same considerations can be incorporated in a virtual setting.
  - a. If the education is offered virtually, the internet capabilities of the family as well as the interventionist are a consideration.
  - b. Similarly, if the program takes place online, what are the participants' home environments like?
    - Are there distractions?
    - Will they be comfortable turning on their cameras in a virtual meeting environment?
    - Would the session be more successful over the phone?
  - c. If homework is required in a remote environment, considerations must be made for providing the materials and returning completed assignments.
  - d. Your delivery methods have unique challenges.

---

- How well do you facilitate an environment conducive to learning during your youth firesetting educational interventions?
- In what areas could you improve upon or design from the start?

Slide 5-45

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## ACTIVITY 5.2

### Comparing Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Educational Interventions

#### Purpose

Discuss various methodologies used for conducting educational interventions as part of students' youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

#### Directions

1. Discuss in your table groups how your youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs deliver educational services.
2. You will have 30 minutes for small group discussion.
  - a. Is the program delivered in individual or group format?
  - b. Does it offer an educational component for both youths and adults?
  - c. If both components are present, are youths and adults educated separately or together?
  - d. What age groups are served by the program?
  - e. What is a typical class size for the program?
  - f. What fire safety/science education is presented as part of the program?
  - g. Is the program a one-class session or multiple classes?
  - h. How are program attendees notified and their attendance confirmed in advance of the class?
  - i. What extension activities/homework/follow-up services are offered as part of the educational intervention?
  - j. What lessons have been learned about the educational component of the program (what has worked/not worked)?
3. After reconvening as a large group, volunteers from each table group will share key points and findings from your group discussion with the class (10 minutes total time).

This page intentionally left blank.

### ACTIVITY 5.3

#### Enhancing Your Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program's Educational Interventions

##### **Purpose**

Reflect on students' youth firesetting program's educational intervention strategies and suggest enhancements to consider.

##### **Directions**

1. This is an individual activity.
2. Reflect on the discussion that took place regarding best practices in planning for and executing youth firesetting educational interventions.
3. After reflection, identify areas for improvement in your youth firesetting program's educational intervention strategies.
4. For those who do not have a program, it's a good opportunity to list items you wish to have in the future.
5. This action sets you up for success in creating a future action plan to address the needed enhancements.
6. You have 20 minutes to complete this activity.

This page intentionally left blank.



## ACTIVITY 5.4

### Develop an Educational Intervention Lesson Outline

#### Purpose

Create and explain a component of a youth firesetting educational intervention.

#### Directions

1. The instructor will divide the class into five groups of four or five students.
2. Your group will be assigned a case study and asked to prepare an outline for a basic youth firesetting educational lesson.
3. Each group will be assigned one of the following age groups:
  - a. Group 1: ages 4 to 6.
  - b. Group 2: ages 7 to 11.
  - c. Group 3: ages 12 to 15.
  - d. Group 4: ages 16 to 18.
  - e. Group 5: adults.
4. Your group should develop a lesson outline that you would use during a firesetting educational intervention for your assigned age group.
5. The lesson outline should include the following content:
  - a. Explanation of what would be presented about fire safety/fire science, as well as consequences of firesetting, personal responsibility and making good choices so acts of recidivism are prevented.
  - b. Methods of presentation, suggested media, student activities, extension and/or take-home activities.
  - c. Characteristics of the physical environment for the program that would encourage learning for the various age groups.
6. Record the lesson outline on an easel pad. You will have 30 minutes for preparation.
7. Present your group's lesson outline to the class. Each group will present a 10-minute overview to the class (50 minutes).

This page intentionally left blank.

## ACTIVITY 5.4 (cont'd)

### Case Studies

#### Group 1

Katie is a 4-year-old who attends preschool three days a week. She lives with her single dad and her Grandpa Frank, who is a heavy smoker. Katie adores her grandpa and spends a great deal of time with him; in fact, Katie frequently states that she “wants to be a cool smoker like Grampy” when she grows up. Grandpa Frank has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and is on oxygen constantly. One morning, Katie woke up early and picked up Grandpa Frank’s lighter from his bedside table while he was sleeping. Neither Katie’s dad nor Grandpa Frank knows exactly what happened (and Katie won’t talk about it), but a fire started in the living room and spread rapidly throughout the house. There were no working smoke alarms, but Grandpa Frank woke up to Katie crying. All but the family cat made it out of the house; Grandpa Frank and Dad were transported to the hospital with smoke inhalation and burns. The family residence was a total loss.

The fire marshal ruled that the fire was started by a child using a lighter to ignite combustible materials in the home’s living room. The fire marshal referred the case to the fire department’s youth firesetting prevention and intervention team. Team members performed an intake and screening interview with the family and Katie. Fire safety educational intervention has been recommended as this is a curiosity-motivated “some risk” case. Katie is functioning at an age-appropriate cognitive level and enjoys interacting with others. It also should be noted that Katie has both visual and hearing deficiencies. While she is not deaf or blind, her dad says that you need to make adjustments for her differing abilities.

Katie’s dad and grandfather have agreed to the educational intervention and would like it to occur at the home of a close relative where the family has been staying since the fire. The relative has agreed to vacate the home for a few hours so the youth firesetting prevention and intervention team can have quiet time with Katie, her dad and her grandfather.

## Group 2

During a recent night, 9-year-old Addison's foster parents (Maria and Tim) smelled a strange odor. They are remodeling the basement in their home and thought perhaps it was sawdust in the vent. However, upon further investigation, Maria found Addison pretending to be asleep and with a lighter in his hand under the pillow. Addison's room had many burned items: paper, carpet, plastic and bedding. Addison had attempted to cover up the burn marks with shoes/clothing. Addison initially lied when asked if he had been using fire, but when he knew he was caught, he admitted that he had been lighting items in his bedroom on fire for "two or three hours." He had minor burns on his hand from dripping melted wax. The carpet was damaged, and his closet/bedroom needed to be repainted. There are 10 people living in the house with Addison, and his foster parents don't think he comprehends the danger of this fire misuse.

Addison's mother contacted the fire department for help and was referred to the youth firesetting prevention and intervention team. Team members performed both an intake and screening that produced the following information:

Maria and her husband Tim have had Addison as a foster child for several years; they also have four children of their own and three additional foster children. Addison's history is unknown, but there is suspicion of abuse in his past; he has no contact with his biological parents. Addison attends Tubman Elementary; he does poorly in school and does not read at a high level. He was involved in a fight at school three weeks ago for which he was suspended. Addison has attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and asthma. He is medicated with four separate prescriptions. He is currently receiving mental and behavioral health treatment from Valley Therapy; his caseworker is Reba Smithson. The Department of Social Services has legal guardianship of Addison. Maria noted that Addison has had a very hard time getting along with his foster siblings. She also mentioned that at almost the same time she and her husband took in Addison, they had a son pass away, and this was very difficult on everyone.

This incident is the first time Addison has been involved with misuse of fire.

### Notes From Assessment/Follow-Up

Addison has been receiving professional mental/behavioral health assistance for his entire life, so a referral was not needed. The Department of Social Services was also quite familiar with this family situation, so no referral was needed to this agency either. The fire department interventionist has communicated with these partner agencies who are in strong agreement that educational intervention should take place.

### Group 3

On the morning of Feb. 1, sixth grade student Donnie walked with friend Ellie to the bus stop located within their apartment complex. Before getting onto the bus to Jefferson Middle School, Donnie and Ellie learned that their friend, Ben, had brought a Bic lighter with him.

After boarding the bus, Ben and Donnie sat together in the rear seats. Ben then produced the lighter and persuaded Donnie to light several items on fire during their ride to school. The items included a plastic cookie container and notebook paper. While the fire remained small — mostly just melted plastic and some notebook paper with burned edges — it did create quite a bit of smoke on the bus that gained the attention of other students and the bus driver, who could clearly see that while there was no fire on the bus, the issue demanded attention.

Upon arrival at the middle school, Ben would not take the lighter back. In fact, according to Ellie, Ben dropped the lighter and left it on the bus when Donnie tried to give it back to him.

Unknown to Donnie and Ben, the bus driver had contacted the middle school to report the incident and was advised that administrators would take action on their arrival at the school. During Donnie's first period class, he was pulled out of class by the vice principal. When Donnie arrived in the vice principal's office, Ben was there, and both were questioned about the bus incident. **\*Note:** There was bus video of the entire incident of which Donnie was unaware of at this point. Initially Donnie lied and told the principal that he used the "sunshine" coming into the bus to start a fire. The video clearly showed both Donnie and Ben lighting objects on fire with Ben's lighter.

Ben and Donnie were given in-school suspension until 2:00 p.m., at which time their mothers came to school after they were notified of Donnie's and Ben's involvement in the incident. Donnie did confess after his mom arrived and it was clear from the video of his part in the incident. Donnie was suspended from school for five days and is no longer permitted to ride the bus this semester. Ben was also suspended for five days with no bus permission.

The vice principal contacted the fire department about the incident, and the youth firesetting prevention and intervention team immediately went to the school to receive a firsthand report. Both Donnie and Ben's mothers were present, so a full intake and screening process could be performed.

Donnie's mom, Kendra, was only "somewhat" surprised that her son was involved in this incident as she admitted that Donnie is frequently influenced by peer pressure. She noted that a year ago, Donnie was involved in a similar peer-pressure incident and that he tends to be a "follower." Donnie is the oldest of five siblings. Kendra is clearly a no-nonsense parent; she is very well-spoken but firm with Donnie. She noted that she reads to all her kids. Later when asked about his favorite books and authors, Donnie named several books and authors that he likes. He is a very good student and has always liked school. Kendra spoke with Ben's mom, Annie, shortly after the incident. Both mothers agreed that their sons should be educated on fire safety and the dangers of "playing" with fire. The youth firesetting prevention and intervention

team agreed, and the school has offered their facility for use as the place for the educational intervention to occur.

Regarding the situation of the fire on the bus, the school resource officer, with consultation from a juvenile justice officer, has agreed that educational intervention and bus suspension are appropriate in this case in lieu of charges, so long as the terms of educational intervention are documented by the youth firesetting prevention and intervention team.

#### **Group 4**

Jake is a high school honor student and president of the student council. After school on a Friday, Jake and six other students on council were decorating the school for Homecoming the next week. The Homecoming theme was Pirates of the Caribbean, so Jake had the idea to singe the edges of the homecoming posters to make it look authentic.

Jake persuaded his six colleagues to take turns using a lighter to lightly burn the edges of the posters. Unfortunately, a couple of the posters burned in too deep, so they were discarded by the group into a trash can located in the rear of the school's stage area. After cleaning up, the students left the school.

Early in the evening, the fire department responded to an automatic fire alarm and found the entire backstage area, with many combustible props, on fire. Fortunately, no one was in the school at the time, but there was more than \$20,000 worth of damage from a fire that started in the trash can where the burned posters were disposed.

Fire investigators quickly learned that student council members were the last people to occupy the stage area, and Jake was the first to be interviewed. He readily admitted to putting the posters in the cans but said there was no fire at all when he threw them out. The six other students also admitted involvement, and everyone said they were in no way trying to start a malicious fire or burn down the school.

School officials, the fire department and youth justice collaborated on the disposition of the incident. It was decided to charge each youth with both reckless endangerment and burning. While both charges are Class 2 misdemeanors, the charges will be dropped so long as certain conditions of restitution/education are met.

The youth firesetting prevention and intervention team has performed intake services and screening on all seven youths. Each student is remorseful for their actions and has never been in trouble with justice officials. They appear to be highly cognitively functioning, vibrant youths. The team has selected the headquarters station of the fire department for the educational intervention as it has a very nice meeting/training area.

## Group 5

During red flag conditions (high temperatures, low humidity, high winds), two 15-year-old girls were riding their bikes on trails in the local neighborhood, which is part of a wildland urban interface (WUI). While doing so, they lit paper tissues on fire with a lighter and tossed the tissues behind them as they rode. Apparently, embers from the tissues were blown into adjacent thick and dry vegetation that ignited a wildfire. The fire ultimately burned 200 acres and destroyed six homes. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Post-fire investigation revealed the identity of the two girls, and their parents were contacted by authorities. The two juveniles were charged with reckless burning and endangerment, along with malicious burning. Much to the dismay of parents, the two girls were remanded to a short-term youth detention facility by the judge who approved the charges because of their nonchalant demeanor toward the fire. Both spent five days at the center and were released and placed under house arrest.



Two months later, during the subsequent court proceeding, the mothers of both girls stated that they felt the “system” was overreacting and bullying both the girls and their families. One of the mothers said she had provided the lighter to the girls because everyone in the families, including the teenagers, smoke. The other stated that wildfires are happening all over the place, and her family was being singled out.

The juvenile court judge did not show leniency in sentencing. Both girls were remanded to an additional two weeks in detention. Although both mothers were single parents and receiving public assistance, they were ordered to be supervised by Child Protective Services (CPS) for a period of one year, to begin paying restitution and to have their entire families receive a **series** of fire safety classes.

The youth firesetting prevention and intervention team got involved a week after sentencing. They contacted the mothers, performed intake services and did their interview/screening process (girls and mothers) at the detention facility. The screening process identified that both girls, their mothers and several members of each family carry a diagnosis of ADHD. Most also have been diagnosed with some level of learning disability. The two mothers told the youth firesetting prevention and intervention team that it was probably not a good idea to do education programs in either of the households because they were pretty chaotic.



V. SUMMARY

 **FEMA**  U.S. Fire Administration

## SUMMARY

- Learned the differences between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.
- Determined the format of the learning environment in an education intervention.
- Chose the proper teaching materials to employ.

Slide 5-52

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

 **FEMA**  U.S. Fire Administration

## SUMMARY (cont'd)

- Evaluated the components of an educational intervention.
- Designed an educational intervention for a youth firesetting situation.

Slide 5-53

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

This page intentionally left blank.

# **APPENDIX A**

## **STATE OF MINNESOTA YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS**

This page intentionally left blank.



## Youth Fire Intervention Class Agreement (Learning level / age 10+)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to the following:  
(print youth's name)

1. I agree to be completely honest about my fire setting offense and accept full responsibility for my actions.
2. I will actively participate in group and individual sessions to the satisfaction of staff and other group members.
3. I will not talk about any information regarding another class member outside of this program.
4. I will show respect to instructors and other class members and follow the rules of the program.
5. I understand that if I break this agreement I can be sent home and all costs of the class will be forfeited.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian



## State of Minnesota YFPI Program Letter of Agreement



I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand the dangers of playing with fire and fire materials. I know that setting fires is a crime. I promise to never set another fire. Due to my age and maturity, I understand that should I break my promise and set another fire that I may be referred to the juvenile legal authorities for further intervention.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth Fire Intervention Program Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature on this document tells us that you agree not to play with or experiment with fire. A copy of this document will be given to you as a reminder of your commitment.

# Dice Exercise

All learning levels



## Instructions

Give the young person a piece of paper, have several colors of paper and markers available. Consider sitting on the floor with them, or at least on their level. Ask them if they would like to write of if they want you to write and list the numbers 1 to 6 on it:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Against numbers one to five, ask the young person to write one thing that can happen when they set a fire. Give encouragement where needed but try and let the young person create the list of scenarios wherever possible.

Once five things are listed, ask the young person to write against number six "Nothing happens". (If they have already written "nothing" against one of the numbers, think of another positive reward when setting a fire e.g. "not bored").

Now ask the young person what they would like to happen if they set a fire?

The young person usually hopes that "nothing happens"/something positive happens.

Now pass the young person a dice and ask them to throw a number six (or whatever number corresponds with the scenario they hope for).

Discuss with them the numbers rolled and the corresponding scenario.

## Purpose of the exercise

This exercise highlights to young people in a very visual way that playing with fire is about taking chances that they cannot control. Many young people think they are in control of fire. This exercise challenges, in a non-confrontational way, this false sense of control. A young person may be in control of setting a fire, but not what happens next.

## Materials used

It is recommended that an actual dice is used for this exercise, not a virtual dice on an app. This is because an actual dice allows for a more tactile, sensory experience as the young person picks up, shakes and sees and hears the dice roll. The avoidance of using an app also ensures the boundary of neither the young person nor the practitioner using their mobile phone during a session is not compromised. This is a boundary that should be set at the start of every session as it helps the young person understand that you are there to listen to them without distraction.

\*Special thank you to Joanna Foster of Fabtiq for sharing this exercise\*

# Cup of Stress

Learning level / age 8—15

This is a rapport building strategy. It is designed to encourage the client to talk about any issues in their life that may be influencing their behavior or the ability to make good decisions.

## **Tools:**

Small cup  
Several ping-pong balls  
Sharpie markers

## **How it works**

During rapport building with the child, encourage them to talk freely. In a conversational manner, ask the client to talk about all the positive / good things in their life like family, friends, sports, etc..

Follow up their answers with the types of questions listed below:

- Ask them what is they like about these aspects of their life.
- Do they plan to continue with them? (Sports for example)
- Have they got plans for the future—career—college—etc.
- What goals do they have?
- What barriers are stopping them from attaining their goals?

**Remember this is rapport building NOT interrogation. Use good questioning skills.**

Now ask the child if they know what stress is.  
Have them give you their interpretation of stress.

**Place the stress cup on the table with the Ping-Pong balls.**

Get the child to talk about the factors in their life that are causing them stress using their terms stated above.

Write or have them write each issue on a Ping-Pong ball (could be bullying, siblings, parents divorce, etc.) and place it in the cup.

When finished, look how full the cup is. One by one talk to the child about each issue.

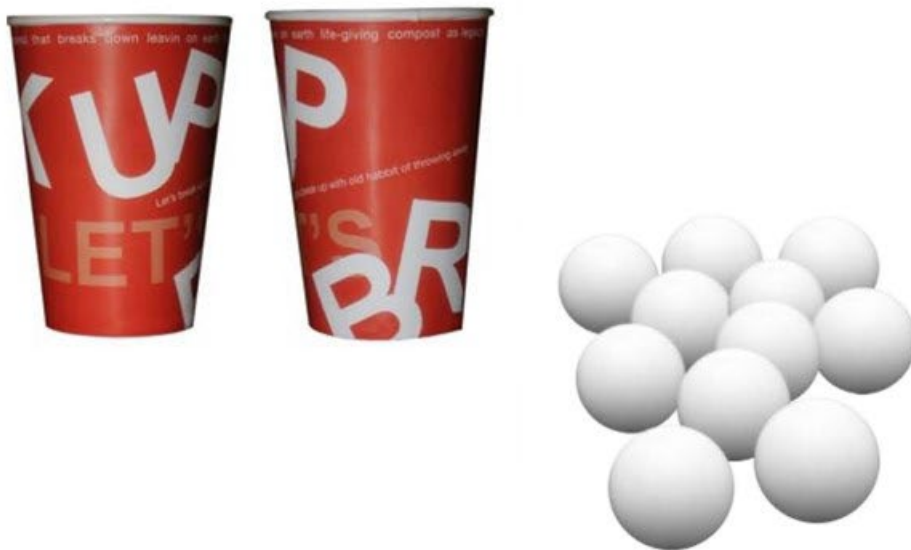
Discuss the following:

- Can they see a solution to any of the balls?
- Have they had an impact on their firesetting?
- Whose problem is it?



Now discuss with the child the fact that issues piled on top of each other will cause our behavior to change and influence how we act or re-act in certain situations. **Note:** If you feel any of the answers requires follow-up, discuss with your program manager the possibility of referring them on to another agency.

A stress cup can be any non-breakable cup.





## **Community Impact Report**

**Guide Sheet** (learning level/ age 10+)

Describe the fire you were involved in.

How did the fire you started affect people?

Describe how it affected one of your family members and at least two other people in the community. (Examples include neighbors, fire fighters, fire fighters' families, people driving on the roads, insurance agents, community members, police, and others.)

How much money did the fire you set cost your family, the fire department, the insurance company, and the community?

In what other ways did the fire you set affect you and your community?

What did you learn from the results of your actions?

List some alternatives to this behavior you can use in the future.



(Learning level / age 10+)

Thank you for your cooperation at the interview. To successfully complete the Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Program, please submit the following assignments to your, Youth Fire Intervention Specialist:

Home Fire Escape Plan

Draw a diagram of your home's floor plan. Draw where all of your smoke detectors are installed. Then mark two escape routes out of every room in your home. In addition, the meeting place needs to be marked and the Fire Department Emergency Number should be clearly indicated on the diagram.

Essay

Needs to be 2 pages in length and double-spaced. Elements of the essay need to include:

- ✓ Why fire is dangerous
- ✓ Why you will never set fires or play with fire
- ✓ Who could have been injured or what property was damaged
- ✓ What you will do to make sure that you live up to his written promise not to play with or set fires

These assignments are due on \_\_\_\_\_



**Key concept: AMBIVALENCE**

(Learning level/age 13+)

NO CHANGE	
Benefits	Concerns
CHANGE	
Concerns	Benefits

\*Used with permission from Laura Saunders\*

**Ambivalence:**

am·biv·a·lence

*noun*

**ambivalence**; plural noun: **ambivalences**

1. the state of having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone.

"the law's ambivalence about the importance of a victim's identity"

Talk to the youth about reasons that they might want to change their behavior.

What are the good things that they get out of starting fires?

What are the bad things that can come from starting fires?

What are they concerned about if they change their behavior?

What are they concerned about if they don't change their behavior?

This activity is a visual representation of the youth's ambivalence about starting fires. It is a great opportunity to help them find other ways to get the benefits in their life without starting fires.

\*Used with permission from Laura Saunders\*



## Youth Firesetting Intervention Program Knowledge Test (7—13-year-olds)

Please circle the best answer.

- 1. An electric space heater**
  - a. Should be placed close to the wall so people won't trip over it
  - b. Should be placed at least 36 inches from walls, furniture, or curtains
- 2. Smoke from fires**
  - a. Stays on the ground
  - b. Rises to the ceiling
- 3. Most people die in fires from**
  - a. Flames
  - b. Breathing too much smoke
- 4. If the smoke alarm is sounding outside a closed door, you should**
  - a. Open the door to see if there is a fire
  - b. Feel the closed door to see if it is hot
- 5. When you go to bed, it is safest to**
  - a. Close the bedroom door
  - b. Leave the bedroom door open
- 6. To prevent harm to yourself and your family in a fire, you should**
  - a. Have an escape plan and practice it
  - b. Know where the smoke alarms are
- 7. If you commit arson**
  - a. You may be charged with a felony
  - b. You cannot be charged with a crime
- 8. The most important thing to do when using legal fireworks**
  - a. Is to have sand nearby
  - b. Is to use them only under adult supervision
- 9. To prevent candle fires**
  - a. Make sure the candle is placed three feet from combustibles
  - b. Use candles in holders with a small base
- 10. You should have smoke alarms**
  - a. In the kitchen
  - b. Outside the bedroom areas on the ceiling, and inside the bedrooms
- 11. The three elements necessary for fire to occur are**
  - a. Matches + leaves + gas
  - b. Heat + fuel + oxygen
- 12. If you get a minor burn, the first thing you need to do is**
  - a. Put cool water on it.
  - b. Put lotion on it
- 13. Very young children should**
  - a. Practice using matches and lighters safely
  - b. Never use matches
- 14. The leading cause of fires in Minnesota is**
  - a. Cooking
  - b. Heating
- 15. If there is smoke or fire in your home, you should**
  - a. Hide
  - b. Shout "Fire!" to alert everyone to get out and use your family escape plan



## Youth Firesetting Intervention Program Knowledge Test (14+-year-olds)

Please circle the best answer.

- 1. An electric space heater**
  - a. Should be placed close to the wall so people won't trip over it
  - b. Should be placed at least 36 inches from walls, furniture, or curtains
  - c. Can be used as a permanent heat source
- 2. Smoke from fires**
  - a. Stays on the ground
  - b. Rises to the ceiling
  - c. Goes around the wall
- 3. Most people die in fires from**
  - a. Flames
  - b. Breathing too much smoke
  - c. Hiding from fire
- 4. If the smoke alarm is sounding outside a closed door, you should**
  - a. Open the door to see if there is a fire
  - b. Hide
  - c. Feel the closed door to see if it is hot
- 5. When you go to bed, it is safest to**
  - a. Close the bedroom door
  - b. Leave the bedroom door open
  - c. Know where the fire extinguisher is
- 6. To prevent harm to yourself and your family in a fire, you should**
  - a. Get a fire extinguisher
  - b. Have an escape plan and practice it
  - c. Know where the smoke alarms are
- 7. If you commit arson**
  - a. You may be charged with a felony
  - b. You cannot be charged with a crime
  - c. You will be charged with a crime that is not very serious
- 8. The most important thing to do when using legal fireworks**
  - a. Is to have sand near by
  - b. Is to only use them on public property
  - c. Is to use them only under adult supervision.
- 9. To prevent candle fires**
  - a. Make sure the candle is placed 3 feet from combustibles
  - b. Use candles in holders with a small base
  - c. Let the wick get low
- 10. You should have smoke alarms**
  - a. In the areas you spend the most time
  - b. In the kitchen
  - c. Outside the bedroom areas on the ceiling and inside the bedrooms
- 11. The three elements necessary for fire to occur are**
  - a. Matches + leaves + gas.
  - b. Oxygen + nitrogen + hydrogen
  - c. Heat + fuel + oxygen
- 12. If you get a minor burn, the first thing you need to do is**
  - a. Put cool water on it
  - b. Wrap it in a towel
  - c. Put lotion on it
- 13. Very young children should**
  - a. Learn how to light a fire with matches
  - b. Practice using matches and lighters safely
  - c. Never use matches
- 14. The leading cause of fires in Minnesota is**
  - a. Cooking
  - b. Heating
  - c. Smoking
- 15. If there is smoke or fire in your home, you should**
  - a. Grab an extinguisher and try to find out what is causing the smoke or fire
  - b. Call the fire department from your home
  - c. Shout "Fire!" to alert everyone to get out and use your family escape plan

# The Fire Challenge: A Conversation with Parents & Caretakers



## MATERIALS

- Chart paper or white board & markers
- Handouts
- YouTube access and related equipment (optional)
- Computer, projector, and screen (optional)

### Lesson Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, parents and caregivers will be able to:

- explain how typical, biological adolescent characteristics impede responsible decision making.
- identify at least three actions that could satisfy their teens' cravings for thrilling and novel experiences.
- apply at least 3 parenting strategies intended to reduce irresponsible risk-taking among teens.

## Step 1: Introduction

- Explain who you are and how you are connected to the community.
- Explain that you are there to talk about a dangerous teen fad making the rounds on social media. Briefly discuss how teen challenge fads have been around for a long time. The current fad, the fire challenge, is definitely not the first one to show up on the internet and it likely will not be the last. Other dangerous fads include the choking game, chubby bunny, condom snorting, the cinnamon challenge, and many more.

### HOOK Your Audience:

- Share a description (or a video clip from the internet) of the dangerous teen fad known as the fire challenge. This challenge requires a participant to pour an accelerant such as nail polish remover, rubbing alcohol, or hand sanitizer on a body part and light it on fire. Often a friend is filming the challenge and posts it on a social media outlet such as YouTube, Instagram, or Facebook.
- Ask audience members for their reactions to the fire challenge. Encourage participants to share both their feelings about the fire challenge and what they might say to a teen who participates in it. List the comments on chart paper or whiteboard.

## Step 2: Body of the Presentation

### The Teen Brain:

- Review the list of comments.
- Let participants know that before you discuss solutions to the fire challenge, you need to first look into the factors that make this activity tempting to teens.
- Ask audience members how they think a teen would respond if you asked, "Don't you know it is dangerous to light yourself on fire?" Hopefully everyone would agree that teens are aware that touching fire leads to painful burn injuries.



Your Source for SAFETY Information  
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Battermarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)



# The Fire Challenge: A Conversation with Parents & Caretakers



## Step 2: Body of the Presentation

### The Teen Brain (Continued):

- This is important because this question is a normal reaction from an adult hearing about the fire challenge but it highlights the different thinking between adults and teens. Most adults and teens understand the risks of this activity. However, adult thinking tends to focus on the risks while adolescents tend to focus on the rewards connected to the activity.
- Provide some basic information that researchers have discovered about the teen brain:

The brain is not fully developed until around age 25. As a result, thinking processes in adolescents tend to be different than those of an adult.

Both teens and adults are capable of weighing the consequences of an action.

Both groups will think about risks and rewards connected to an action.

BUT – in the teen brain, the scales are already tipped:

- Potential **rewards are weighted** much more heavily than risks of an action.
- Teens' decision-making is **driven by emotion** rather than rational thinking.
- Teens' rational thinking tends to decrease even more with **peer interaction**.
- Social rewards such as **being popular**, seen as funny, or included in a group are particularly valuable.
- **Social media** such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook provide instant and continued evidence of heightened social status through likes, views, and comments from "followers".
- The teen brain seeks novel and **thrilling experiences**.



Your Source for SAFETY Information  
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Battermarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)

# The Fire Challenge: A Conversation with Parents & Caretakers



## Evaluating Adult Reactions:

- Ask participants to reexamine the reactions to the fire challenge you listed on the chart paper. Considering the information we have about the adolescent brain, predict why the adult reaction is not effective:

THE ADULT SAYS:	THIS ISN'T EFFECTIVE BECAUSE: (Examples of acceptable responses - Ask participants for ideas before sharing, if time allows)
"What were you thinking?"	The teen wasn't <i>thinking</i> . He was <i>feeling</i> .
"Don't you know fire is dangerous?"	Yes - The teen does know this. But because the rewards outweigh the risks, this knowledge doesn't curb the risky behavior.
"Burn injuries are extremely painful."	Pain is a risk. The teen is more focused on reward he or she might gain if the video goes viral.
"You could have burned the house down!"	Burning the house down is a risk. The teen is more focused on the novel and thrilling experience of the fire challenge.
"You are too smart to do something so stupid!"	Intelligence isn't the issue. The focus is on the emotions and the rewards connected to the experience.
"That kid is a bad influence on you!"	Adults view the behavior as "bad;" Teens view the behavior as cool, exciting, or funny. Also, teens are seeking peer approval during this time. Acceptance from peers can be more important than making parents happy.



**Your Source for SAFETY Information**

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Battermarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)

# The Fire Challenge: A Conversation with Parents & Caretakers



## Alternative Reactions: Opening the Lines of Communication

- After discussing some of the reasons why typical adult reactions have little impact, start to discuss responses that may be more effective. Ask the group to craft conversation starters that focus on the teen characteristics discussed earlier. For example:

Instead of:	Try something like this, to get the conversation started: (Examples of acceptable responses - Ask Participants for ideas before sharing, if time allows)
"What were you thinking?"	"What were you feeling?"
"Don't you know fire is dangerous?"	"You know how dangerous fire can be. I know teens encourage each other to do silly things. How do you determine the line between silly and reckless?"
"Burn injuries are extremely painful."	"I know some kids become really popular when they post a video that goes viral. How do your friends feel about people who get hurt posting fire challenge videos?"
"You could have burned the house down!"	"I can see why some teens get a thrill from this activity. It is normal for teens to want to do exciting things but I want you to be safe. Let's talk about some safer activities you enjoy that might give you that same adrenaline rush."
"You are too smart to do something so stupid!"	"You know I think you are awesome and I understand how important it is for teens to feel popular with their friends. What are some things your friends do that make them (funny, popular, respected...)? What would they say about you?"
"That kid is a bad influence on you!"	I want you to enjoy your youth. You'll have some fun memories of growing up and becoming independent. When I was growing up, I remember some kids who seemed to go wild when they weren't around their parents. Do you know any kids like this?



**Your Source for SAFETY Information**

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Battermarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)

# The Fire Challenge: A Conversation with Parents & Caretakers



## Taking Action:

- Unfortunately, there is no single solution to eliminate risky behaviors such as the fire challenge.
- Open, honest conversations about risky behavior is a start but it cannot be the end point.

Parents and caretakers need to employ a collection of prevention-oriented strategies:

- o **Become informed** about the latest risky teen fads and about the dangers associated with them. All forms of risky behaviors peak during adolescence.
- o Monitor teens' use of social media. Set and enforce ground rules.
- o Recognize that the teen brain (up to about age 25) is **under construction**. As a result, adolescents do not process rewards & risks the same way as adults do. The teen brain tends to weigh rewards much more heavily than risk.
- o **Be involved** with teens. It is developmentally important for teens to seek independence but input from and interaction with adults is still important during this time.
- o **Model healthy risk-taking** and thrill-seeking. It is valuable for teens to see their adult role models participating in exciting yet safe activities.
- o Provide opportunities for teens to channel thrill-seeking behaviors in healthy ways. Consider both athletic and non-athletic experiences. (See Handout for suggestions)
- o Enlist the help of **responsible peers**. For every teen who thinks the fire challenge is awesome, you can likely find one who thinks it is ridiculous. More and more teens are speaking out publicly against the fire challenge on social media outlets. Share these clips with your teen to help dissuade the feeling that "everyone is doing it".
- o Share examples of social media being used in a **positive manner** such as viral posts that are humorous without being dangerous. Show how social media has been a worthy vehicle for public awareness campaigns, charities, and to bring communities together.
- o **Flag dangerous YouTube videos:** YouTube has a set of [Community Guidelines](#) for posting videos. They do remove posts that cross the limits of "Dangerous Illegal Acts" and posts that are "Shocking and Disgusting." However, YouTube relies on the viewers to flag items that cross the lines. Click on the flag icon under the number of views to send a warning to YouTube administrators.



Your Source for SAFETY Information  
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Battermarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)

# The Fire Challenge: A Conversation with Parents & Caretakers



## Step 3: Conclusion

- Review the important points of the lesson:
  - o The fire challenge is dangerous.
  - o Teens don't think about risky behaviors the same way adults do.
  - o Adults can help reduce reckless behaviors by being involved with their teen's activities, by monitoring social media use, by helping teens find safe outlets for thrill-seeking behaviors, and by keeping the lines of communication open with careful responses.
  - o Risky teen fads come and go. There will likely be a new risk to address in the near future. The strategies covered in the lesson apply to a variety of risky behaviors.
- Additionally:
  - o Validate the difficulty of parenting adolescents. Remind parents that even good teens with good parents mess up sometimes.
  - o Reassure parents that many teens will not experience problems related to risk-taking.
  - o Remind parents that some of them probably did some wild things back in the day, as well. The concept of teen thrill-seeking is not new. However, the added element of social media turns teen risk-taking into a global event. Before the internet, when teens did silly things, your neighbors heard about it and then the news fizzled away. For our current teens, their mistakes are heard around the world in an instant and have a permanent life on the web.
- Share handouts and additional resources.



Your Source for SAFETY Information  
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Battermarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)

# The Fire Challenge: A Conversation with Parents & Caretakers

## Parenting Strategies: Addressing Teen Risk-Taking in the Age of Social Media

- o **Become informed** about the latest risky teen fads and about the dangers associated with them. All forms of risky behaviors peak during adolescence.
- o Monitor teens' use of **social media**. Set and enforce ground rules.
- o Recognize that the teen brain (up to about age 25) is **under construction**. As a result, adolescents do not process rewards & risks the same way as adults do. The teen brain tends to weigh rewards much more heavily than risk.
- o **Be involved** with teens. It is developmentally important for teens to seek independence but input from and interaction with adults is still important during this time.
- o **Model healthy risk-taking** and thrill-seeking. It is valuable for teens to see their adult role models participating in exciting yet safe activities.
- o Provide opportunities for teens to **channel thrill-seeking behaviors** in healthy ways. Consider both athletic and non-athletic experiences.
- o Enlist the help of **responsible peers**. For every teen who thinks the fire challenge is awesome, you can likely find one who thinks it is ridiculous. More and more teens are speaking out publicly against the fire challenge on social media outlets. Share these clips with your teen to help dissuade the feeling that "everyone is doing it".
- o Share examples of social media being used in a **positive manner** such as viral posts that are humorous without being dangerous. Show how social media has been a worthy vehicle for public awareness campaigns, charities, and to bring communities together.
- o **Flag dangerous YouTube videos**: YouTube has a set of Community Guidelines for posting videos. They do remove posts that cross the limits of "Dangerous Illegal Acts" and posts that are "Shocking and Disgusting". However, YouTube relies on the viewers to flag items that cross the lines. Click on the flag icon under the number of views to send a warning to YouTube administrators



Your Source for SAFETY Information  
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Battermarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)

# The Fire Challenge: A Conversation with Parents & Caretakers

## Seeking the Thrill

Youth ages 10-25 are biologically wired to seek out exciting, novel experiences. Many teens will feed this need with safe behaviors but some will take unreasonable risks to get the adrenaline rush. Adults throughout the community can encourage teens to take responsible risks by providing opportunities for exciting yet safe activities and encouraging youth to try new adventures within sensible limits.

### Need Some Ideas? Check out these suggestions:

**Outdoor adventures** will appeal to some teens. Obstacle courses, kayaking, mud runs, hiking, zip lining, and ropes courses will appeal to some teens.

For teens who want to **infuse creativity** into their escapades, suggest auditioning for a theatre company, performing in a talent show, entering a poetry slam, or take a tumbling or dance class.

Teens can grab some **thrills and spills at the beach**: Raft down a river, go tubing, ride the waves, learn to surf, enter a sandcastle building contest, catch sand crabs, have a scavenger hunt, or enter a cannonball challenge.

They can **go old school** and watch scary movie, go fishing, sing karaoke, visit an amusement park, or roll down a grassy hill.

Encourage youth to perform **random acts of kindness**: bring ice cream to a lonely neighbor, take someone's barrels back to the house on trash day, run a toys-for-tots collection during the summer, let someone go ahead of you in line, or give a compliment to someone in need.

Tell them to **surprise friends with random ideas**: take a fencing class, try a new food, dance in the rain, join a campaign committee, or host a costume party.

Encourage kids to **be silly but safe**: have a fun game of "Heads Up!" in the middle of the mall, participate in a flash mob, or go caroling in July. Challenge friends to a Minute to Win-It competition, go sledding, or start up a neighborhood game of manhunt.

**The possibilities are endless.**

### More information about teens and risk-taking:

[Beautiful Brains](#) by David Dobbs, National Geographic Magazine, October 2011.

[Dr. Drew](#) talks about the Fire Challenge, teen risk-taking, and the role of social media.

[Insight into the Teenage Brain](#) by Dr. Adriana Galván at TEDxYouth@Caltech, 2013.

Positive Parenting Tips, [Middle Childhood, Young Teens](#), & [Teenagers](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014.

[Why do they act that way?](#) A survival guide to the adolescent brain for you and your teen by David Walsh, 2014.

Atria: Simon & Schuster.

[You and Your Adolescent: The Essential Guide for Ages 10-25](#) by Laurence Steinberg, 2011. Simon & Schuster.



Your Source for SAFETY Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Battermarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)

# The Fire Challenge: A Conversation with Parents & Caretakers

## "You did WHAT??!!" Adult's Reactions to Teen Risk-Taking Behaviors: Problems & Solutions

THE ADULT SAYS:	THIS ISN'T EFFECTIVE BECAUSE:	INSTEAD, TRY"
"What were you thinking?"	The teen wasn't <i>thinking</i> . He was <i>feeling</i> .	"What were you feeling?"
"Don't you know fire is dangerous?"	Yes - The teen does know this. But because the rewards outweigh the risks, this knowledge doesn't curb the risky behavior.	"You know how dangerous fire can be. I know teens encourage each other to do silly things. How do you determine the line between silly and reckless?"
"Burn injuries are extremely painful."	Pain is a risk. The teen is more focused on reward he or she might gain if the video goes viral.	"I know some kids become really popular when they post a video that goes viral. How do your friends feel about people who get hurt posting fire challenge videos?"
"You could have burned the house down!"	Burning the house down is a risk. The teen is more focused on the novel and thrilling experience of the fire challenge.	"I can see why some teens get a thrill from this activity. It is normal for teens to want to do exciting things, but I want you to be safe. Let's talk about some safer activities you enjoy that might give you that same adrenaline rush."
"You are too smart to do something so stupid!"	Intelligence isn't the issue. The focus is on the emotions and the rewards connected to the experience.	"You know I think you are awesome and I understand how important it is for teens to feel popular with their friends. What are some things your friends do that make them (funny, popular, respected...)? What would they say about you?"
"That kid is a bad influence on you!"	Adults view the behavior as "bad;" Teens view the behavior as cool, exciting, or funny. Also, teens are seeking peer approval during this time. Acceptance from peers can be more important than making parents happy.	I want you to enjoy your youth. You'll have some fun memories of growing up and becoming independent. When I was growing up, I remember some kids who seemed to go wild when they weren't around their parents. Do you know any kids like this?"



Your Source for SAFETY Information  
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Battermarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)



## **APPENDIX B**

### **FIREFACTOR<sup>2</sup>: A COLORADO SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

This page intentionally left blank.



# STUDENT HOMEWORK

Your homework is due at the FireFactor<sup>2</sup> class on:

Date of class: \_\_\_\_\_



# HOME FIRE

**Make sure that your own home is safe from fire and injury risks. Inspect the following  
Most importantly, check for working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.**

✓ Put a check in front of each statement that is true for your home.

## SMOKE & CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

- Smoke alarms are on every level of your home.
- Smoke alarms are inside and outside each sleeping area.
- Smoke alarms are less than 10 years old.
- Smoke alarm batteries get replaced as needed *(unless it is 10-year tamper-proof alarm)*.
- Carbon monoxide alarms are on every level of your home.
- Carbon monoxide alarms are less than 7 years old.
- All smoke and carbon monoxide alarms get tested monthly.



**In my home we have \_\_\_\_\_ levels and \_\_\_\_\_ sleeping areas.**

**We need \_\_\_\_\_ SMOKE ALARMS and \_\_\_\_\_ CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS.**

## ELECTRICAL & APPLIANCES

- Electrical cords are in good condition *(not frayed or damaged)*.
- Electrical cords are not running across doorways or under carpets.
- All extension cords are used safely *(not under carpets or across walking areas)*.
- Replace missing or broken electrical outlet covers or switch plates.
- Appliances are plugged into separate electrical outlets.
- Portable space heaters are 3 feet away from anything that can burn.



# SAFETY CHECKLIST

areas where you live and let an adult know if you find anything that is potentially unsafe.

## UTILITIES & HOUSEKEEPING

- The furnace has been inspected in the past year.
- Maintain a 3 foot clearance around the furnace from combustible materials.
- The area around the electrical panel is accessible and free of clutter.
- Bathroom exhaust fans are clean and free of lint.
- Matches and lighters are kept out of reach of children in a secure place.
- Flammables are stored in sturdy metal containers and in a cool place.
- The clothes dryer has a clean vent and filter (*there is no lint build-up*).

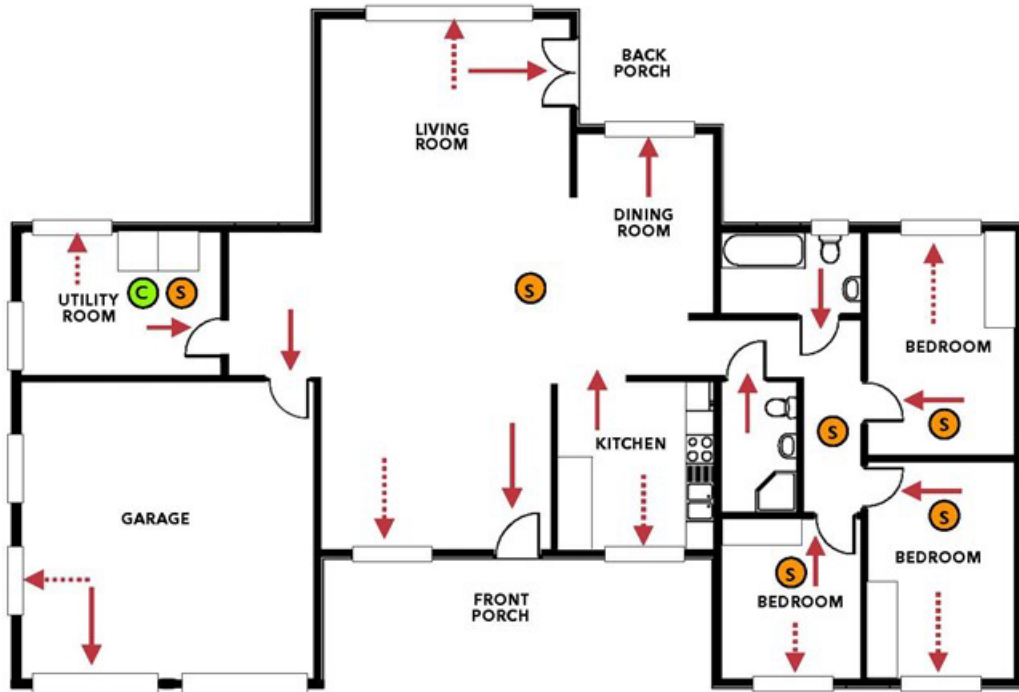


## COOKING & KITCHEN

- NEVER LEAVE COOKING UNATTENDED!
- If there is food cooking on the stovetop, an adult is present.
- Pot handles are always turned toward the back of the stove.
- Combustible and other flammable materials are away from the stovetop.
- Always set a timer or reminder when cooking.
- The oven is never used to heat the home.
- Stove and oven(s) are clean and free of built-up splatter and grease.



# HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN



## HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN CHECKLIST:

- Draw a map of your home showing all windows and doors.
- Find 2 ways out of each room and mark them on your map with arrows.
- Pick 1 place outside of your home where everyone will meet.
- Mark the location of smoke alarms with a circled "S".
- Mark the location of carbon monoxide with a circled "C".
- Make sure your house or building number are easily seen from the street.
- Check your smoke alarms every month.
- Practice your home fire escape plan at least 2 times per year!
- Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years.

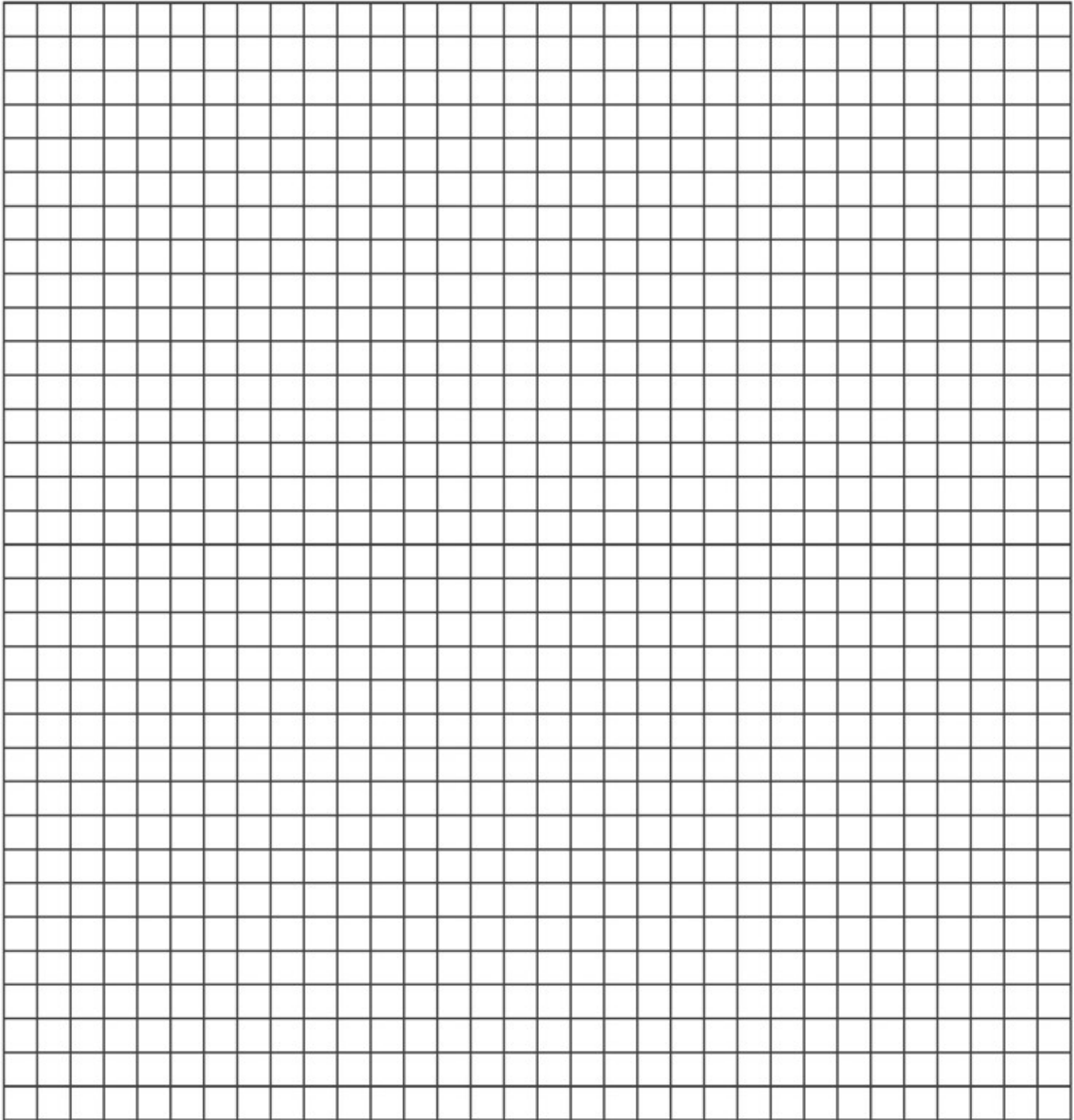


## ALWAYS REMEMBER:

1. Get low and go under smoke.
2. Get out and stay out!
3. Call 911 from your meeting place.
4. If you can't evacuate, close the door and call 911 to alert them of where you are in the home.

# HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

**Draw your plan here:**

A large grid for drawing a home fire escape plan. The grid is composed of 20 columns and 30 rows of small squares, providing a space for students to draw their escape routes and meeting places.

**Where is your family meeting place?** \_\_\_\_\_

# REAL FIRE HAS . . .

FIRE AFFECTS **LOTS** OF PEOPLE  
IN LOTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS

Imagine your school burned down.  
Describe how all of these people  
could be affected by that.

**FAMILY**

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----



**NEIGHBORS**

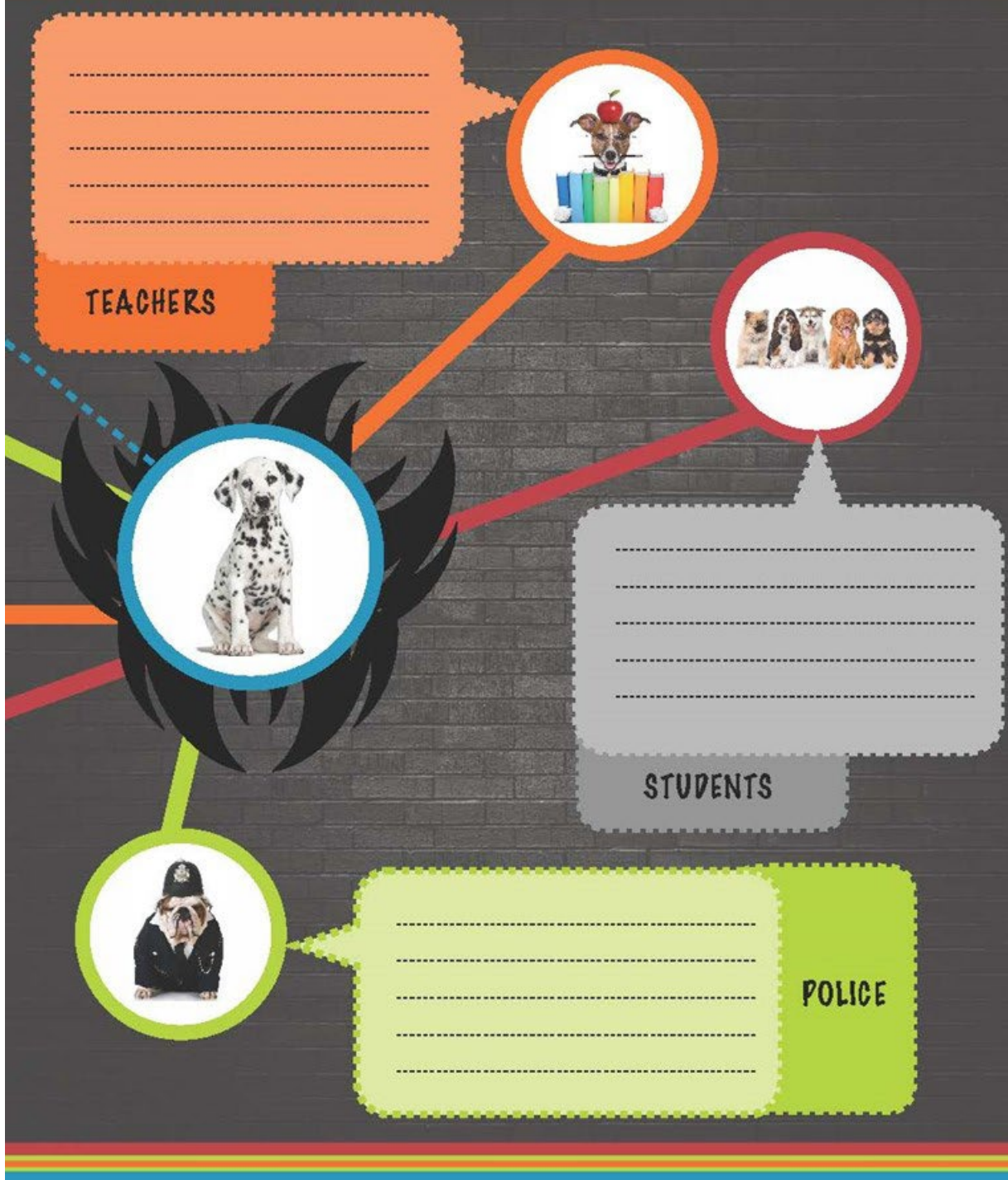
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

**FIREFIGHTERS**

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----



# CONSEQUENCES



# APOLOGY LETTER

Part of taking responsibility for your actions is to apologize to people affected by your decision and to acknowledge your mistake. You can write your apology letter to whomever you like. Your apology letter should come from the heart and be sincere. Here are some ideas of what to include in your letter:



- State **WHO** you are writing the letter to and **WHY**.
- State **WHAT** you are apologizing for doing.
- Take **RESPONSIBILITY** for your actions.
- Share what you have **LEARNED** from this experience.
- Explain how you are going to or did **RESOLVE** the situation.
- Tell **HOW** you plan to do things differently in the future.
- Explain how you will **ENSURE** that this will never happen again.
- **SIGN** the letter.

Use the pages provided to write your apology letter or you can use your paper and attach it with this homework packet.



# APOLOGY LETTER



A series of 20 horizontal lines for writing the apology letter.



# WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

Write 3 questions you may have about fire or for the fire department:

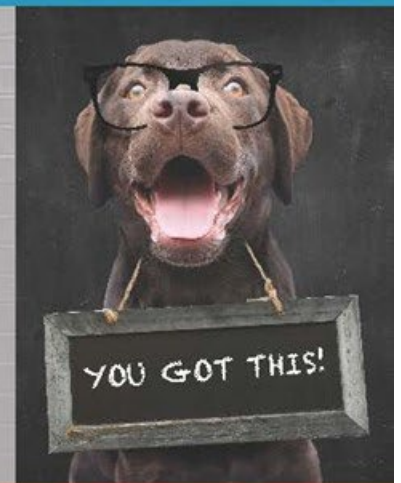
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

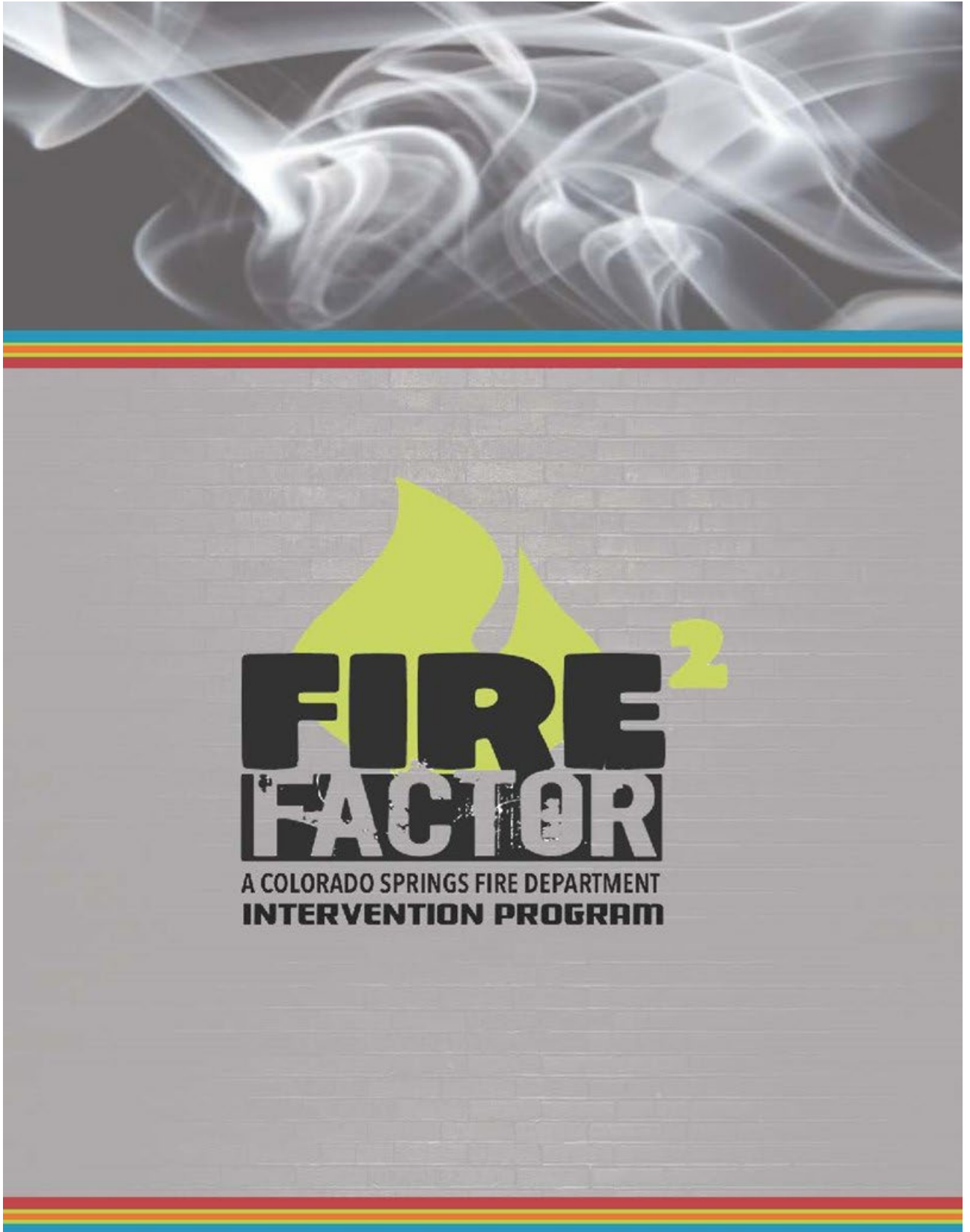
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CLASS REMINDERS

- Bring your **COMPLETED** homework; certificates will not be provided if it is incomplete.
- **NO** hats, caps or beanies.
- **NO** earbuds or cell phone use during class.
- **NO** food or drink (water is okay).
- Be prepared to **SPEAK CLEARLY** and openly with our firefighters.





# **UNIT 6: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION**

## **TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

*The students will be able to:*

- 6.1 *Construct an action plan for program development and/or enhancement.*


## **ENABLING OBJECTIVES**


*The students will be able to:*

- 6.1 *Articulate how to develop a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.*
  - 6.2 *Articulate how to cultivate long-term working relationships with youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force members in the community.*
  - 6.3 *Evaluate existing and missing resources needed to develop a successful youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.*
  - 6.4 *Evaluate the requirements of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.*
  - 6.5 *Evaluate their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program using formative stage evaluation.*
  - 6.6 *Justify the advancement of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program through a persuasive speech.*
-

This page intentionally left blank.



 **FEMA**

 U.S. Fire Administration

---

**UNIT 6:  
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT  
AND EVALUATION**

Slide 6-1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**TERMINAL OBJECTIVE**

---

Construct an action plan for program development and/or enhancement.

Slide 6-2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES**

---

- Articulate how to develop a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.
- Articulate how to cultivate long-term working relationships with youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force members in the community.

Slide 6-3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Evaluate existing and missing resources needed to develop a successful youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- Evaluate the requirements of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Slide 6-4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Evaluate their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program using formative stage evaluation.
- Justify the advancement of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program through a persuasive speech.

Slide 6-5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**I. THE YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM MANAGER AS A LEADER**

- A. A job performance requirement (JPR) of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program manager is the ability to lead the development, operation and sustainment of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- B. The position carries tremendous responsibility because the manager often has authority (or co-responsibility with the youth firesetting interagency task force) to make final disposition on how youth firesetting cases are resolved.
- C. The job is both proactive and reactive in nature. While the goal is to prevent youth firesetting incidents, the program manager must ensure that policies and procedures are in place to handle all types of firesetting situations. This requires vision, leadership and mastery of a diverse set of skills.

**YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM MANAGER AS A LEADER**

- Skills and mindset:
  - Program leader or administrator.
  - Organizer and communicator.
  - Mentor.
  - Policy facilitator.
  - Problem-solver.
  - Visionary.

**What might the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program manager be doing specific to each role?**

Slide 6-6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- D. The manager needs to have a professional skill set so that they are competent in the following roles:
1. Program leader or administrator.
  2. Organizer and communicator.
  3. Mentor.
  4. Policy facilitator.
  5. Problem-solver.
  6. Visionary.
- E. The youth firesetting prevention and intervention program manager may come from one of several professions including, but not limited to:
1. Fire departments.
  2. Law enforcement or youth justice agencies.
  3. Mental/behavioral health.
  4. Social services.
  5. School system.
  6. Other allied agencies.
- F. Whatever the profession of the program manager, most who assume command of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program quickly realize that developing the right mindset is essential.

- G. The mindset of an effective and efficient program manager should include:
1. Effective and efficient youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs follow a strategic process.
    - a. The leader of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program unit must visualize the “big picture” of community risk reduction.
    - b. The process begins with a comprehensive community risk assessment to identify and prioritize the local youth firesetting problem.
    - c. It continues as the interagency task force defines the highest priorities and root causes of the local problem.
    - d. Interagency task force members should represent a diverse group of agencies (stakeholders) who bring various experiences and perspectives to the process.
    - e. Once the magnitude of the local youth firesetting problem has been identified, causal chain analysis is used to study how the various typologies of firesetting develop and occur. It is at this point that a discussion of what combination of prevention interventions to employ occurs.
    - f. As stated repeatedly, the most effective and efficient strategy entails the use of combined prevention interventions (five E’s) that have been suggested and are supported by the interagency task force.
  2. Participating in a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program is an elite responsibility. The program must be selective about who it chooses as members.
    - a. Effective leaders understand the strengths of others on their team or those who may make good members.
    - b. Proficient leaders invest time to learn the interests and attributes of team members. They will help team members grow by facilitating continuing education and skill-building opportunities.
  3. Budget preparation and budget management skills are essential for building, sustaining and advancing a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
    - a. Every program must have a budget.

- b. Program managers, in cooperation with the interagency task force, are responsible for developing and managing a budget that supports the goals and objectives of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
  - c. Youth firesetting intervention specialists must have the basic tools that are needed to perform their duties safely, effectively and efficiently.
  - d. The organization and community's budget cycle and spending procedures must be understood.
4. Youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs can be "resource-challenged."
- a. Strained municipal budgets prove that even important programs like youth firesetting prevention and intervention efforts are not immune from staffing cuts, reductions in services provided and even elimination.
  - b. Leaders of youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs must embrace the mindset that we must do a better job of justifying the essential function of our services.
  - c. Program leaders, cooperatively with their interagency task force, must commit to developing a strategic evaluation plan so that every function of the program is measured for both impact and efficiency.
  - d. The worth of youth firesetting prevention and intervention must be proven, not just stated. This is best accomplished through a comprehensive program evaluation that begins the minute an idea for a prevention program is conceived and continues throughout its life cycle.
  - e. It is important for key stakeholders in the community to be engaged in the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program evaluation process. They are the clients who will influence the political decision of worth.
  - f. The leader must understand the importance of investigating and pursuing creative methods of revenue generation to support their unit.
  - g. The leader must also realize that service agencies like fire and police departments are often looked upon as an expense and not as a revenue-generating source.

- h. Again, the mindset: The youth firesetting prevention and intervention program must prove that they are saving the community money in property tax revenues through a reduction of incidents or events that occur with less severity because of proactive prevention/mitigation strategies.
- 5. Participation in the local political process is not only a reality, it is essential.
  - a. If an interagency task force proposes public policy or applies specific sanctions, its leader must understand and be adept at participating in the local political process.
  - b. This requires understanding the local process of proposing policy and issue resolution.
  - c. It also requires a keen analysis of the local political environment and how to participate in an effective manner.
  - d. Political environments are dynamic and constantly evolving. The leader must be able to forecast, recognize and adapt to a changing environment.
- 6. The program manager must have a positive working relationship with the chief administrators of partner agencies and political leaders, as well as administrators from other government agencies and community groups.

The ability to communicate, collaborate, negotiate and compromise is a trait that has been mastered by those who lead effective youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs.
- 7. Commitment, integrity and ethical behavior are essential.
  - a. A comprehensive youth firesetting prevention and intervention program task force is often comprised of agencies/people who are responsible for enforcing fire, criminal and child-protective laws.
  - b. This responsibility brings with it the reality of liability in case ethics violations or when acts of gross negligence take place. Failure to accept this responsibility and act accordingly may result in program derailment.
- 8. Professional development provides opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills so that the program leader is adequately prepared to address their JPRs.

**YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM MANAGER AS A LEADER (cont'd)**

- Individually, list the three strongest leadership skills you possess that will help you advance the development or enhancement of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Share with a partner.

Slide 6-7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM MANAGER AS A LEADER (cont'd)**

- Individually, list three leadership skills that you need to enhance to help you strengthen your leadership skills.

Share with a partner.

Slide 6-8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**II. UNDERSTANDING WHAT PROFICIENCY LOOKS LIKE**

**VIDEO PRESENTATION**

“FIRE FACTOR OVERVIEW”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBJB75Smav4>

Slide 6-9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. Youth firesetting prevention and intervention program development best practice example.
- B. Colorado Springs, Colorado, Fire Department FireFactor<sup>2</sup> has three exemplary programs devoted to youth firesetting prevention and intervention.
  - 1. The FireFactor<sup>2</sup> intervention program is specifically designed to work with youths who have been involved in an incident where fire was misused or if a youth has been determined to have a propensity to misuse fire.
    - a. The main goal of the intervention program is to educate and provide the appropriate support to mitigate future firesetting behavior.
    - b. FireFactor<sup>2</sup> assists youths and their families who may be involved in the legal process due to charges associated from a fire incident by working in tandem with the courts, judges and diversion process as well as partnering with area mental/behavioral health agencies to ensure youths have the support they need.
    - c. Referrals to the FireFactor<sup>2</sup> intervention program may come from parents/caregivers, schools, law enforcement, fire departments, the judicial system, family members and mental/behavioral programs. Anyone in the community can make a referral for a youth who is misusing fire.
    - d. The program is designed for children as young as age 3 through age 17.
    - e. After a referral is received, the initial firesetting risk assessment is scheduled. During this assessment, questions will be asked of the youth and of the parents/guardians to determine the youth's level of risk for future firesetting behavior.
      - The outcomes of the assessment range from educational intervention to a referral to mental and behavioral health or a combination of both.
    - f. If deemed appropriate, youth and their families will attend an educational class taught by fire and life safety educators, firefighters, and a burn survivor.
    - g. The interactive class focuses on accountability, decision-making skills and fire safety education; it concludes with a phenomenal speaker who is a burn survivor and has an inspirational message for both the youth and their families.



- h. To attend this class, the following criteria must be met:
    - Complete a firesetting risk assessment.
    - Children must be over the age of 8 and under the age of 18.
    - Have the ability to actively participate in a two-and-a-half-hour class.
    - A parent/guardian must attend with the youth.
  - i. If a youth does not meet these guidelines, a one-on-one educational session will be conducted by the youth firesetting intervention specialist with the youth and their parent/guardian.
2. The FireFactor+ parenting program is specifically designed for the caregivers of youths who have been involved in a firesetting incident or who show an unusual interest or curiosity about fire.
- a. Typically held in conjunction with the FireFactor<sup>2</sup> intervention program, this educational course provides important information pertaining to home fire safety and warning signs for risk-taking behavior, as well as giving parents/guardians a “safe” place to ask questions.
  - b. The group setting affords attendees the opportunity to share experiences with other adults who may be struggling with similar issues and to acquire resources to assist with these challenges.
  - c. The youth firesetting intervention specialist will also ensure that parents/caregivers understand the importance of practicing fire safety at home and, if needed, will help guide adults who may need help in obtaining appropriate care for their youth.
  - d. The FireFactor+ program assists parents/caregivers who may feel overwhelmed and unequipped to handle their youth’s fire setting behavior.
3. The FireFactor prevention program was developed as a proactive approach to educate youth on the proper use of fire and the consequences of unsupervised, experimental or illegal use of fire.
- a. This highly interactive, 50-minute, media-heavy program is delivered in middle schools either in-person or, more recently, made available for youths to view online.

- b. The program is purposefully designed to meet the Colorado education standards in earth science, health and physical education.
- c. The presentation engages students in thought-provoking discussions centered on virtual fire versus “real” fire, fire science, wildfires in our community, the social acceptance of fire experimentation, the consequences of fire misuse, and decision-making.
- d. Content is reviewed and updated frequently to ensure that the information provided is timely, relevant and appealing to preteen/teen adolescent audiences.

• Why is the Colorado Springs Fire Department FireFactor program a best-practice example of an effective youth firesetting prevention and intervention program?

• What leadership, organizational support and community partnerships were seen in the video?

Slide 6-10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**III. YOUR YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM — TODAY AND BEYOND**

**YOUR YOUTH FIRE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM — TODAY AND BEYOND**

• Most programs are in one of three states:

- Fire department wants to start a program and is in the formative stages of development.
- A program exists and is functioning well, but enhancements would be beneficial.
- There was a program, but people retired, transferred or left the agency, and the program has lapsed into a state of inactivity.

Slide 6-11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. Prior to taking the helm as a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program manager, a **key first step** is to identify the **existing state** of your organization’s youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
  
- B. Most students that attend the National Fire Academy’s (NFA’s) “Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention” (YFPI) course(s) will identify their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program to be in one of three conditions:
  - 1. The fire department wants to start a program, and they are in the formative stages of development.
  - 2. A youth firesetting prevention and intervention program exists, and although it’s functioning pretty well, enhancements would be beneficial.
  - 3. The community had a program, but people retired, transferred or left the agency, and the program has lapsed into a state of inactivity.
  
- C. Regardless of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program’s existing state, it takes leadership to either build it, enhance it or rejuvenate it back to an effective state.

**ACTIVITY 6.1 — OVERVIEW**

Includes four parts:

- Program’s existing state and vision for the future.
- Task force composition.
- Program components and administrative tools.
- Develop a draft action/evaluation plan.

**Create a Word file titled “Activity 6.1,” process the activity in order and follow the rubric.**

Slide 6-12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

This page intentionally left blank.

## ACTIVITY 6.1, PART 1

### Explaining Your Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program's Existing State and Developing a Vision for the Future

#### Purpose

Explain their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's existing state and developing a vision for the future.

#### Directions

1. The instructor will create small groups based upon the existing state of each student's youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
  - a. Group 1: The fire department wants to start a program, and they are in the very formative stages of development.
  - b. Group 2: A youth firesetting prevention and intervention program exists, and although it's functioning pretty well, enhancements would be beneficial.
  - c. Group 3: The community had a program, but people retired or left the agency, and the program has lapsed into a state of inactivity.
2. Create a blank Word document titled "Activity 6.1, Part 1."
3. Individually, provide a summary of the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. The summary should be at least a paragraph or two and clearly explain the condition of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program now. Be sure to include an explanation of the existing primary prevention activities that are designed to prevent youth firesetting behaviors in the first place. Use the rubric to help guide responses.
4. Next, individually develop an aspired state vision of what you would like to see the condition of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program ascend to over time. Consider the time frame of 18 to 24 months from today.
5. Thirty minutes are allotted for in-class individual work.
6. Next, within your table group, discuss the similarities and differences pertinent to the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program(s) and the condition you would like to see your program ascend to over time.
7. Ten minutes are allotted for small group discussion.
8. Part 1 of the activity should be completed within 40 minutes. If you need more time for individual work, it is to be processed after class.

This page intentionally left blank.

**IV. DEVELOPING OR ENHANCING A YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION TASK FORCE**

DEVELOPING OR ENHANCING A YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION TASK FORCE

- Coordinating agency.
  - Often the fire department but does not have to be.

Slide 6-15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

A. Role of the coordinating agency.

1. Whether it be the fire department or other agency, there must be a lead organization that oversees the overall youth firesetting prevention and intervention program operation.

What are the “must do” tasks of the lead agency for a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program?

Slide 6-16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Some of the responsibilities of the lead or coordinating agency include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Providing leadership in program development, implementation, operation, evaluation and sustainment.
  - b. Overseeing the development of program components and administrative tools.

- c. Identifying required resources to support the overall program.
- d. Facilitating partnerships.
- e. Establishing a central contact point for the community.
- f. Ensuring a secure central data repository is created and maintained.
- g. Assisting with marketing the program.
- h. Ensuring that initial and ongoing youth firesetting community risk analysis takes place.
- i. Maintaining awareness of and adhering to ethical and legal requirements.

**DEVELOPING OR ENHANCING A YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION TASK FORCE (cont'd)**

- Role of the fire department: Cannot run an effective youth firesetting prevention and intervention program single-handedly.

Slide 6-17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

B. Whether or not the fire department serves as lead agency, its role and function should include:

---

What might be specific roles of the fire department as part of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention interagency task force?

Slide 6-18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



1. Investigating the origin and cause of reported fires.
2. Recording youth firesetting incidents according to departmental protocols.
3. Developing youth firesetting case files that include comprehensive narrative reports from investigating officers.
4. Performing intake services to bring firesetting youths and their families into the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
5. Conducting interviews with firesetting youths and their families (following training in the use of approved forms and the screening process).
6. Providing firesetting educational interventions.
7. Referring children and families to appropriate allied agencies according to the youth firesetting prevention and intervention team's predetermined protocol.
8. Interfacing with youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force agencies to determine appropriate intervention/support services and continually improve the process.
9. Maintaining awareness of ethical and legal requirements.
10. Keeping the program visible to the community.
11. Seeking ongoing support and information through local, state and national networking.

**DEVELOPING OR ENHANCING A YOUTH  
FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND  
INTERVENTION TASK FORCE (cont'd)**

- Role of the interagency task force: Build a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program that serves the needs of its community.

Slide 6-19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- C. Role of the interagency task force: It is the responsibility of the interagency task force to collaborate and build a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program that serves the needs of its local community. Typical duties of a task force include:

What are some of the roles of the interagency task force?

Slide 6-20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1. Identifying the scope of the youth firesetting problem through collection and analysis of local data.
2. Locating and reviewing existing youth firesetting program models from other communities.
3. Considering using/adapting the format of other youth firesetting program models or creating a model specific to local needs.
4. Determining a leadership and management structure for the program.
5. Developing a mission statement for the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program that creates a foundation and direction for all program services.
6. Designing an organizational chart illustrating the operation of the program.
7. Specifying the relationship between organizations and the service delivery system that will be offered.
8. Identifying community resources such as the youth justice system, counseling services, and school- and community-based support services that will be included as part of the program.
9. Establishing a referral mechanism for all organizations involved so that each youth firesetting case is assessed appropriately.

10. Developing a plan so that each youth firesetting case receives a follow-up evaluation.
11. Determining legal aspects of the program, such as confidentiality, parental consent, liability, mandated referrals, etc.
12. Creating or adapting the tools necessary for the program. This includes forms to be used for intake, interview, referral and follow-up services.
13. Ensuring that policies are created directing all agencies involved in the investigation and intervention process to develop secure and complete youth firesetting case files that include comprehensive narratives of services performed.
14. Determining training needs, especially for those who will be using the screening documents.
15. Designing a data collection system.
16. Designing an evaluation process for the overall program.
17. Determining required resources and a resource acquisition strategy.
18. Designing and implementing a marketing campaign to inform the community about the youth firesetting problem and program.

D. Identifying the stakeholders.

1. Upon determination that a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program is needed, the fire department (or other lead agency) should invite other community agencies to join in the program design and implementation process.

---

- In the context of developing or enhancing a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, what does the term “stakeholder” mean to you?
  
- In the context of stakeholders for a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, what does the ability to offer wisdom, work or wealth mean?

Slide 6-21

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

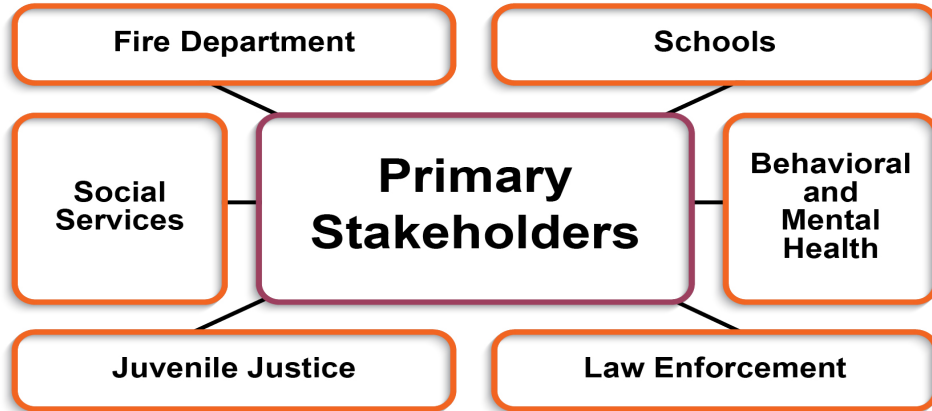
---

---

2. This multidisciplinary approach will ensure the success of the program. Therefore, it is important to identify and recruit a core group of primary stakeholders who may have interest in the issue of youth firesetting.
3. Each stakeholder being considered for inclusion into the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force should offer either wisdom, wealth or work.
  - a. Wisdom could be in the form of problem analysis, knowledge of firesetting typologies, advice on intervention services, assistance with program intake/assessments, etc.
  - b. Wealth may be in the form of funding for program staffing, operating resources or marketing.
  - c. Work is the “boots on the ground” activities that make the program work. These are the people-supported tasks such as education, behavioral/mental health, youth justice and social service interventions.
4. There are many agencies that have a vested interest in our communities regarding youth firesetting. These stakeholders are potential partners that are engaged to assist in addressing the problem of youth firesetting. They can be divided into two groups: primary and secondary stakeholders.

# YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION TASK FORCE: PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Task Force



Slide 6-22

Why do these agencies usually represent the primary stakeholders that may be included in a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force?

Slide 6-23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

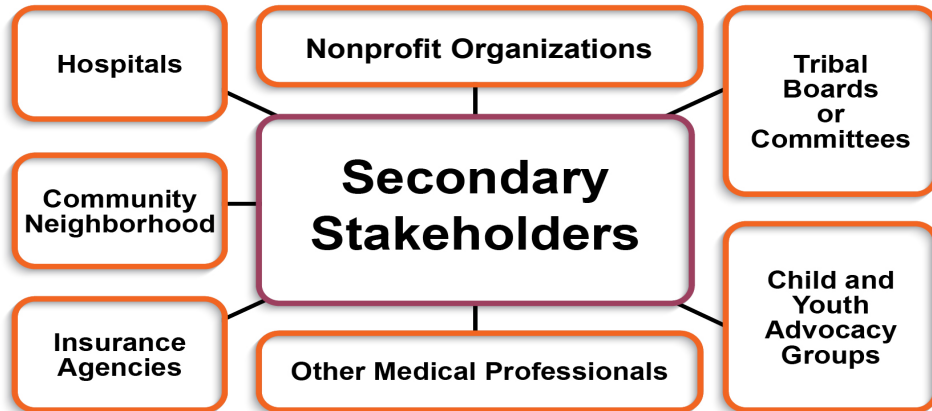
---

---

5. Primary stakeholders are those that are essential to creating and supporting a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. They include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Fire department.
  - b. Law enforcement agencies.
  - c. Schools.
  - d. Social services.
  - e. Behavioral and mental health.
  - f. Juvenile justice.

# YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION TASK FORCE: SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS

Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Task Force



Slide 6-24

Why are these agencies often considered as secondary stakeholders/ community partners to a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program?

Slide 6-25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- 6. Secondary stakeholders are agencies within the community that are not necessarily essential to creating the program but may have a distinct interest in participating and supporting the program. These include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Hospitals.
  - b. Tribal boards or committees.
  - c. Nonprofit organizations.
  - d. Insurance agencies.
  - e. Other medical professionals.
  - f. Child and youth advocacy groups.

How should the coordinating agency go about establishing who their key stakeholders are, when to invite them to an engagement meeting and how to get them to engage?

Slide 6-26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



7. Obviously, the size and scope of the jurisdiction will dictate what resources are available, and there may be other groups that are interested in supporting the program.
8. Building collaborative relationships and/or partnerships with other agencies and multidisciplinary professionals is essential to understanding and addressing the youth firesetting problem in your community.
9. Each agency can help identify youth firesetting incidents and provide valuable data; either new, different data and/or additional details that can augment what was already known.
10. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1035, *Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist and Youth Firesetter Program Manager Professional Qualifications*, calls for a youth firesetting program manager to exhibit proficiency at leading the development of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

- What background research should the lead agency perform on any stakeholder group prior to inviting them to join a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force?
- When seeking to build, enhance or reengage a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force, why should you take time to evaluate potential challenges that could be encountered when a broad-based group of stakeholders engage?

Slide 6-27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- E. Evaluate before you invite.
1. When seeking to build, enhance or reengage a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force, take time to evaluate potential challenges that could be encountered when a broad-based group of stakeholders engage.
    - a. Competing agendas.
    - b. Competition of funding.
    - c. Organizational priorities.
    - d. Cannot offer wisdom, wealth or work.

- e. Interpersonal relationships among people.
  - f. Political agendas.
2. Recognize that sometimes there may be personality conflicts with partner agencies, either with an individual or resistance at the expectation of their participation, but the common goals and objectives must be emphasized in helping the youths within the community.
  3. Taking time to evaluate the primary mission of the stakeholder group, what resources they can bring to the table, and who will be the person representing the group is a smart leadership strategy.

## ACTIVITY 6.1, Part 2

### Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Task Force Composition — Building or Enhancing Your Team

#### Purpose

Determine possible task force composition to build, enhance or rejuvenate a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

#### Directions

Remain in the work groups based upon the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

#### Step 1

1. Individually, identify the resources your organization brings to the table in terms of the three W's that can be invested into the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program as a task force member. Please be specific.
2. Remember: Most fire departments serve as the lead agency for the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. It is essential that the fire department lead by example by investing resources into the program. Do not forget the value of staff time dedicated to the program.

#### Step 2

Individually, perform the following actions:

1. Identify the primary stakeholders (likely four to six agencies) whose participation is essential to building, enhancing or rejuvenating the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.
2. Identify why each stakeholder is being considered related to their specific mission (e.g., what's in it for them to join, help enhance existing efforts or reengage with the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force).
  - a. What levels of the three W's do they offer?
  - b. If a stakeholder is currently present on the task force but interest/performance is lacking, what might have happened to create this?

- c. If a key stakeholder was once active but stopped participating, what might have happened to create this?
3. Explain how you will go about engaging each stakeholder group so that they agree to participate in an engagement meeting to learn about the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force and the vision you have for the future.

### **Step 3**

Individually, perform the following actions:

1. Identify the secondary stakeholders (or allied partner groups) whose participation would be beneficial to building, enhancing or rejuvenating the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force after the primary group has been engaged and moving forward.
2. Identify the three W's each could offer to the program.
3. Identify the benefits to the stakeholder should they join or reengage with the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

### **Step 4**

Individually, perform the following actions:

1. Reflecting on the local resources you have access to, identify any agencies or groups key to a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force that either don't exist in your locality or that you know cannot or will not be able to assist you.
2. Suggest ways that you could compensate for the lack of these local resources, such as combining stakeholder services or potentially doing without them.

### **Debrief**

1. Within your table group, discuss the similarities and differences pertinent to the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention team composition and where you would like to see it ascend to over time.
2. Ten minutes are allotted for small group discussion.
3. Activity 6.1, Part 2 should be completed within 1 hour and 35 minutes.

**V. BUILDING YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRENGTH THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS**

**BUILDING YOUTH FIRESETTING  
PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION  
STRENGTH THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS**

---

A strong youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force features:

- Broad-based interagency composition.
- A common vision and desire to achieve a specific goal.
- Excellent relationships and collaboration among task force members.
- Understanding of how participation in the task force benefits each member agency.

Slide 6-30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- A. A strong youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force will feature several common attributes related to relationships:
1. Broad-based interagency composition.
  2. A common vision and desire to achieve a specific goal.
  3. Excellent relationships and collaboration among task force members.
  4. Understanding of how participation in the task force benefits each member agency.
- B. Relationship building is the starting point for cultivating long-term relationships with task force partners.

---

One of the most daunting challenges of leading a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force is cultivating these long-term relationships. How do you get started?

Slide 6-31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

C. A productive youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force that enjoys strong relationships among members can generate a regional hospital-based (or community-relevant facility) educational program as a referral resource for youths who exhibit high-risk fire misuse behavior or who are at risk for fire experimentation.

1. Policies that require mandatory participation and completion of the specific youth firesetting intervention program components.

This, in turn, can provide alternative intervention for:

a. Juvenile courts are an alternative to incarceration and the associated costs to society.

b. Schools are an educational alternative to suspension or expulsion. Supports educational achievement and graduation in students. Promotes maintaining a safe and uninterrupted learning environment.

c. Fire and police: Adjunct and expansion of firesetting intervention performed within local departments.

2. Access to a comprehensive program for families that addresses the medical, social, financial and legal ramifications of fire misuse in a positive supportive method.

3. Fewer youth firesetting incidents.

4. Reduction of injuries, deaths and property loss from youth-set fires.

5. Enhanced community awareness of the risk of injury to first responders (e.g., firefighters, police, etc.).

6. Reduced departmental cost for fire service, emergency medical services (EMS) and law enforcement response.

7. Fostering of a safe environment; promote fire prevention and safety education within the school and community.

8. Free consultation and professional advice from medical experts in burn injury, prevention and fire misuse intervention.

9. Collaboration with multidisciplinary professionals to identify contributing factors and underlying conditions that may be contributing to unsafe and risky behaviors in the youths they serve.

10. Engagement of community partners to comprehensively support the youth and family. Also, an increase in the number of community partners participating in a shared risks and protective factors approach to address risky behaviors.
  11. Identification of potential abuse/maltreatment, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and potential for underlying mental/behavioral health conditions.
  12. Utilization of a trauma-informed care approach to prevent ACEs.
  13. Build resiliency in youth.
  14. Emphasize the importance of and encourage adult supervision and intervention.
  15. Enhancement of firefighter, EMS and law enforcement officer safety.
- D. Best practices — communicating with and engaging partners and stakeholders.
1. Create a “fact sheet” of frequently asked questions (FAQs) (or what you can anticipate you will be asked) about your program.  
  
Example: [University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center: Straight Talk FAQ’s](#).
  2. Compile a list of “benefits” to the specific partner (person, professional or agency) that you wish to invite and/or engage.
  3. Develop a referring agency and/or community partner information packet that contains items such as a referral form, referral process or steps, contact information of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program primary coordinator, youth firesetting prevention and intervention program details and description, partnering agencies, youth firesetting prevention and safety tips, local stats (if relevant), experience/training/certification/qualifications of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program staff (intervention specialist and/or program manager), testimonies or positive impact feedback from participants, outcomes data, etc.
  4. Share stories of youth firesetting incidents in your local area, region or state. Giving real-life examples can personalize the issue in your community and encourage engagement of partners/stakeholders. Review “[Children Using Fire Unsafely in Our Homes and Communities](#)” as an example of simple stories and describing youth firesetting in a community-friendly way.

5. Share your vision, mission, passion and/or the “why” you and your organization are involved in youth firesetting prevention and intervention.
6. Share data on the issue by utilizing data sources highlighted in Unit 1: A Strategic Approach to Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention, Appendix H: Structure Fires in Schools.
7. Consider highlighting some of the myths and facts about youth firesetting included in Unit 2: Who Sets Fires and Why?
8. Incorporate relevant key points from the section Common Factors That Influence Firesetting Behavior in Unit 2. If partners/stakeholders better understand youth firesetting behaviors, then common interests or goals will be revealed regarding what is in it for them to collaborate or participate in youth firesetting prevention and intervention.
9. Learn how to engage partners via the [Safe States Alliance Connections Lab](#), a free online resource.
10. Development of the program stems from the information obtained from the community analysis conducted within a jurisdiction and discerning a need based upon a problem that was identified.
11. Agreements are made with other agencies to clarify roles and responsibilities. Establishing roles and responsibilities and maintaining awareness of what other agencies and groups will do for the program alleviates duplication of efforts.
12. A mission statement is created, types and levels of interventions are agreed upon, and a budget is established for determining personnel and capital assets.
13. During this time, measures for evaluation are created as well.

## **VI. ASSESSING YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND ENHANCING ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS**

- A. Value of a mission statement.
  1. A good mission statement is succinct, usually a single sentence, uses clear and concise language, and integrates actionable words.
  2. All youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs should have a mission statement.



**ASSESSING YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND ENHANCING ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS**

- Youth firesetting prevention and intervention mission statement: The mission of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program and the youth firesetting intervention team is to identify youths who are misusing fire and to provide prompt intervention, including referrals as necessary, to reduce the incidence of youth-set fires.

Slide 6-32

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How does this example fit the criteria of a strong mission statement?

Slide 6-33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ASSESSING YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND ENHANCING ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)**

- The mission statement is created by the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

**Why should you collaborate with your task force partners to create the mission statement?**

Slide 6-34

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

B. Program components and services.

1. All youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs need specific components that offer program services and the administrative tools to support these services.

**PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

- Identification media.
- Intake process.
- Interview/screening components.
- Intervention services.
- Follow-up.
- Program evaluation.

Slide 6-35

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How does a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force go about the process of building or enhancing these key program components?

Slide 6-36

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Recall from earlier instruction and prerequisite courses that program components include:
  - a. Identification media.
    - How firesetting youth in need of program services are identified.
  - b. Intake process.
    - Identifying and documenting the circumstances surrounding why the youth and their family are being brought into the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

- The information includes basic contact information from the family and details surrounding the firesetting incident(s).
- c. Interview/screening components.
  - A process for interviewing firesetting youth in conjunction with integrating a vetted scoring assessment to evaluate the potential for repeat acts of firesetting.
  - A screening tool helps to identify the needs of the youth and their family. It also drives the intervention strategies.
- d. Intervention services.
  - An integrated network of services provided by youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force members (and beyond) to intervene in firesetting incidents and prevent recidivism.
  - Specifically:
    - Fire department personnel will offer educational intervention services based upon age and cognitive abilities.
    - Behavioral and mental health partners will be readily able to assess and provide necessary services per individual.
    - Juvenile justice will offer options based on history of firesetting and/or other delinquent offenses.
    - Law enforcement, in conjunction with juvenile justice, can work toward getting the youth involved in activities to get them off the streets, rather than involved in juvenile delinquent actions that are dangerous. There are alternatives that can be attained by these members working in concert, including probation, diversionary programs and parole.
    - Social services can provide various options regarding the needs of the individual and their families such as family counseling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, temporary housing, job placement, after-school care, etc.

- e. Follow-up mechanisms.
  - A process of contacting the participating family at specific intervals after interventions have been performed. Follow-up could be as simple as scheduling a phone call six, 12 and 18 months after the intervention is complete.
  - The follow-up checks for behavior change. Have there been any more firesetting incidents (i.e., recidivism)? Is the family continuing to isolate fire ignition sources? Have they checked their smoke alarms? Has the family practiced their home escape plan? This behavior change is an evaluation component determining the success of the program.
  
- f. Evaluation of services.
  - An on-going evaluation of the overall youth firesetting prevention and intervention program to assess its effectiveness in program outreach, delivery, impacts and the overall outcomes of reducing youth firesetting incidents in the community.

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS**

---

- Staffing plans: A program cannot function effectively when operated by one person or a single agency.

Slide 6-37

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- C. Administrative tools to support program components and services.
  - 1. Staffing the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
    - a. As stated repeatedly, a program cannot function effectively when operated by one person or a single agency.
    - b. Since many fire departments assume the lead role of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, it is logical for them to have a lead program manager who oversees the process.

- c. In addition, multiple other staff members in the department can be trained to perform intervention specialist duties.

Many fire departments continue to have only one, or perhaps a few, staff members trained as youth firesetting intervention specialists. What are some potential pitfalls that could be associated with this type of structure?

Slide 6-38

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- d. Once they have engaged in a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force, each allied support agency will likely have specific staff that handle requests for assistance with firesetting cases.
- e. Staffing strength, both within a fire department and among task force agencies, is often commensurate to the amount and quality of training each agency receives on youth firesetting prevention and intervention.

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)**

- Training: Fire departments should consider multiple levels of training pertinent to youth firesetting prevention and intervention.

Slide 6-39

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- 2. Training for the fire department and task force agencies.
  - a. Fire department.

- Fire departments should consider multiple levels of training pertinent to youth firesetting prevention and intervention.
- A youth firesetting prevention and intervention program manager should possess the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) outlined in NFPA 1035 as related to youth firesetting prevention and intervention. The same is true for those that function at the intervention specialist level.
- In addition, all fire department staff, including administrative positions, should have a basic understanding of the local youth firesetting problem, the typologies of firesetting and associated interventions. Everyone must also understand the department's intake process and protocols and their role in the process.

You are the youth firesetting program manager for the fire department. You have gained full department support for engaging in youth firesetting prevention and intervention. It's time to train the department about youth firesetting. What are you going to present, why and how?

Slide 6-40

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)**

- Task force agencies: Each agency that engages with the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force should take the same approach the fire department does, albeit with a slightly different scope.

Slide 6-41

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

b. Task force agencies.



- 3. Budget and resources.
  - a. The task force must estimate startup costs and review the ongoing expenses anticipated for implementing and maintaining a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
  - b. Financial needs will be greater during the startup process. Training costs will be ongoing.
  - c. Personnel costs: When activities associated with the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program occur during normal operating hours, the salary of the employee performing the work is normally covered by their sponsoring agency.
    - However, if the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program offers services during evenings and weekends, which most do, there needs to be funding for overtime and backfilling of positions. This is not only for the fire department but also other agencies. The full costs of wages and benefits should be considered.
  - d. Operational costs: Office/meeting space, supplies, computer costs, copying, fuel costs for traveling to meet the families, transportation vouchers for low-income families to attend program services, program materials, educational materials, brochures, or online access to required information are all examples of youth firesetting prevention and intervention operational costs.

Does your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program currently have a budget? Why or why not?

Slide 6-44

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- Funding sources: Once the budget is estimated, determination is made on where funding will come from.



- Budget monies from the local municipality, line-item monies from task force members' operating budgets, grants, donations, private foundations, insurance companies, local businesses, community organizations, per-student fees and fundraising activities (or a combination of several or all) are options.
  
- In-kind contributions could be in the form of donated office supplies and materials or professional services.

---

- What are funding models for a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program you are aware of or have used?
  
- Are there other viable options for funding sources?

Slide 6-45

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- As repeatedly stated, it's important that supporters know what's in it for them. A youth firesetting prevention and intervention program could include a company's logo into their materials, or the sheer fact that the community will be safer when kids are not starting fires could be a benefit to some businesses like insurance companies. A combination of private and public funding would allow for various organizations to help. It is a good idea to diversify funding sources so that in case one of the funding sources decides not to participate, the program will not collapse.

### ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)

- Data management includes two categories of information:
  - Demographic information.
  - Case management information.

Slide 6-46

4. Data management and evaluation.
  - a. As explained in pre-course activities and other course material, objectively tracking the national picture of America's youth firesetting problem is challenging due to the many ways agencies may classify and report incidents.
  - b. Data can be gathered from databases such as the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), NFPA, FBI, Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR), and the Youth Firesetting Information Repository and Evaluation System (YFIRES).
  - c. Your agency's records management system (RMS), or other database your organization creates to document youth firesetting incidents, is ultimately the most accurate way to track and monitor your local service demands related to youth firesetting.
  - d. Information from your data management system can help monitor caseloads, track cases and recidivism rates for evaluation, and provide valuable information on the success or needs of the program. It can also be used to identify areas where additional public education is needed.
  - e. Upon receipt of information from the intake process, the assigned youth firesetting prevention and intervention specialist should establish a case file for the youth. The reason for this immediate action is that some families will not follow up with the intervention program. This information is valuable to determine the baseline number of youth firesetting behaviors occurring in the community, whether families complete the program or not.

- f. A youth firesetting prevention and intervention program should document its day-to-day operational activities. Activities to document include (at a minimum) the number of:
  - Inquiries about program services.
  - Intakes.
  - Interviews/screenings.
  - Referrals to partner agencies for interventions.
  - Youth firesetting educational interventions.
  - Follow-ups **and** what changes occurred because of program attendance/interventions.
  - Staff hours invested into program development, training and delivery of services.
- g. There should also be ongoing evaluation of the overall program to assess if it is reducing the number of youth firesetting incidents in the community.
- h. When documenting program services, data management should include two categories of information:

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)**

- Demographic information includes:
  - Referral source.
  - Age and gender.
  - Family status.
  - Name of school and grade level.
  - Details of the incident.
  - Prior firesetting incidents.
  - Initial assessment information.

Slide 6-47

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- **Demographic information** is data that identify the general circumstances of an event and information about the participants. Demographic data should not be connected to an individual case. Demographic data should include:
  - Referral source.

- Age.
- Gender.
- Family status.
- Name of school and grade level.
- Details of the incident.
- Prior firesetting incidents.
- Initial assessment information.

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)**

- Case management information includes:
  - Names.
  - Case numbers.
  - Addresses.
  - Incident numbers.
  - Information about the youth's family.

Do you have a reliable and secure data management system to track and evaluate your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program services? Why or why not?

Slide 6-48

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- **Case management information** including names, case numbers, addresses, incident numbers and information about the firesetting youth's family.
  - i. Standard operating procedures (SOPs)/standard operating guidelines (SOGs) should mandate that case information — confidential specifics regarding the youth and their family — must be maintained in a secured location in which access is only provided to select individuals (detailed in an access log).
  - j. Juvenile justice and other partner agencies may request case files or reports contained within the case file, so the access log must be maintained properly.

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)**

- Community outreach and marketing:  
Have a reliable youth firesetting prevention and intervention program before you market its services.

Slide 6-49

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. Community outreach and marketing.
  - a. Fire departments may think their community does not have a youth firesetting problem because youth firesetting incidents are not showing up through emergency response service demands, investigation reports or requests for help from parents.
  - b. Fire departments are often shocked when they proactively create a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program and, as part of the effort, educate staff, partner agencies and the community, and start to see requests for intervention services start coming in at a steady pace.
  - c. A word of caution: It is wise to have a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program in place prior to marketing it to the community. Many fire departments, which have not adequately prepared, have proudly announced that they have a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program when in fact all they have are preventive and educational intervention services to offer. When faced with a complex youth firesetting case, they are left struggling and scrambling to locate ancillary intervention services.

What are the potential dangers associated with marketing a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program to the community when there are limited or no agreements in place with support agencies to provide intervention services?

Slide 6-50

- d. Remember, proper planning helps prevent poor performance. And when you do have that best practice program, remember that selling is different than marketing.
- e. Selling entails communicating “You need to buy this product.” In turn, marketing entails creating a demand for a product or service from customers.
  - Effective marketing can foster the attitude of “We can’t afford not to do this.”
  - Here’s an example of marketing related to youth firesetting and adults (target audience). The target audience needs to:
    - Be aware youth firesetting exists in the local community.
    - Believe they or loved ones could be or are at risk of harm from youth firesetting.
    - Believe the youth firesetting risk is unacceptable, and change needs to occur.
    - Understand how the youth firesetting risk develops, occurs and what actions they can take to stop it.
    - Possess the KSAs and resources to address the youth firesetting problem.
    - Receive feedback on how they are doing in the quest to prevent youth firesetting in the community.

- f. As you are aware, best practices in public fire and life safety education direct youth firesetting messages to be current, relevant, age-appropriate and positive in nature.
- g. In the context of all prevention and intervention messages, market medium saturation remains a best practice.

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)**

- SOPs/standard operating guidelines (SOGs): Go to Appendix C: Colorado Springs Fire Department Policies and Procedures and Appendix E: Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT) Standard Operating Guidelines to review Colorado Springs Fire Department procedure documentation and the SOGs for the Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team.

Slide 6-51

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- 6. SOPs/SOGs.
  - a. SOPs and SOGs contain the official operating rules and policies of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
  - b. SOPs provide youth firesetting prevention and intervention team members with the information to perform a job properly and document the way activities are to be performed to facilitate consistency.
  - c. SOPs should be written in a concise, step-by-step, easy-to-read format.
  - d. SOPs/SOGs include, but are not limited to:
    - Description of how program components such as youth firesetting identification, intake procedures and interview/screening directives are executed. The forms that are to be used with the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program are identified, and pertinent directives for use are also explained.
    - Explanation of procedures for making referrals to partner agencies and how educational interventions are to be handled.

- Direction on how follow-up services are handled and procedures to close out a case are summarized.
- Explanation of what is evaluated as part of overall program performance, what to document and how to do such.

• Why are SOPs/SOGs critical components of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention?

• What are the benefits associated with having thorough and current SOPs/SOGs?

• What features of the SOGs from Minnesota stood out as a best practice?

Slide 6-52

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)**

• Memorandum of understanding (MOU): Clarify the expectations of each partner agency of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

**Why are MOUs important?**

**How can they help with program succession planning?**

Slide 6-53

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

7. Memoranda of understanding (MOUs).
  - a. It is helpful to have formal agreements with program stakeholders. An MOU helps to clarify the expectations of each agency participating in the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. A formal MOU will serve as a clear outline of expectations and should be made with an agency rather than an individual.
  - b. MOUs help with succession planning because as specific people cycle through the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, the roles for each task force agency remain documented so that new staff can assume positions being vacated.



- c. If the understanding is in an MOU, the agency holds the contract, and it will transcend staffing changes.

**ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS (cont'd)**

- Succession planning: Big reason why long-standing youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs fall into a state of disrepair is due to staff members from fire departments (and task force agencies) retiring or transferring to other positions.

Slide 6-54

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- 8. Succession planning.
  - a. Succession planning is a process for identifying or passing on leadership roles when those currently in those positions retire or leave for any reason.
  - b. Arguably, one of the biggest reasons why long-standing youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs fall into a state of disrepair is due to staff members from fire departments (and task force agencies) retiring or transferring to other positions.
  - c. Succession planning starts immediately upon the identification of the problem of youth firesetting. Exactly what this looks like will vary from program to program, but it is important to identify future program service needs based upon the data you have ascertained.

---

What might a good youth firesetting prevention and intervention program succession plan look like?

Slide 6-55

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



9. Purpose and content of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention handbook.
  - a. A youth firesetting prevention and intervention program operations handbook provides the user with examples of each document used by the program.
  - b. The purpose of an operations handbook is to:
    - Develop written documentation of the program policies and procedures (SOPs/SOGs).
    - Use as the primary training resource for new personnel as they join the program.
    - Ensure that all documents used by the program are available for review.
    - Provide an informal step-by-step guide of how to deliver program services.
  - c. While an operations handbook may vary from program to program, depending on available resources and the number of referrals into the program, there are some items that are necessary for inclusion in this document. These include:
    - Identification procedures.
    - Intake procedures and forms.
    - Screening procedures and forms.
    - Intervention strategies defined.
    - Procedures for making referrals.
    - Follow-up/evaluation of the firesetting youth.
    - Closeout of the case.
  - d. The operations handbook should be distributed to all agencies and people who will play a role with the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.



### ACTIVITY 6.1, Part 3

#### Evaluating and/or Proposing Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Components and Administrative Tools

##### Purpose

Evaluate the student's existing youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components and the administrative tools that support them, and suggest development of or enhancements to the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components and administrative tools.

##### Directions

1. Remain in your work groups based upon the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
2. Part 3 involves:
  - a. Evaluating your existing youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components and the administrative tools that support them.
    - Program components include identification, intake, interview/screening process, intervention capabilities and follow-up evaluation.
    - Administrative tools include staffing, training, budget, data management, marketing plan, SOPs, etc.
  - b. Suggesting development of or enhancements to the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components and administrative tools.

##### Step 1

1. Individually, respond to the following directives:
  - a. Activity 6.1, Part 1 had you define the existing overall state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. Now, we are going to take a more in-depth look at your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's primary components (if you have a program).
  - b. Define the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's primary components (if you have a program).
    - Youth firesetting identification media.
    - Intake process.

- Interview/screening component.
  - Intervention services.
  - Follow up process.
  - Overall evaluation of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
  - **Note:** If you do not currently have a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, indicate so and proceed to letter c.
- c. Next, whether you have a program or not, develop an aspired state vision of what you would like to see the program components ascend to over 18 to 24 months. Be specific and include as many of the primary components as possible.
2. Thirty minutes are allotted for individual work.
  3. Next, within your table group, discuss the similarities and differences pertinent to the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components and where you would like to see them ascend to in the future.
  4. Ten minutes are allotted for small group discussion.

## Step 2

1. Individually, respond to the following directives:
  - a. Define the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's administrative tools (if you have them) that support your overall program to include:
    - Staffing to deliver program services.
    - Training program for fire department and partner agencies.
    - Program budget and ancillary resources to support the program.
    - Data management protocols.
    - Program marketing.
    - SOPs and SOGs.
    - MOUs.

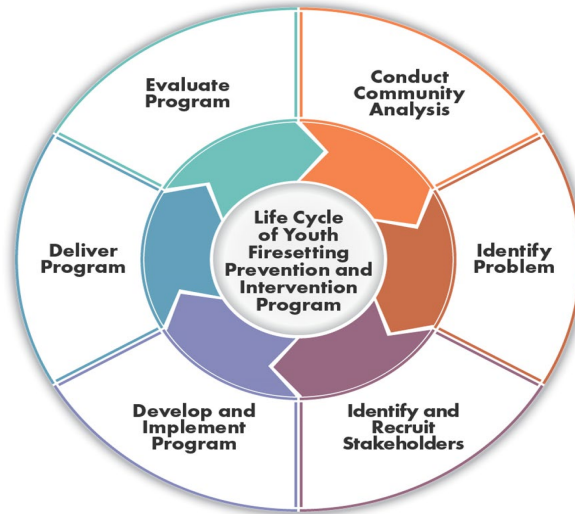
- Youth firesetting prevention and intervention handbook.
  - **Note:** If you do not currently have a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, indicate so and proceed to letter b.
- b. Next, develop an aspired state vision of what you would like to see your administrative tools ascend to over 18 months to 24 months. Be specific and include as many of the administrative tools as possible.
2. Twenty minutes are allotted for individual work.
  3. Within your table group, discuss the similarities and differences pertinent to the existing state of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention administrative tools and where you would like to see them ascend to over time.
  4. Ten minutes are allotted for small group discussion.
  5. Activity 6.1, Part 3 should be completed within 1 hour and 20 minutes.

This page intentionally left blank.





# YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION



Slide 6-62

---

---

---

---

---

**VIII. FOUR STAGES OF PROGRAM EVALUATION**

**FOUR STAGES OF PROGRAM EVALUATION**

- Formative.
- Process.
- Impact.
- Outcome.

The stages of evaluation measure the planning, implementation, outreach, impacts and outcomes of the program over its life cycle.

Slide 6-63

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

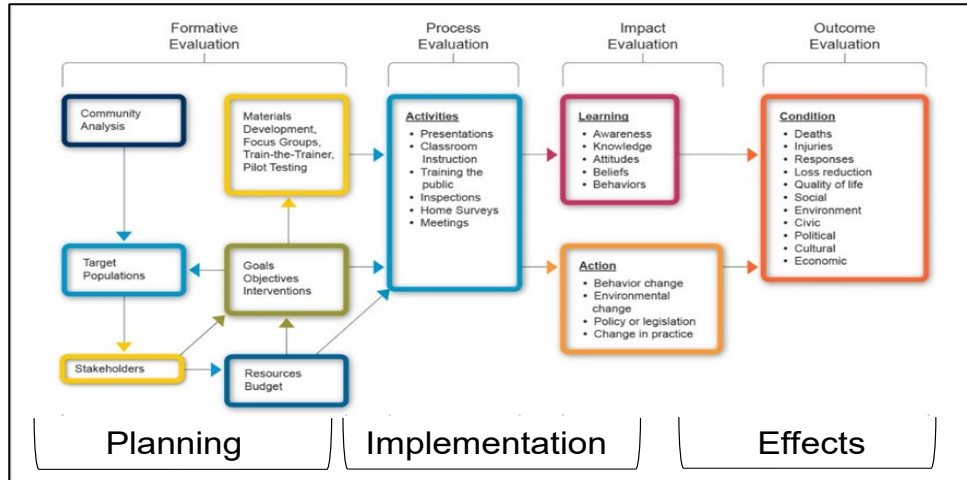
---

---

- A. The four stages of program evaluation are:
1. Formative evaluation.
    - a. Used to monitor and measure the planning stage of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
    - b. It is also engaged if a program, for whatever reason, needs enhancements, is struggling or requires rejuvenating.
  2. Process evaluation.
    - a. Monitors the operation of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program in terms of outreach, service delivery and staff performance.
    - b. If challenges are experienced in a program’s operation, use formative evaluation to explore what’s wrong.
  3. Impact evaluation.
    - a. Measures what has changed as a result of program service delivery. Specifically, did knowledge gain occur among the target audience, did awareness and attitudes change, and were behavioral changes made.
    - b. This stage of evaluation requires a baseline measurement of conditions prior to service deliveries and afterward.

4. Outcome evaluation.
  - a. Measures changes in the occurrence of youth firesetting behaviors and their associated impacts (injuries, deaths, property loss) over the long term.
  - b. This stage of evaluation requires a baseline measurement of conditions prior to service deliveries and afterward.

# FOUR STAGES OF PROGRAM EVALUATION (cont'd)



[Long Description](#)

Slide 6-64

- B. Formative evaluation.
1. Formative evaluation is used during the development of a new program.
    - a. When an existing program is being modified or has problems with no obvious solutions.
    - b. When a program is used in a new setting with a new population.
    - c. When a program is targeting a new problem or behavior.
    - d. Main purpose is to strengthen or improve the development/delivery of a program.
  2. Unfortunately, formative evaluation is a step often overlooked or underused by program developers. With respect to a new program, formative evaluation allows programs to make revisions before the full effort begins, thereby maximizing the likelihood that the program will succeed.
  3. Questions to answer during the formative evaluation stage for a new program include:
    - a. Address local needs: Does the program seek to impact a local risk issue that has been identified through objective analysis of accurate data?
    - b. Appropriate stakeholders: Are people/groups who have a vested interest in the risk issue involved in the program planning process?
    - c. Knowledge levels: What do stakeholders know about the risk being addressed by the program?
    - d. Introduction: When is the best time to introduce the program or modification to the target population?
    - e. Plans and strategies: Are the proposed plans/strategies realistic and likely to succeed? Are time frames for development and implementation present and realistic?
    - f. Resources: Are adequate resources (time, people, money) available to develop, implement and sustain the program? Do resources support the goals and objectives of the program?

- g. Methods for implementing the program: Are the proposed methods for implementing program plans, strategies and evaluation feasible, appropriate and likely to be effective? Does the program have the ability to reach target populations (market research)? How do people in the target population get information? What are the best media for communication? Is it television, newspaper, radio, internet, word of mouth or a combination of sources?
  - h. Program activities: Are the proposed activities suitable for the target population?
    - That is, are they current, meaningful, barrier-free, culturally sensitive and related to the desired outcome? For example, is the literacy level appropriate?
  - i. Logistics: How much marketing is required for the program? Are scheduling and locations acceptable?
    - For example, would scheduling program hours during the normal workday make it difficult for some people in the target population to use the program?
  - j. Acceptance by program personnel: Is the program consistent with the staff's values? Are all staff members comfortable with the roles they have been assigned?
    - For example, are they willing to distribute smoke alarms door-to-door or to participate in weekend activities to reach working people? Has the staff been adequately trained to perform their prospective duties?
  - k. Barriers to success: Are there beliefs among the target population that work against the program?
    - For example, do some people believe that children misusing fire is normal and that they will outgrow the behavior?
4. Whom you ask to participate in formative evaluation depends on the evaluation's purpose.
- a. For example, if you are pilot testing materials for a new program, select people or households at random from the target population who share characteristics of the proposed target populations.
  - b. If you want to know the level of consumer satisfaction with your program, select evaluation participants from people or households who have already been served by your program.

- c. If you want to know why fewer people than expected are taking advantage of your program, select evaluation participants from among people or households in the target population who did not respond to your messages.
  5. How to use results of formative evaluation.
    - a. Well-designed formative evaluation shows which aspects of your program are likely to succeed and which need improvement.
    - b. It should also show how problem areas can be improved. It can be used to modify the program's plans, materials, strategies and activities to reflect the information gathered during formative evaluation.
    - c. Formative evaluation is a dynamic, ongoing process. Even after the prevention program has begun, formative evaluation should continue.
    - d. The evaluator must create mechanisms (e.g., customer satisfaction forms to be completed by program participants) that continually provide feedback to program management from participants, staff, supervisors and anyone else involved in the program.
- C. Process evaluation.
  1. Process evaluation should answer the question: Is the program being delivered as intended? This is a very important question to answer because even the best-designed program may not produce intended results if it is not delivered properly.
  2. The methods for tracking process evaluation (forms, surveys, databases, etc.) should be designed during the formative stage of a program's development.
    - a. Often referred to as "program monitoring."
    - b. Begins as soon as the program is put into action.
    - c. Continues throughout the life of the program.
    - d. Process evaluation examines how well a program is being delivered.
    - e. Identifies when and where programs occur.
    - f. Identifies who delivered services and how well they did.



- g. Examines how well the program is reaching its intended target populations.
3. Keeping track of the following information is considered process evaluation. Program activity levels such as:
  - a. Training sessions for staff.
  - b. Meetings to organize program outreach.
  - c. Materials purchased for program.
  - d. Number of programs presented.
  - e. Locations of presentations.
  - f. Number of people who attended presentations.
  - g. Number of materials distributed.
  - h. Number of inspections performed.
  - i. Number of home surveys conducted.
  - j. Program/staff performance levels such as:
    - Participant satisfaction with program.
    - Performance of staff who deliver programs.
4. Process evaluation is useful because it identifies any problems early that are occurring in reaching the target population.
5. Allows programs to evaluate how well their plans, procedures, activities and materials are working and to make adjustments before logistical or administrative weaknesses become entrenched.
6. Allows one to understand why a program may or may not have influenced short- or long-term changes.

For example, poor attendance may explain why a well-designed educational activity did not influence a target group's knowledge.
7. If process evaluation identifies unexpected problems with a program (especially if it shows you are not reaching as many people in the target population as you expected), conduct additional formative evaluation to figure out why.

8. Done well, the process stage of evaluation sets up a pattern for ascending levels of program success. Much of the information gathered during the process stage will be used as a foundation for impact and outcome evaluation when you will be calculating the effect your program has had on the target population.
9. Some components of process evaluation are similar to those performed in a program's formative stage of development.
10. The main point to remember is to start evaluating the minute you begin thinking about a program and to keep doing it throughout its lifespan.

D. Impact evaluation.

1. Impact evaluation reveals the degree to which a program is meeting its intermediate goals. It measures two important levels of performance: learning and action.
  - a. Learning: What do you know now that you didn't know then? Did the program influence any of these factors among the target population?
    - Awareness.
    - Knowledge levels.
    - Attitudes and/or beliefs.
    - Skill levels.
  - b. Action: What are you going to do now as a result of the information gleaned from impact evaluation? Did the program change any of the following?
    - Target population behavior or lifestyle change.
    - Change within a targeted physical environment.
    - Public policy, legislation, adoption or enforcement.
    - Hazard reduction.
    - Change in practice.
    - Decision-making process.

2. Often the least used, but impact evaluation is the most important stage of evaluation.
3. A major contributing factor to its lack of use is that impact evaluation requires time, skill, planning and effort.
4. This stage of evaluation requires that baseline measurements are taken before the program is delivered and after it has been completed. It compares conditions that existed before a program was delivered to those present after it was completed.

For example, pre- and post-tests can provide a baseline measurement, demonstrating preexisting and current knowledge.

5. Impact evaluation mechanisms should be designed during the development phases of a program.
6. Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs are almost always measured by some type of assessment instrument.
  - a. The instrument could be a test, survey or questionnaire.
  - b. Evaluators might also observe group discussions to watch and listen for signs of change among participants' knowledge, attitudes or beliefs.
  - c. Physical, environmental and lifestyle changes are usually assessed by direct observation.
  - d. For example, an observer might check to see that seat belts are positioned correctly, smoke alarms installed appropriately, or that the required grade of construction material is used.
7. Conducting impact evaluation is important because it allows management to modify materials or move resources from a nonproductive to a productive area of program.
8. If the results of impact evaluation are positive, they can be used to justify continuing a program.
9. If the results are negative, they can help justify revising or discontinuing a program.
10. In addition to providing tangible evidence to evaluators, impact data can be used to show stakeholders and potential funders that a program is working.

11. In the case that a program is experiencing challenges, impact evaluation can be used to help justify support for adjustments.
- E. Outcome evaluation.
1. Outcome evaluation demonstrates the degree to which the program has met its ultimate goals.
  2. Outcome evaluation measures change over an extended period within the community. Outcome evaluation seeks to provide:
    - a. Statistical proof that the risk-reduction program is reducing risk in the specified areas.
      - Program success is proven by a reduction of deaths, injuries, and property and medical costs in the target area.
    - b. Valid anecdotal proof (such as personal testimonials) that verify outcomes. Anecdotal proof is frequently used to measure outcome of social-oriented risk- reduction initiatives.
    - c. In some circumstances, outcome can be demonstrated by improvement in the target population's health and quality of life.
    - d. Cultural change can be a measurement of outcome because it often leads to sustained levels of behavioral change.
  3. Often programs start with the end in mind and determine what long-term changes could happen overtime.
  4. Just like impact evaluation, measuring outcome requires baseline data about conditions that exist prior to the start of a program, initiative or strategy.
  5. It is difficult at best, and often impossible, to prove outcome unless baseline data is in place. This is especially true when attempting to measure changes in morbidity, mortality, and economic and social conditions.
  6. When seeking to perform outcome evaluation on a specific program, the following strategy is recommended:
    - a. Outcome evaluation should be used for ongoing programs (e.g., a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program) at appropriate intervals throughout the program's offerings.

- b. For ongoing programs (e.g., a series of fire safety classes given each year in elementary schools), conduct outcome evaluation as soon as enough people or households have participated in the program to make outcome evaluation results meaningful.
  - c. Depending on the extent of your youth firesetting problem (and the number of programs you deliver), you could conduct outcome evaluation, for example, every year, every three years or every five years to find out how well the program's effects are sustained over time.
7. Preparation for outcome evaluation begins when the program is being designed. The type of data (and their sources) must be considered carefully.
8. To be considered reliable, data must be collected from valid sources in a systematic, unbiased manner.
9. In general, measuring changes in morbidity and mortality is not so easy.
- a. For example, you can measure the change in helmet-wearing behavior of children who participated in a safety training class soon after the class is over.
  - b. Measuring the reduction in morbidity and mortality as a result of those same children's change in behavior is more difficult, and results take much longer to appear. Documenting changes in morbidity and mortality that are directly the result of a program to reduce most unintentional injuries requires a vastly larger study population than does documenting changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.
  - c. In addition to a large study population, documenting changes in morbidity and mortality requires a long-term study, which can be time-consuming.
10. You can use positive results of outcome evaluation as even stronger evidence than the results of impact evaluation to justify continued funding for your program.

## **IX. DEVELOPING AN ACTION/EVALUATION PLAN**

- A. The evaluation process should begin when the idea for creating a program is conceived. Evaluation should continue throughout the life cycle of the program.

- B. An action/evaluation plan describes in precise, measurable terms how a program is to be developed, implemented, operated and monitored. It also describes the intended levels of outreach, impact and outcome the program seeks to achieve.
- C. The foundation of an action/evaluation plan is its goals and objectives.
- D. Goals.
  - 1. A goal is a statement that explains, overall, what the program seeks to accomplish. It sets the fundamental, long-range direction of the program.
  - 2. Without clear goals and well-developed objectives, it is virtually impossible to assess and evaluate where we are making a difference in community risk reduction.
  - 3. Typically, goals are broad, general statements. A goal summarizes expected results and outcomes rather than program methods and activities.
  - 4. Goals do not include measurements of change.
- E. Example of a goal: To reduce the number of youth-set fires in Cleveland Park.
- F. Objectives.
  - 1. An objective is a concise statement of the desired product(s) of the risk-reduction initiative.
  - 2. Without objectives, the fundamental components of the program cannot be developed, i.e., specific interventions.

**ACTION/EVALUATION PLAN**

---

- SMART objectives:
  - **S:** Specific.
  - **M:** Measurable.
  - **A:** Achievable.
  - **R:** Relevant.
  - **T:** Time-bound.

Slide 6-65

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

G. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant/Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART) objectives refer to an acronym designed around the five leading indicators of a solid program.

1. **Specific:** What is precisely going to be done, with or for whom?

The program states a specific outcome or a precise objective to be accomplished in concrete terms.

2. **Measurable:** Is it quantifiable, and can it be measured?

a. The objective can be measured, and the measurements source is identified.

b. Collection of the data is feasible for your program or partners.

c. Baseline data are basic information that must be identified before a program begins so that impact and outcome can be measured.

3. **Achievable:** Can we get it done in the proposed time frame/in this political climate/for this amount of money/with the resources and support available?

The objective or expectation of what will be accomplished must be realistic given the time period, resources allocated and the political and economic conditions.

4. **Relevant:** Will the objective have an effect on the desired goal or strategy?

a. Does it address the scope of the problem and propose reasonable programmatic steps?

b. The outcome or results of the program directly support the mission of the agency's long-range plan or goal.

5. **Time-bound:** When will the objective be achieved?

a. A specified and reasonable time frame should be incorporated into the objective.

b. Take into consideration the environment where the change is expected, the scope of the change and how it fits into the work plan.

## ACTION/EVALUATION PLAN (cont'd)

- The action/evaluation plan contains SMART objectives that call for specific actions to take place that will make tracking and measurements of change possible.

**Review the example for the Cleveland Park youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.**

Slide 6-66

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## ACTION/EVALUATION PLAN

### Cleveland Park Fire and Life Safety Coalition

#### Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program

**Problem statement:** The problem is the Cleveland Park Fire/Rescue Service responds to a high rate of firesetting incidents by youths between the ages of 12 to 17 compared to similar communities.

**Goal:** Decrease the number of youth-set fires in Cleveland Park.

#### Outcome objective

As compared to baseline data, the following changes will have occurred:

By (five years from today), the program will have reduced by 50% the number of incidents involving firesetting by youths ages 12 to 17. Evaluation methods: fire reports, police reports.

#### Impact objectives

As compared to baseline data, the following changes will have occurred:

By (three months from now), MOUs will be adopted among agencies handling youths involved in firesetting. Evaluation method: adoption of MOU. Interventions: education and enforcement.

By (five months from now), the city council will have adopted a novelty lighters ordinance. Evaluation method: passage of law. Interventions: education, engineering and enforcement.

By (seven months from now), there will be a 25% increase in youths ages 12 to 17 who can name at least three ways an arson arrest can affect them and their families. Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pre-tests and post-tests. Intervention: education.

By (one year plus three months from now), there will be a 25% increase in youths ages 12 to 17 who know the age juveniles can be arrested in their state. Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pre-tests and post-tests. Intervention: education.

By (one year plus three months from now), there will be a 25% increase in youths ages 12 to 17 who can name at least two of the state's arson laws. Evaluation methods: self-report surveys, pre-tests and post-tests. Intervention: education.

By (six months from now), there will be a 95% increase in homes of youths ages 12 to 17 admitted to the program having working smoke alarms according to state law. Evaluation methods: observational surveys and self-report surveys. Interventions: education, engineering and enforcement.

By (six months from now), there will be a 25% increase in the number of parents/caregivers who can name three ways they can prevent firesetting. Evaluation methods: pre-tests and post-tests. Intervention: education.

### **Process objectives**

By (five months from now), the committee will have drafted legislation restricting novelty lighters in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: drafting of legislation. Interventions: education, engineering and enforcement.

By (seven months from now), the project coordinator will have implemented a media campaign to raise awareness about youth firesetting. Evaluation methods: counting number of hits to website. Intervention: education.

By (one year plus three months from now), the project coordinator will begin offering the educational component of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program to youths and their families referred to the program as often as needed to meet demand. Evaluation method: counting. Intervention: education.

By (one year plus three months from now), each member of the committee will have made at least three presentations to a community group about the problem of youth firesetting in the community. Evaluation method: counting. Intervention: education.

### **Formative objectives**

Starting (three months from now), the project coordinator will monitor changes in the prevalence, incidence and severity of youths ages 12 to 17 injured from firesetting by collecting and analyzing data from city EMS run report data, the county's medical examiner's logs on fatalities, trauma registry data on children treated in three hospital emergency rooms and local clinics, fire reports, and policy reports. Evaluation methods: injury/loss statistics and anecdotes. Intervention: education.

By (three months from now), the youth firesetting prevention and intervention committee will start program planning based on escalation of youth-set fires from analysis of the community risk assessment of Cleveland Park.

By (five months from now), the youth firesetting prevention and intervention committee will identify core stakeholders in the Cleveland Park district to join the youth firesetting prevention and intervention committee.

By (seven months from now), the fire and life safety coalition will develop goals, interventions and objectives for the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

By (nine months from now), the project coordinator, with the help of the committee, will have developed a lesson plan on state arson laws for use in the elementary and middle schools in Cleveland Park. Evaluation method: development of curriculum.

By (nine months from now), an MOU will be developed by the committee on how youths will be handled by various agencies. Evaluation method: development of MOU. Interventions: education, engineering and enforcement.

By (one year from now), the youth firesetting prevention and intervention committee will have drafted SOPs for the fire department on how youths who set fires are handled. Evaluation method: development of procedures.

By (one year plus one month from now), the project coordinator, with the help of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention committee, will design the educational component for youths and their families referred to the program. Evaluation method: development of education component.

By (one year plus three months from now), the project coordinator will have trained all firefighters in the Cleveland Park stations on how to refer youths to the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. Evaluation method: counting. Intervention: education.

By (one year plus seven months from now), the project coordinator will have trained teachers in the pilot school to use the lesson plans about arson laws in the state. Evaluation method: counting.

By (one year plus eight months from now), the project coordinator will have received permission from the school board of Cleveland Park to instruct teachers in elementary about lesson plans pertaining to incendiary fires and the potential dangers of firesetting. Teachers at the middle school level will be instructed on lesson plans pertaining to arson laws and how they pertain to youth ages 12 to 17 years. Evaluation methods: letter of agreement and adoption of curriculum.

**X. TYPES OF EVALUATION OBJECTIVES**

**TYPES OF OBJECTIVES**

- Formative objectives:
  - SMART objectives written during the planning stage of a program. These objectives help define how the program is to be developed, pilot-tested and implemented.
  - Call for explanation of why the program is needed. Calling for a community risk analysis can be stated in a formative objective.

Slide 6-67

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A. Formative objectives.**

1. Formative objectives are SMART objectives written during the planning stage of a program. These objectives help define how the program is to be developed, pilot-tested and implemented.
2. Formative objectives call for explanation of why the program is needed. Calling for a community risk analysis can be stated in a formative objective.
3. Formative objectives support the formative stage of evaluation by calling for specific measurable actions to occur during the planning phase of a program.
4. Good formative objectives can guide a planning team through the early development, enhancement or rejuvenation of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
5. Formative evaluation helps discover strengths and weaknesses of a program as it is developing and before huge resource investments are made.
6. Formative objectives help establish baselines for your efforts to be measured. They examine the early stages of the program’s development concerning community risks, target populations, stakeholders, existing knowledge, attitudes and beliefs; material development, developing goals and objectives; testing procedures; and resources needed.
7. Refer to the Cleveland Park Action/Evaluation Plan for examples of formative objectives.

**TYPES OF OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Process objectives describe anything having to do with program activities, procedures and materials. The number of intended presentations, attendance and material distribution can be described in process objectives.

Slide 6-68

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**B. Process objectives.**

1. Process objectives describe anything having to do with program activities, procedures and materials. The number of intended presentations, attendance and material distribution can be described in process objectives.
2. Process objectives can also describe the intended quality of the service being delivered. They are written using action verbs to show accountability, such as monitor, coordinate, plan, write or publish, rather than know, learn or feel.
3. Process objectives are normally developed after the interventions have been selected and decisions are made based on who is going to do what and when.
4. Process objectives assign responsibility for activities to be completed by specific people or groups. These objectives are an important component of an evaluation plan because they can indicate who will be responsible for doing what and include a deadline of when tasks are to be accomplished.

**TYPES OF OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Impact objectives show desired changes in attitudes, knowledge, behavior, physical environment or public policy that will be created by the program in the relatively short term (one to five years).

Slide 6-69

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

C. Impact objectives.

1. Impact objectives are SMART objectives written to describe the following:
  - a. Who will be affected by the program?
  - b. What results are expected?
  - c. How large a change is necessary to demonstrate success?
  - d. How much time is required for the change to occur?
2. Impact objectives are written to show desired changes in attitudes, knowledge, behavior, physical environment or public policy that will be created by the program in the relatively short term (one to five years).
3. Baseline data is required so that current knowledge levels, attitudes, living conditions, use of safety equipment, etc., can be compared to those that exist after a program has been operating for a designated period.
4. Impact objectives call for changes to occur among the target populations and where they reside. Specifically, changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and living environments.
5. Baseline data must be obtained before impact and outcome can be measured.

**TYPES OF OBJECTIVES (cont'd)**

- Outcome objectives are SMART objectives written to show the intended long-term implications of your program. They describe expected outcomes for the community in relation to the reduction of incidents, injuries, deaths and property loss from youth-set fires.

Slide 6-70

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

D. Outcome objectives.

1. An outcome objective is a SMART objective written to show the intended long-term implications of your program. It describes expected outcomes for the community in relation to the reduction of incidents, injuries, deaths and property loss from youth-set fires.

2. Outcome objectives describe the intended effect of the program (usually to reduce the occurrence of a condition).
3. Outcome objectives may be related to personal, social, economic, environmental or health conditions.
4. Outcome objectives usually call for a long-term reduction in deaths, injuries, property loss and emergency responses. They should be tied to evaluation, support your goal, and state conditions you ultimately want to achieve.
5. If you are interested in advancing your skills in program development and evaluation, the NFA offers “Demonstrating Your Community Risk Reduction Program’s Worth” (DYCRRPW).

This page intentionally left blank.



## ACTIVITY 6.1, Part 4

### Developing a Draft Action/Evaluation Plan: Home Community Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program

#### Purpose

Develop an action/evaluation plan for the development, enhancement or rejuvenation of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

#### Directions

1. Considering where you are right now in the development (formative) stage of your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program, **list at least 15 actions** that will need to be accomplished as part of a planning process to move forward once you return home.

While the actions will ultimately be word-processed, a good option to get started is to list them on index cards or pieces of paper so they can be placed in order.

2. Next, place the actions into the logical order for which they should occur.
3. Finally, create an action plan (using SMART objectives) for accomplishing the task(s). Use the examples in Appendix F: Local and Statewide Examples for Activity 6.1 as reference.

Remember to identify the following:

- a. What is to be done?
  - b. Who is to accomplish it?
  - c. A time frame of when the action is to take place.
  - d. How progress will be evaluated.
4. Upon completion of Part 4, the entire Activity 6.1 should be finalized, word-processed and submitted to the instructors for grading.
  5. Activity 6.1, Part 4 should be completed within 1 hour and 30 minutes.

This page intentionally left blank.

## ACTIVITY 6.2

### Persuasive Speech — Moving Your Vision Forward

#### Purpose



Deliver a persuasive speech to an organizational leader in support of developing, enhancing or rejuvenating a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

#### Directions

1. Reflecting on Parts 1-4 of Activity 6.1, deliver a three-minute persuasive speech to an organizational leader that supports developing, enhancing or rejuvenating your organization's youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
2. Include as part of your presentation:
  - a. Your youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's existing state.
  - b. The aspired state vision of what you want your program to become.
  - c. The "why" for moving from what exists now to a future state.
  - d. Summarization of the action plan for getting started.
  - e. A conclusion that includes "What I'm asking for today is...."
3. You will have three minutes for this graded presentation to the class. Presentations will be graded using the associated rubric.

This page intentionally left blank.

**XI. SUMMARY**



### SUMMARY

- Developing a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.
- Cultivating long-term working relationships with youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force members.
- Evaluating existing and missing resources needed to develop a successful youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Slide 6-75

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---



### SUMMARY (cont'd)

- Requirements of SOPs/SOGs for youth fire prevention and intervention programs.
- Four stages of program evaluation.
- Stages of evaluation to measure the development, implementation and operation of youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs.

Slide 6-76

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

This page intentionally left blank.

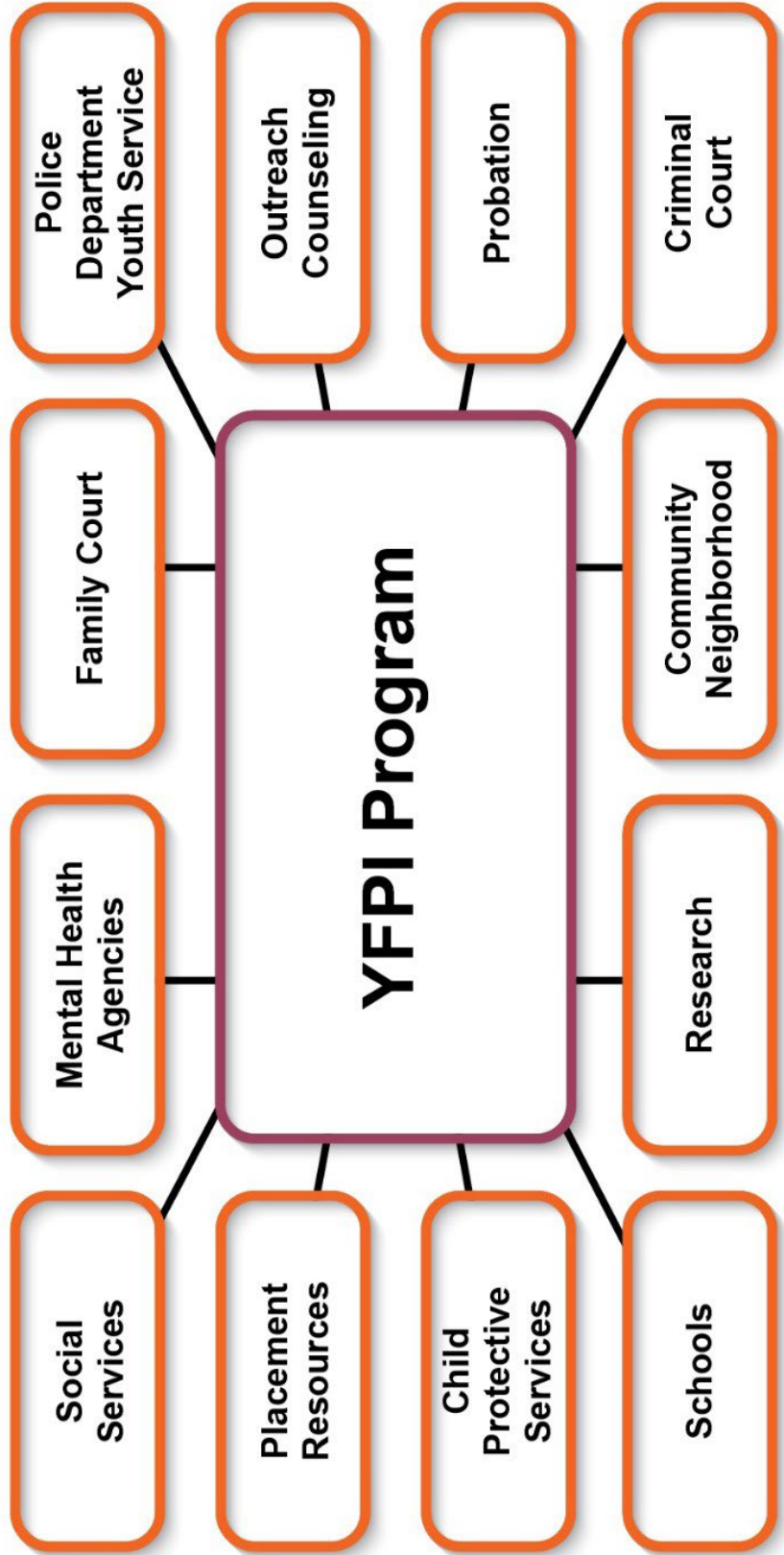
# **APPENDIX A**

## **YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM TASK FORCE**

This page intentionally left blank.



## Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Task Force

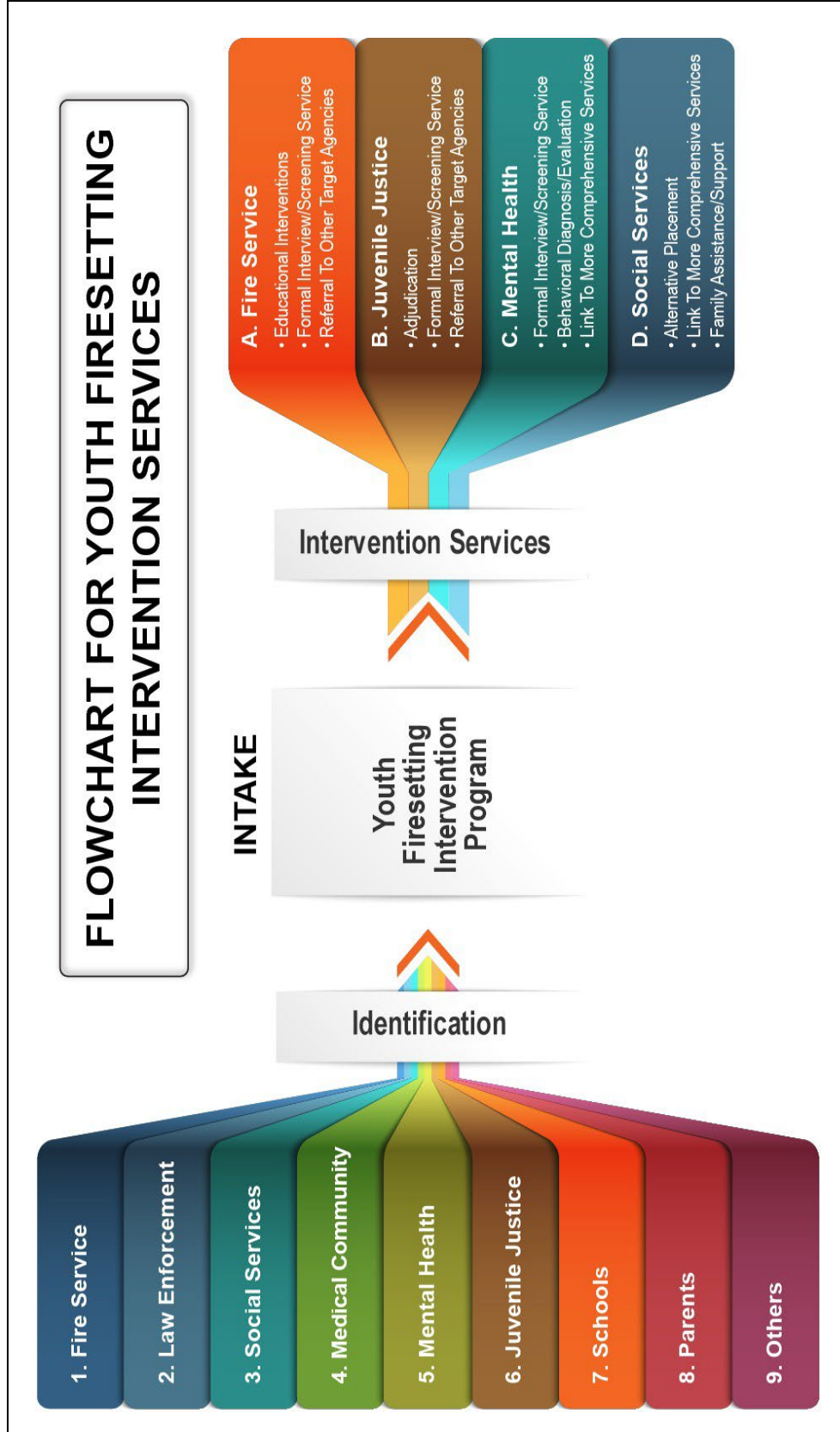


This page intentionally left blank.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **FLOWCHART FOR YOUTH FIRESETTING INTERVENTION SERVICES**

This page intentionally left blank.



Sources of identification occur from the fire service, law enforcement, social services, the medical community, mental health services, juvenile justices, schools, parents or others. Following identification, cases move through intake via a youth firesetting intervention program.

Intervention services offered can be:

A. Fire Service:

- Educational interventions.
- Formal interview/screening service.
- Referral to other target agencies.

B. Juvenile Justice:

- Adjudication.
- Formal interview/screening service.
- Referral to other target agencies.

C. Mental Health:

- Formal interview/screening service.
- Behavioral diagnosis/evaluation.
- Link to more comprehensive services.

D. Social Services:

- Alternative placement.
- Link to more comprehensive services.
- Family assistance/support.

## **APPENDIX C**

# **COLORADO SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

This page intentionally left blank.





## COLORADO SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

---

**POLICY: YOUTH FIRESETTER INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

DATE ORIGINATED: June 18, 2021

Written by: Kathryn Hook,  
Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist  
FireFactor Program Manager

---

**PURPOSE:** The Fire Marshal of the Colorado Springs Fire Department establishes the FireFactor<sup>2</sup> YOUTH FIRESETTER INTERVENTION PROTOCOL

**SCOPE:** Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Specialist (YFIS)

**PROCEDURE:**

**A. Identification of Youth and Incident Referral**

1. Youth may be referred to the FireFactor<sup>2</sup> program by fire personnel, fire investigators, parents/guardian/caregivers, schools and school districts, court diversion program, probation, mental/behavioral health agencies, law enforcement agencies, hospitals, the Department of Human Services and any other person(s) working with youth. (For assignment to YFIS see B)
2. Referrals may be sent via online referral form, phone call (verbal referral), email, fax, or interoffice mail. If referral is received via phone complete the FireFactor<sup>2</sup> program referral form verbally. All components of referral form should be filled out as completely as possible. Original forms should be provided to designated YFIS.
3. If referral is received via email complete the FireFactor<sup>2</sup> program referral form based on the email received. Print and attach the email to the referral form and forward on to YFIS program.
4. If referral is received via fax, advance completed form to designated YFIS and send email to YFIS that referral has been received.

**5. The FireFactor Intervention program is only for youth younger than 18 years old.**

- B. Designated YFIS initiates Referral Record** – In YFires Database, <https://yfires.com>, log in and chose Manage Cases. Select Add Case (located under Active Case tab) and enter general intake/incident information. YFires will automatically generate a unique case number; this number for CSFD will start with 009 (009 is CSFDs user number), indicate year of entry, indicate month of entry, and finally entry # for that month. For example, the first referral received in June of 2021 would have the number 009-2021-06-001. Enter general information obtained from referral, leaving unknown details blank. Also designated YFIS will enter general case info in Airtable Report found under Referral/Assessments tab.
- C. Intake Process:** The YFIS program manager will designate YFIS for this case- the designated YFIS will initiate Intake process and contact parent/caregiver to discuss details of the program, obtain pertinent basic information impacting intervention (including basic incident details and special issues the youth/caregiver may have which may be a factor in the assessment and intervention process) and preferably schedule the assessment date/time during Intake. Ideally contact with parent/guardian will be made within 48 hours of receiving referral. Document all communication in YFires, including attempted but unsuccessful contact.

- D. Risk Assessment Logistics:** Risk assessments should be scheduled as soon after incident date as possible to maximize success of intervention. Both youth and their parent/legal guardian must be present for the entirety of the risk assessment. When scheduling date, time, and location, be mindful that all assessments must be conducted with at least two CSFD staff members present. CSFD Community Education and Outreach Assessment room will be the primary location for conducting risk assessment unless assigned elsewhere, such as at a school or fire station OR in alternate room at FDC. Risk assessments shall not be conducted in private homes. If scheduled at an offsite location, arrangements need to be made with school or fire station personnel to have private room available to conduct assessment. In general, routine risk assessments take one hour to complete. If there are extenuating circumstances, such as the need to use an Interpreter, arrange for additional assessment time. If possible, text the information back to the parent/guardian reviewing details of assessment date/time/location.
- E. Pre-Risk Assessment Protocol:** Primary YFIS conducting assessment will review Referral and Intake notes prior to assessment and ensure that all necessary documents/forms (and potentially necessary forms, such as Intervention Services referral form) are available. These include:
1. Release of Liability (white copy- CSFD, yellow copy- parent/guardian)
  2. Participation Release (white copy- CSFD, yellow copy- parent/guardian)
  3. FAMILY and YOUTH Risk Survey question/packet
  4. Intervention Services Referral form (may or may not be needed)
  5. Age appropriate Homework Assignment-including Letter of Apology information
  6. Intervention CLASS information, if youth and/or parent are deemed appropriate to attend
  7. Home Fire Safety Checklist
  8. Pens/pads/business cards/misc
  9. Smoke alarms, lock boxes, and CO alarms may be need to be available if deemed necessary at time of assessment.
- F. Risk Assessment schedule:** Prior to arrival time request that FDC front desk staff notify lead YFIS when youth and parent/guardian arrive. Note time of arrival. If the assessment party does not show within 10 minutes of scheduled time, attempt to contact parent/guardian to reschedule. After 3 no-shows to scheduled assessments, CSFD will CLOSE CASE. Lead YFIS assessor will meet youth with their parent/legal guardian at front desk and escort to interview location; this is an excellent time for rapport with youth/family unrelated to purpose of meeting. Seating arrangement for assessment may vary by assessor preference but ideally lead assessor is closet to exit, secondary is seated where they can see youth/parent facial expressions, and youth will be seated where parents/guardians can visibly see their child at all times, even during separate interviews. At no time may CSFD staff be alone with a youth.
- G. Risk Assessment:**
1. **Introduce** everyone present for assessment and their role. If siblings/other youth are present lead assessor should determine if it is appropriate to have youth stay with parent/guardian or sit outside interview area.
  2. Give general **overview** of what to expect from assessment process. Remind both child and parent/guardian that this process is not punitive.
  3. Review FireFactor<sup>2</sup> **documents-** Release of Liability and Participation Release; parent/guardian must sign both before assessment begins.
  4. **Incident review:** allow youth to tell his/her side of story of what occurred in the incident first. Discuss with the youth what they have learned from this incident and what they might do differently next time in that same situation. After youth has shared their narrative, parent/guardian may weigh in.
  5. After incident review, have the youth complete an "assignment" (ie what they have learned so far or draw a picture of the incident and their role) and explain expectations that the youth will sit outside assessment room until called back in. Escort youth to the sitting area.

6. Complete **Family Risk** Assessment with parent/guardian
  7. Exchange location of youth and parent/guardian and complete **Youth Risk** Assessment.
  8. Request parent/guardian rejoin in assessment room and review what the next **intervention steps** will be. If mental/behavioral Intervention services are needed, ensure that the parent/guardian completes the required form.
  9. If youth/parent/guardian is appropriate for FireFactor Intervention group class, provide class details including date, time, class structure, expectations, and participation requirements.
  10. Provide youth with home safety homework to include a letter of apology assignment (their "ticket to class").
  11. If determined during assessment that family home does not have smoke alarms or if a lock box might help with limiting access to matches/lighters provide these at conclusion of assessment.
  12. Review final details and give the family the opportunity to ask questions. Thank youth and adult and escort to exit.
- H. Post-Assessment:** Ensure the assessment notes are complete and a narrative (usually compiled by secondary assessor) is written in a timely manner after risk assessment. Enter assessment data into YFires and AirTable and complete CSFD youth information folder. If a referral to a mental/behavioral professional was made, email the appropriate contact and ask for confirmation when received. All assessment notes, including the narrative, should be included in the mental/behavioral referral. If youth will be attending an Intervention class add to class roster. Place the completed referral/risk assessment folder in Active file. Ensure that all youth/family information is kept CONFIDENTIAL.
- I. INTERVENTION/ FIRE EDUCATION CLASS**
- Intervention classes are conducted for youth who are deemed appropriate after a Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist has conducted the risk assessment. Intervention classes are intended for both youth and their parent/legal guardian; if an adult is unable to be present at the scheduled class the youth will need to reschedule for a time when BOTH parent and youth involved can attend. Under most circumstances, youth under 7 years old will not be appropriate for class as the material and length of course is designed for older youth. If age appropriate and if space allows, siblings may attend.
1. Classes are 2-3 hours and have four distinct sections: Accountability, Fire Safety Education, Parenting education, and Decision making skills. Group classes should be designed to accommodate youth school schedules as well as parent work schedules; usually this entails a weeknight class 5:30pm-8:30pm. Group classes WILL NOT discuss specific details of any incident and only first names for both youth and their parent/guardian should be used.
  2. As was reviewed in risk assessment, youth need to come with completed home safety check, apology letter, and be prepared to take accountability for their part in the incident. Homework/apology letter will be collected at check in.
  3. Ideally youth involved in the same incident will attend different classes; if this is not feasible youth (and their parent/guardians) will be assigned seats and will be separated from other participants who they know.
  4. Start class with introductions, reviews of exits, restrooms, agenda, and class expectations.
  5. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** CSFD Capt Juliet Draper will share (either in person or via video) her story of poor decision making and how these choices impacted her life; immediately following, each youth and their parent/guardian will participate in sharing (without specific incident details) how this fire event has impacted their families and themselves, and some goals etc they have for themselves. Parents/guardians will do the same. After each youth has taken accountability for their part in the incident the Accountability section will be completed.
  6. **YOUTH FIRE EDUCATION and PARENTING SECTIONS:** During this section of the class youth and their parent/guardians will be separated into separate locations; ideally firefighters will be present to lead fire education and answer question youth may have. The Youth section should include how fast fire spreads, the difference between virtual fire and real fire and basic fire science.

The Parenting section can be more discussion-oriented and include what youth are seeing on social media pertaining to the misuse of fire. Both youth and adult sections of the class need to stress the importance of practicing home fire safety.

7. **DECISION MAKING:** Youth and parents/guardians will rejoin together for the last section; youth have now had an opportunity to take accountability for their part in the incident and have learned about fire safety; ideally, the last section of class will be a time to reflect on how similar incidents in the future might be handled differently. (Note: for the current CSFD FireFactor program, burn survivor Rai Henniger will share his inspirational story.)
  8. **CLASS CONCLUSION:** Youth who completed their homework, participated appropriately in class, and have fulfilled all of the requirements of the FireFactor program will receive a Certificate of Completion signed by the Colorado Springs Fire Department Chief. A "ceremony" with each youth coming up front and shaking hands with firefighters and instructors is conducted.
- J. INTERVENTION CLASS DISPOSITION:** After youth have fulfilled all requirements of the Intervention program, records should be updated to reflect the completion of the program. If court/Diversion/school ordered, YFS should notify the appropriate party that the requirements have been met. Close case in physical file and complete YFires and Airtable data entry.
- K. FOLLOW-UP:** If a referral was made to a mental/behavioral health agency, ensure that contact was made and assistance was offered. When feasible, a follow-up call with family 3-4 months post intervention is ideal. Note any progress (or setbacks) the youth has had. Youth may only attend the FireFactor Youth Firesetter Intervention Program ONCE; if there are further incidents the youth is no longer appropriate to attend.
- L. ALTERNATIVE TO FIREFACTOR INTERVENTION CLASS:** Not all youth who misuse fire are appropriate to attend a group FireFactor class, even if the court/Diversion/ school is requiring it. It is the prerogative of the Colorado Spring Fire Department Youth Fire Setter FireFactor program to determine if a youth may attend or not. In some cases, the youth is too young (usually under 7yrs old); in this case a one-on-one fire education class (or classes) may be conducted in lieu of group class. Similar components of the group Intervention class will be included, but in a less formal setting and in much smaller sections. Other youth or their parent/guardians may have shown during the risk assessment (or elsewhere in the process) that they are not willing to be participatory, and thus a group class will not be appropriate, even if required.

# **APPENDIX D**

## **SCARBOROUGH FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

This page intentionally left blank.



*Scarborough Fire Department  
Scarborough, Maine*



## Standard Operating Procedures

<b>Book:</b>	Routine Operations
<b>Chapter:</b>	
<b>Subject:</b>	Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program
<b>Revision Date:</b>	DRAFT PROPOSAL
<b>Approved by:</b>	

### **PURPOSE**

To outline consistent procedures when addressing the behavior of firesetting among juveniles.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

The responsibility to carry out this policy rests with any member of the organization who may encounter a juvenile with firesetting behaviors.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Juvenile Firesetting:** Any child, youth or adolescent who engages in the act of burning/melting anything, (regardless of its value or of their intent) or, who plays with fire for any given reason.

**Juvenile Firesetting Intervention Program:** The program is made up of six components, which provide a continuum of service for any juvenile who comes to the attention of the agency for firesetting behaviors.

**Mission Statement:** “The mission of the Juvenile Firesetting Intervention Program is to reduce fire-related tragedies through assessment, intervention and education.”

**County Intervention Collaborative:** A network of professional jointly addressing the problem and mitigating the risk associated with juvenile firesetting behavior within the community. The professional disciplines represented in the Collaborative include: representative of the fire service; law enforcement; social services; juvenile justice; and school systems.

### **PROCEDURE**

The Juvenile Firesetting Intervention Program is made up of the following six components:

1. Identification
2. Referral / Intake / Release of Information
3. Screening and Safety Considerations
4. Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Review
5. Interventions and Education
6. Evaluation and Follow-up

**IDENTIFICATION:** The point of entry into a firesetter intervention program follows the identification of at risk-juveniles. The earlier the identification is initiated, the better are the chances of successful intervention. Typically, juveniles can be referred from any source including: the fire service, parents, caregivers, and schools, community agencies such as law enforcement, mental health, child protective services, and youth aid programs.

All fire companies are provided a form that is carried on fire apparatus or can be found electronically. It shall be the responsibility of the person in charge to fill out this form and forward it to the Fire Chief either on paper or electronically, when a juvenile is found to be the cause of a fire.

The same form can also be used when families stop into a fire station and self-refer to the program. In these cases, it is also forwarded to the Fire Chief either on paper or electronically, or the information can be left on the Fire Chief's voice mail. It is important to note that the program is not equipped to take immediate action in response to these referrals. A goal has been set to contact each family within 48 hours of receipt or initiation of a referral.

**REFERRAL/INTAKE/RELEASE OF INFORMATION:** When a referral is made, the parent and/or legal guardian is required to sign a Release of Information (ROI) form permitting the program the legal rights to release information to those parties who need to be involved, and which will serve the goal of implementing appropriate interventions for a successful outcome of the case. The ROI form is absolutely critical to the success of the case. It provides the program officials the right to release information received to those persons and/or agencies necessary for intervention. Without it no information may exchange hands, thereby preventing any intervention from taking place and thus wasting the time and energy of the program.

The program must have an intake process that includes the following five basic procedures.

- **Points of Entry** - where the juvenile makes initial contact with the program.
- **Reasonable Response Time** - the best window of opportunity is immediately after the fire.
- **Contact Person(s)** - intake personnel and their availability.
- **Record of Contact - Referral Form** - written or automated record of contact established for all cases. Along with the other information that will be collected, this form offers a descriptive account of the contacts and scheduling with the family. The value is often shown when a family refuses to participate and is referred back to the program again at a later date. The prior refusal is now documented and a paper trail is established.
- **Prioritization of Cases** - methods for responding to urgent cases that require a more rapid intervention.

**SCREENING AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:**

Screening: The main component of the intervention process is screening. The purpose of a screening interview is primarily to gain information for the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) to use in making their determination regarding the type(s) of intervention needed for a favorable outcome in each case. The interview should be conducted in the home of the referred family so that the interviewer(s) have an opportunity to experience the usual environment (living



conditions) of the family. It will also help the individuals being interviewed feel more comfortable and thereby potentially provide more information.

A pool of trained interventionists will perform the screening interviews. **It should be noted that ONLY trained individuals working under the supervision of the Fire Chief will provide this service to citizens. Any other employee encountering this behavior will refer these juveniles in accordance with this guideline.**

The use of the structured screening tool often produces an understanding as to why the juvenile engages in the use of fire (firesetting behavior) and may provide an indication of the likelihood or risk of continued firesetting behavior. Additionally, this tool is helpful in determining the course of action for intervention. The structured screening interview should be the only method of fact finding employed by any program for gaining information that will lead to appropriate intervention strategies established and initiated by the MDT.

In conjunction with education, a formal interview/screening process is also conducted. It forms the foundation for the intervention. This process is intended to help the interventionist determine the motivation behind the fire setting behavior and determine the ultimate needs of the child/family.

Three types of assessment forms are used:

- Parent Interview Form
- Juvenile Interview Form
- Parent Checklist

At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewer may assign some fire safety related responsibility to the child. If necessary, another meeting is scheduled to continue education.

Families will sometimes refuse to participate in the program. The most common reason is denial, on the part of the family, that their child was involved in the firesetting activity. Some parents also claim that the incident was isolated and the discipline provided by the family will remedy the situation. Regardless of the reason, all children brought to the attention of the program must be referred through the identified channels. The Fire Chief may have benefit of information about the family that the family does not disclose initially. **Making a referral does not mean that negative actions or consequences will be directed toward the child and/or family.** The service is designed to aid the family in obtaining solutions to the firesetting behaviors.

Safety: At the time of the screening interview a home fire safety inspection should be conducted to assure a safe environment. The inspection should ensure the installation and proper operation of smoke detectors in each room of the home (except bath and kitchen), clear exit ways, and the reduction and elimination of obvious fire hazards. It can address the removal of combustible clutter, and such fire prevention aspects as securing matches and lighters.

**MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM (MDT) REVIEW:** The multi-disciplinary team is comprised of professionals who are involved with those agencies and departments that are concerned with and/or may provide services to juveniles. It is the MDT's responsibility to

periodically meet to review and evaluate each case screening interview report and matters related to the case; and to identify the level of concern for each case and the best type of intervention(s) necessary to address the behavior. Minimal MDT composition should consist of representatives of the fire services, law enforcement, juvenile court system, mental health services, school systems and a county or local children and youth social service agency.

**INTERVENTIONS AND EDUCATION:**

The goal of the intervention is to determine the child's needs in response to the inappropriate fire use. For children whose behavior seems to stem from thinking errors or lack of information about fire outcomes, education is the most appropriate intervention. When the behavior seems to result from stress, crisis or dysfunction in the child's life, the required intervention services needed may extend to other service providers.

Intervention strategies include the services provided after the interview/screening process. They are decided upon by the MDT and delivered by those departments and agencies designated for that function. For children in need to extended services, the program will assist the family in finding a program or agency best suited to the family's needs. This may range from mental health involvement, child protective services, interaction with school counselors, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) screening, inpatient hospitalization for the child, to family counseling. Parenting classes may be another recommended intervention. The program has established a list of intervention strategies to facilitate services to families. While education would be considered another intervention strategy, it is typically the service best provided by trained fire service educators.

Education is perhaps one of the most critical parts of the Juvenile Firesetting Intervention Program. When children have had an experience with fire, it is crucial that they gain an understanding of why their behavior was inappropriate. This involves pointing out their mistakes and identifying appropriate corrective action.

Many times, the parent may think they have offered direction to their child. The reality is that most have not. Parents visiting the program have usually attempted to educate their children about proper fire use by applying one or more of the following approaches:

- Instilling fear in the child
- Punitive measures only
- Ignoring the problem, fearing ideas will be put into the child's head
- Explaining unrealistic outcomes of firesetting behavior (e.g. if you play with fire, you will be killed; you will go to jail; etc.)

Rarely do parents, whose children experience problems with fire, give a detailed explanation of how and when fire should be used. This should be no surprise since many adults know little more than their children do about the realities of fire.

The program provides fire safety education as an integral part of the interview/screening process. The interventionist begins the educational process during the intake interview with the family.

Intervention Specialists participate in an extensive training program to understand juvenile firesetting behaviors and systems approaches to solutions. They also become familiar with community organizations that can assist in the intervention process when educational intervention does not provide sufficient motivation to discourage future behavior.

The parents are an important part of the educational process. If a parent cannot accompany the child to the interview, the interview will not be performed. Exceptions to mandatory parental attendance will be made in the case of children who are in the custody of the State and whose caseworker feels education will be beneficial to their future placement in a foster home or residential facility.

**EVALUATION/FOLLOW-UP:** Exit from a firesetter intervention program follows the completion and/or adequate implementation of intervention(s) as directed by the MDT. Anyone who exits the program prior to the completion and/or adequate implementation of any intervention(s) fails the program. However, the most typical exit for juveniles is after education and/or referral to an appropriate intervention.

Once a person exits a program it is important that follow-up procedures take place. Follow-up is established so the youth and families understand that the firesetter intervention program will continue to be concerned about their welfare. Follow-ups generally occur:

- 1) Four to six weeks after exit
- 2) A secondary follow-up between six and twelve months after exit.

Follow-ups can be conducted in a number of different ways including telephone calls (most cost-effective and least time-consuming), written contacts, and visits. The content of the follow-up needs also to be considered and may include a standard set of questions.

Evaluation and follow-up is probably the most important aspect of the Juvenile Firesetting Intervention Program. It is the compass that guides the program. The program employs a comprehensive follow-up component that not only questions recidivism, but also critiques its content and delivery. Program evaluation cannot only come from within. The individuals receiving the service must be allowed input as well. The success of the clients, not the opinion of the program management, determines the success of this program.

The program also concludes by delivering the mandatory fire reporting information to the appropriate authorities.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. State of Maine Juvenile Fire Safety & Intervention Protocol
2. FEMA Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist I and II: Leadership Student Manual

You replied on 12/17/2009 8:01 AM.

**Bruce Quint**

**From:** Mike Thurlow  
**To:** Bruce Quint  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** JVFS  
**Attachments:**

**Sent:** Wed 12/16/2009 2:16 PM

Bruce,

I took the time to read through your draft JVFS SOP. It is obvious you put some effort into it, and it is well done. If you would be willing to share your electronic copy I will make some minor formatting changes and incorporate your work into a final draft for the JVFS committee and eventually the SOP committee's review.

Thanks for your work on this,

**SCARBOROUGH FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
246 US ROUTE ONE, SCARBOROUGH, ME 04074  
(207) 883-4342 Ph (207) 730-4270 Fax

*B. Michael Thurlow*  
FIRE CHIEF

Direct Line Fax  
(207) 730-4201 (207) 730-4233  
MTHURL@CI.SCARBOROUGH.ME.US

# **APPENDIX E**

## **MINNESOTA YOUTH FIRE INTERVENTION TEAM (YFIT) STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

This page intentionally left blank.

***Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT)***  
**STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE**

Title:	Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT)
SOP/SOG #:	
Effective Date:	
Approved By:	
Signed:	Date

**1.0 Purpose:**

The purpose of this guide is to provide consistent procedures statewide for fire departments and other stakeholders to follow when addressing youth firesetting and intervention. The YFIT program coordinates local and regional youth-fire intervention teams.

**2.0 Description:**

**2.1 MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention programs and the YFIT is to identify youth who are misusing fire and to provide prompt intervention, including referrals as necessary, to reduce the incidence of youth-set fires.

**2.2 DEFINITIONS**

**Youth Firesetting:** The act of burning, melting, or playing with fire for any reason, regardless of property value or intent, by any child under the age of 18.

**2.2.1 Youth Firesetting Intervention Program:** A program made up of seven components, providing a continuum of service for youth who come to the attention of the agency for firesetting behaviors:

1. Identification
2. Intake
3. Assessment
4. Review
5. Intervention
6. Evaluation
7. Follow-up

**2.2.2 Approved means of information sharing:** Documentation shall be delivered through secure electronic transmission, a secure fax, U.S. Post Office or in person.

**2.2.3 Intervention Taskforce:** A network of professionals who advocate for youth to minimize youth firesetting behavior. Participants may include representatives from the fire service, law enforcement, social services, juvenile justice, mental health agencies, or school systems.

**2.2.4 Youth Firesetting Intervention:** A response to persons under 18 who have set a fire or fires. Intervention includes fire education, related activities, and appropriate referrals to other agencies.

**2.2.5 Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist:** Meeting the criteria of NFPA 1035 chapter 9.

**2.2.6 Youth Firesetting Intervention Program Manager:** Meeting the criteria of NFPA 1035 chapter 10. (See Appendix A)

**2.2.7 Youth Firesetting Prevention:** An educational initiative to prevent future incidents of youth-set fires.

**3.0 Scope:**

The responsibility to follow these guidelines rests with program managers and intervention specialists: The youth fire intervention team is a support system made up of highly trained and experienced intervention specialists. The responding youth-fire intervention team is under the direction of the state youth fire intervention coordinator. Specialists also report to the local fire chief who requests the team. The team works for local authorities to help provide an intervention program for youth firesetters. The team coordinates necessary resources to mitigate youth firesetting in the community. The team will respond at no cost to the requesting agency. The intervention specialist's home jurisdiction maintains responsibility for workers' compensation and liability insurance for their employee. Initial deployment of the Youth Fire Intervention Team should consist of one or two trained specialists.

**4.0 General Procedures:**

The program is made up of the following components:

1. Identification – entry into the program
2. Intake
3. Assessment
4. Review
5. Intervention
6. Evaluation
7. Follow-up

**5.0 Specific Procedures:**

**5.1 Identification**

Youth may be referred by parents, caregivers, school officials, the fire service, law enforcement, mental health services, child protection services, and others.

**5.2 Fire Suppression Officers**

An intervention should not interfere with an investigation. Fires involving youth should be reported as soon as possible to the Minnesota State Duty Officer at 800-422-0798. The duty officer will contact the regional Youth Fire Setter Intervention Coordinator. The Coordinator will then contact the Program Manager in that region. The Program Manager will take responsibility for setting up the intervention with the local fire chief.

The following information (if available) shall be provided for YFIT:

1. A completed, on-scene youth firesetting questionnaire. Fire apparatus should be equipped with the questionnaire. It should also be available on the fire department website.
2. The fire incident report must include the Juvenile Firesetter Module report or identified in the arson module as "age as a factor".
3. Photographs of what was set on fire.
4. Injury or unusual circumstances. If anyone was injured, or unusual circumstances were associated with a youth-set fire, contact the State Duty Officer and request that YFIT be activated immediately to assist with the on-scene interview.

**5.3 Fire Investigators**



An intervention should not interfere with an investigation. Fires involving youth should be reported as soon as possible to the Minnesota State Duty Officer at 800-422-0798. The duty officer will contact the regional Youth Fire Setter Intervention Coordinator. The coordinator will contact the YFPI Program Manager in that region. The Program Manager will take responsibility for setting up the intervention with the local fire chief. The following information (if available) shall be provided to YFIT:

1. A completed, on-scene youth firesetting questionnaire.
2. An investigation report
3. Photographs of what was set on fire.

**5.4 Administrative Staff:**

The Intake Form shall be used when a family stops at a fire station (or calls a fire station) to refer a child to the program. Immediate action will be taken on these types of referrals only if qualified staffing is available at the time of self-referral.

If qualified staff is not available, complete the Intake Form and call the Minnesota State Duty Officer at 800-422-0798. The duty officer will contact the regional Youth Fire Setter Intervention Coordinator. The coordinator will contact the YFPI Program Manager in that region. The Program Manager will take responsibility for setting up the intervention with the local fire chief. The following information shall be provided to YFIT:

1. A completed intake form

**5.5 Youth Firesetting Intervention Program Manager**

A YFPI Program Manager will conduct or assign a Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialists to conduct assessments and assist in making intervention strategy decisions as necessary.

**5.6 Intake**

When initial contact is made, the parent or legal guardian must sign a *Participation Release* form giving the YFPI Program legal rights and responsibilities to share information within our state YFPI network. This information shall be shared only within our network. The release acknowledges that going through a YFPI program does not guarantee the behavior will stop. If the parent refuses to sign the Participation Release form and the referral is a result of a fire call, criminal charging may be required in order to proceed with the intervention. If there was no fire call, the specialist should document the refusal to participate and maintain the record in a secured location with other case files. The value of these records is clear when a family refuses to complete the process and is referred to the program once again (following another incident of firesetting, or perhaps by the court). With proper records, the prior refusal to cooperate is documented and a paper trail is established. Documentation will be considered when establishing an intervention strategy.

**5.6.1** A record of contact, electronic or written, shall be established for all cases. The Intake Form requires a descriptive account of contacts and incident details.

**5.7 Assessment**

The main component of the intervention is the assessment. The assessment tool helps us determine an appropriate intervention strategy.

The Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division recommends using the state-approved forms. These forms are easy to use. Questions are numerically weighted, providing a clear and vetted way of determining the most effective intervention strategy.

It is recommended that two people (one being an intervention specialist and the other being a local fire service or social service representative) conduct interviews and assessments. This may be done in the home of the referred family or in a neutral location in order to gather information about the family condition and lifestyle. The family may feel more “at home” in their home setting, and possibly more forthcoming with information. If only one intervention specialist is available, it is recommended to conduct the interviews at a neutral location — not the home. At no time shall specialists enter a potentially dangerous environment. Personal safety is paramount. Community centers, schools, and libraries are appropriate. In selecting a location, this is important: Do not reward the youth firesetter with a display of fire trucks.

Separate the parent from the juvenile for the screening and assessment process. Go through each section of the tool. If other juveniles are involved with the fire, get their contact information and contact those families to provide intervention services.

Based on assessment scores, the intervention specialist will determine an intervention strategy or first meet with the YFPI team or program manager. Depending on the assessment tool score, the intervention will include fire education and other services as deemed necessary. The parent or guardian should sign an agreement that they will attend the firesetting education program and make a date to meet for the session. If the child is court-ordered to attend and the family fails to meet the terms of the agreement, charges may be filed.

Firesetting prevention education begins during this process. Parents will be advised to eliminate access to ignition devices and provide continuous supervision of the children. Caregivers will be asked to take responsibility *immediately* to eliminate access to lighters and matches — which may include locking them up.

The youth should be given a pre-test to determine the existing level of knowledge before the intervention education session(s).

After leaving the assessment, the intervention specialist will document the findings on the Narrative Form.

If assessment results require involvement of mental health specialists, and the family is already using a mental health professional, an Authorization to Release Confidential Information form must be signed to release information to those parties who need to be involved. “Low risk” program participants will receive fire education and “moderate risk” youths will have a combination of intervention strategies recommended.

### **5.8 Review**

The multi-discipline intervention specialists who make up the local/regional YFPI team should meet on a regular schedule. In order to maintain the highest level of service and effectiveness, case studies should be reviewed, results evaluated, and changes made as needed to maintain the integrity of the program.

### **6.0 Intervention Process:**

The goal of intervention is to respond to the family’s needs and provide referrals and education to stop risky behavior. Just as every child is unique, every intervention will be different. If the firesetting

behavior stems from curiosity, an educational intervention is appropriate. If the behavior stems from stress, crisis or mental health issues, the intervention will involve other service providers. If the behavior is delinquent, a restorative justice portion can be effective. Community Impact Reports are recommended for children older than eight years of age.

After carefully reviewing the assessment notes, intervention strategies shall be determined by the Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist who works on the case. This process may involve consultation with the local YFPI team, the State Fire Marshal Division or other agencies involved with the family, including social or mental health services. The YFI Specialist will help families find the right agencies for children in need of other services.

### 6.1 Education

Firesetting prevention education is one of the most critical parts of the Youth Firesetting Intervention Program. Children who set fires need information so they can understand the consequences of their inappropriate behavior. This involves helping the youth take responsibility for inappropriate behavior and identify *appropriate* behavior.

Fire education should include:

- Rules and Laws
- Fire Statistics and Behavior
- Fire and Burn Prevention
- Fire Safety
- Review and Test
- Evaluations

Fire education should also include a Victim Impact Statement. This portion teaches the student all of the victims (or potential victims) who've been adversely affected by the student's poor choices and behavior. It is important to include ALL victims, as this illustrates the community impact of firesetting behavior. The student should read the impact statement aloud to the class and to his/her parents. This is sometimes uncomfortable for the student, but the exercise is highly affective.

### 6.2 Role of Parents:

Parents or behavioral specialists who aren't familiar with effective intervention strategies may believe they have given useful guidance to a young firesetter. Usually, parents have attempted to educate their child about fire in one of the following ways:

- Instilling fear in the child
- Using punishment
- Ignoring the problem to avoid "putting ideas into the child's head"
- Warning of unrealistic outcomes (you will be killed; you will go to jail)
- Giving the child misinformation about fire

Rarely do parents of youth firesetters provide their children with detailed instructions on how and when fire *should* be used. Most adults don't know much more about fire than children do, but they are an important part of the child's education process. Parents should accompany children through the process, sitting with them in the classroom and participating in one-on-one education. This will reinforce the whole family's understanding of fire and firesetting behavior, and help them learn to prevent inappropriate use of fire.

### **6.3 Specialist Training**

There is extensive training for Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialists available through the [National Fire Academy](#) and [State Fire Marshal Division](#). This training addresses firesetting typologies and intervention approaches. The specialists also need to be familiar with other community organizations that can assist in the intervention process when education alone is not enough.

### **7.0 Evaluation**

Exit from the firesetting intervention program typically occurs after the education session is completed, a post-test is passed and (if necessary) a referral is made to an outside agency. Juveniles who exit the program prior to completion fail the program. Failure should be documented in the juvenile's file. It is very important to have successful participants fill out evaluation forms upon completion. Their feedback provides insight into how the program can be improved.

### **8.0 Follow-up**

When a participant exits the program, a follow-up procedure is essential. Follow-up was established to assure the youth and the family that YFPI specialists and other agencies continue to be concerned and supportive. Follow-ups can be conducted by telephone, in writing, or during personal visits. Follow-ups should be conducted six and twelve months after the intervention is completed. The follow-up form should be used to document progress. The follow-up also serves as an evaluation. If there has been behavior change (no more firesetting behavior, practicing fire prevention and fire safety) then the intervention can be considered successful.

### **8.1 Unusual Circumstances**

At any time throughout the process, the specialist may encounter one of several unusual circumstances which may require extra resources or specific actions. These may include (but are not limited to): Child Abuse (Sexual, Physical or Psychological), Non-English speaking students or parents, students with physical or mental impairment, or dangerous situation. Under no conditions shall a specialist attempt to provide service that is beyond his/her training.

### **8.2 Child Abuse**

All cases of suspected abuse shall be immediately reported to law enforcement personnel. This is required by Minnesota State Law. A specialist who has questions regarding a case should contact their county's social services department, an officer in their police or fire department or the State Fire Marshal Division.

### **8.3 Non-English Speaking Students/Families**

Every attempt should be made to find an interpreter to aid in the process. If this is not possible, follow your cities policies. It is recommended to have these services available ahead of time in case this should happen.

### **8.4 Students with physical/mental impairment**

Every effort shall be made to accommodate students and family members with physical/mental impairments. All guidelines within the federal ADA (American Disability Act) shall be adhered to.

### **9.0 Recidivism**

Some children will continue to set fires. These children need more help from social services, referral to juvenile justice, or mental health treatment. They may need to be formally charged in order to stop the

behavior. A child should not go through the program twice, but should be referred to an appropriate mental health agency.

**10.0 Documentation**

Juvenile data is protected by law. Every contact established during the case should be documented in the file with name(s), date, time, and reason for contact. Files may include a police report, a fire report, a contact form, an assessment form, a knowledge test, a privacy form, a release form, and a narrative. *Youth firesetting intervention files shall be stored securely and accessed only by the program manager or intervention specialist handling the case.* Data on all cases must be entered into [Image Trend](#), other NFIRS compatible software, or submitted directly to the State Fire Marshal Division on the incident reporting form.

**11.0 Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of all program participants to sign the Minnesota YFIT Memorandum of Understanding (See Appendix B) and to agree to follow this guideline for youth fire interventions through this program.

The State Fire Marshal Division will keep the Memorandums of Understanding on file.



## ***Appendix A***

### ***Youth Fire Intervention Team Program Manager***

**NFPA 1035, Chapter 10 includes the following expectations:**

#### **Administration:**

- A YFIT Program Manager must follow the YFIT Standard Operating Guidelines in order to support program goals and regional community needs (10.2.1).
- YFIT Program Managers develop program budgets that cover specific procedures, define program needs, and list existing and potential revenue sources so that capital, operating, and personnel costs are determined and justified. (10.2.2)
- Youth firesetting cases are referred to YFIT Program Managers so that intakes and assessments are conducted according to program policies. (10.2.3)
- YFIT Program Managers supervise specialists, collecting data, doing performance evaluations, and providing continuous feedback and direction. (10.2.4)
- YFIT Program Managers maintain records and case files, address legal issues, track case progress, and evaluate program effectiveness through follow-up data collected from specialists. They report on each case in [Image Trend](#) or directly to the [State YFPI Coordinator](#). (10.2.5)

#### **Planning & Development**

- The interagency network is essential. YFIT Program Managers build teams of inter-agency representatives; there are interagency agreements and protocols that establish roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication of services. Regular team meetings keep participants involved. (10.3.1)
- YFIT Program Managers will use [forms](#) as outlined in the SOG. (10.3.2)

#### **Education & Implementation**

- The YFIT Program Manager determines a training program for team members, making sure that intakes, interviews and interventions that include education, referral, follow-up and evaluation will be successfully completed. The YFIT Program Manager also schedules training and education sessions. (10.3.3) Many of these skills can be learned in the National Fire Academy two-day YFPI Specialist course that is available from the [State Fire Marshal Division](#).
- As YFIT Program Managers, you select sample ideas from the Minnesota Model or other resources to create public awareness, or develop your own program to be sure

community members are aware of youth firesetting, understand the problem, and know about intervention resources. (10.3.4)

**Evaluation**

- YFIT Program Managers evaluate program results using records, case files, and feedback provided by YFPI Specialists to evaluate program effectiveness and implement changes necessary to meet team goals. (10.5.1-10.5.2)

The State YFPI Coordinator is available to handle your questions:

Deputy Fire Marshal Kathi Osmonson 651-201-7220

[Kathi.osmonson@state.mn.us](mailto:Kathi.osmonson@state.mn.us)

Successful YFIT Program Managers make the state of Minnesota a safer place.

Appendix B

**Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT) Memorandum of Understanding**

**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between

Department name (enter name here)

and

Minnesota Youth Firesetting Intervention Team

**Background**

In 2013 there were about 300 identified youth-set-fires involving about 500 children. It is imperative that children who start fires receive intervention services to stop the dangerous behavior. A team approach will help ensure that these children are identified and helped.

**Purpose**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets the terms and understandings between the fire department and the YFITs to facilitate firesetting intervention services and formalize fire department participation in the YFIT program.

**Agreement**

The partners signed agree to follow the Youth Fire Intervention Team Standard Operating Guidelines as they are amended from time-to-time.

**Duration**

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from both parties. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the partners' authorized officials and will remain in effect until terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. Regarding termination: in the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials, this MOU shall remain in effect.

**Contact Information**

Partner name  
Partner representative  
Position  
Address  
Telephone  
Fax



Appendix B

E-mail

Partner name  
Partner representative  
Position  
Address  
Telephone  
Fax  
E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
(Partner signature)  
(Partner name, organization, position)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
(Partner signature)  
(Partner name, organization, position)



## ***Appendix A***

### ***Youth Fire Intervention Team Program Manager***

**NFPA 1035, Chapter 10 includes the following expectations:**

#### **Administration:**

- A YFIT Program Manager must follow the YFIT Standard Operating Guidelines in order to support program goals and regional community needs (10.2.1).
- YFIT Program Managers develop program budgets that cover specific procedures, define program needs, and list existing and potential revenue sources so that capitol, operating, and personnel costs are determined and justified. (10.2.2)
- Youth firesetting cases are referred to YFIT Program Managers so that intakes and assessments are conducted according to program policies. (10.2.3)
- YFIT Program Managers supervise specialists, collecting data, doing performance evaluations, and providing continuous feedback and direction. (10.2.4)
- YFIT Program Managers maintain records and case files, address legal issues, track case progress, and evaluate program effectiveness through follow-up data collected from specialists. They report on each case in [Image Trend](#) or directly to the [State YFPI Coordinator](#). (10.2.5)

#### **Planning & Development**

- The interagency network is essential. YFIT Program Managers build teams of interagency representatives; there are interagency agreements and protocols that establish roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication of services. Regular team meetings keep participants involved. (10.3.1)
- YFIT Program Managers will use [forms](#) as outlined in the SOG. (10.3.2)

#### **Education & Implementation**

- The YFIT Program Manager determines a training program for team members, making sure that intakes, interviews and interventions that include education, referral, follow-up and evaluation will be successfully completed. The YFIT Program Manager also schedules training and education sessions. (10.3.3) Many of these skills can be learned in the National Fire Academy two-day YFPI Specialist course that is available from the [State Fire Marshal Division](#).
- As YFIT Program Managers, you select sample ideas from the Minnesota Model or other resources to create public awareness, or develop your own program to be sure

community members are aware of youth firesetting, understand the problem, and know about intervention resources. (10.3.4)

**Evaluation**

- YFIT Program Managers evaluate program results using records, case files, and feedback provided by YFPI Specialists to evaluate program effectiveness and implement changes necessary to meet team goals. (10.5.1-10.5.2)

The State YFPI Coordinator is available to handle your questions:

Deputy Fire Marshal Kathi Osmonson 651-201-7220

[Kathi.osmonson@state.mn.us](mailto:Kathi.osmonson@state.mn.us)

Successful YFIT Program Managers make the state of Minnesota a safer place.

Appendix B

**Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT) Memorandum of Understanding**

**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between

Department name (enter name here)

and

Minnesota Youth Firesetting Intervention Team

**Background**

In 2013 there were about 300 identified youth-set-fires involving about 500 children. It is imperative that children who start fires receive intervention services to stop the dangerous behavior. A team approach will help ensure that these children are identified and helped.

**Purpose**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets the terms and understandings between the fire department and the YFITs to facilitate firesetting intervention services and formalize fire department participation in the YFIT program.

**Agreement**

The partners signed agree to follow the Youth Fire Intervention Team Standard Operating Guidelines as they are amended from time-to-time.

**Duration**

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from both parties. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the partners' authorized officials and will remain in effect until terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. Regarding termination: in the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials, this MOU shall remain in effect.

**Contact Information**

Partner name  
Partner representative  
Position  
Address  
Telephone  
Fax

Appendix B

E-mail

Partner name  
Partner representative  
Position  
Address  
Telephone  
Fax  
E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
(Partner signature)  
(Partner name, organization, position)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
(Partner signature)  
(Partner name, organization, position)

This page intentionally left blank.

# **APPENDIX F**

## **LOCAL AND STATEWIDE EXAMPLES FOR ACTIVITY 6.1**

This page intentionally left blank.



## LOCAL YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM

### ACTIVITY 6.1 (Example)

#### **Part 1: Explaining Your Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program's Existing State and Developing a Vision for the Future**

##### **Background**

The Mason Area Fire Authority (MAFA) was formed in 1980 to provide fire and emergency medical services (EMS) to the city of Mason (population 30,000) and three surrounding townships (Maple Grove, Blue Blossom and Centerville). The combined population of Mason and the townships is approximately 51,000. Mason and the townships are all part of Fulton County with a collective population of 72,000. The MAFA employs 30 full-time employees and has an additional paid on-call force of 40 members.

Mason is an old city with aging infrastructure. It has a limited tax base and includes a high number of impoverished households with many children. In turn, the three townships served by the MAFA represent growing communities that, due to a larger tax base, have more amenities.

##### **Existing state of youth firesetting prevention and intervention program**

The MAFA once enjoyed a robust fire and life safety outreach program. The MAFA had a full-time staff member dedicated to organizing fire and life safety efforts that were performed by both full-time and paid on-call staff. This included a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program which, according to old records, served approximately 10 firesetting youths annually.

Unfortunately, the recession of 2008 drastically impacted resources available to the MAFA. Staffing levels fell, and the fire and life safety program went dormant. As economic conditions improved, staffing levels rebounded, but sadly the fire and life safety efforts to a great extent did not.

The post-COVID-19 environment has brought renewed interest in the MAFA fire and life safety effort. The authority was able to reinstate the fire and life safety position, and school programs are again active.

Six months ago the fire and life safety staff member began getting requests to assist with youth firesetting situations. These incidents were being reported by responding fire officers and state fire marshals investigating fires. While most of the incidents (eight) were in Mason itself, four occurred in the townships.

Acting on need, the fire and life safety staff member explored past records associated with MAFA's youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. They found that a partnership once existed between the authority, social services and the county mental health authority. However, the last documented activity of the partnership was 2012. As such, the existing state of

the MAFA youth firesetting prevention and intervention program would be classified as once robust but now nonexistent.

### **Aspired state for the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program**

Based on the occurrence of youth firesetting incidents, there is a need to rejuvenate the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program once led by the MAFA. The fire and life safety staff member could serve as team leader.

It is the vision of the (future) team leader to reconstruct a task force comprised of community-based stakeholders who develop an active youth firesetting prevention and intervention program dedicated to preventing youth firesetting behaviors and intervening effectively when they do occur.

## **Part 2: Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Task Force Composition — Building or Enhancing Your Team**

### **The lead agency**

Step 1 of Part 2 called for the identification of resources that the student's organization (likely the fire department) brings to the table in terms of wisdom, wealth and work (three W's) that can be invested into the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program as a task force member.

It is proposed that the MAFA becomes the lead agency for the task force, and the fire and life safety staff member initially serves as the team leader.

Resources the MAFA can initially offer include:

- Training a staff member so they possess the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) to function as a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program manager and task force leader.
- Working collaboratively with the state fire marshal's office to help determine the extent of the youth firesetting problem in the MAFA area.
- Providing staff that are interested in working within a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- Researching past activity of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention group to identify previous members and suggest new stakeholders.

- Being the lead initial recruiting agency to build a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.
- Serving as an initial lead training agency to educate stakeholders on best practices to prevent and intervene in youth firesetting situations.
- Providing meeting space for the task force.

### **Primary stakeholders**

Step 2 in Part 2 is dedicated to the primary stakeholders whose participation will be essential to building, enhancing or rejuvenating the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force. The following section will identify why each stakeholder is being considered, plus the three W's each can offer.

Research indicates the previous group working to address youth firesetting included the MAFA, Fulton County Social Services and the Fulton County Mental Health Authority.

Since successful prevention and intervention of firesetting behaviors involves a collaborative community-based approach, the following primary stakeholders would make logical partners on a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force:

The MAFA (was previously outlined and will likely be the lead organization of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force).

The State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) is an important stakeholder to engage early in the process of forming a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force. First, the SFMO investigates fires within the MAFA jurisdiction and has the power of arrest and authority to file charges with the state's attorney's office against firesetting youths who are at or above the state age of accountability, which is 7. Second, they host the state fire incident portal where National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) data are fed from local fire agency Records Management Systems (RMSs). In terms of wisdom, wealth and work, the SFMO has a staff member dedicated to incident reporting who has already been contacted and is willing to help the MAFA designee learn how to better report incidents of youth firesetting. They can also help the MAFA enhance their RMS so that incidents where an actual fire did not occur (such as fire experimentation by a youth), but intervention is needed, get tracked.

Fulton County Social Services is a primary stakeholder because of their direct interaction with low-income and high-risk families. The office has two distinct branches that would bring work, wealth and wisdom to a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

- The Office of Children and Youth (OCY) is a component of social services that investigates child neglect and abuse. While the branch does not formally file criminal charges against adults, they work closely with the state's attorney who can. Most OCY personnel have tenure with the office, and their reputation is excellent. The branch is known for its ability to apply services fairly and expediently. Their presence on a task force would be essential as some families may need a push to attend intervention classes specific to firesetting situations.
- The Office of Social Services (OSS) is the unit that helps underserved, low-income and high-risk families obtain assistance with support resources such as referrals to allied agencies; food, housing and transportation vouchers; along with parenting support education. Like the OCY, the OSS has an excellent reputation (specifically in Mason proper) among at-risk families.

Fulton County District Attorney's Office is the legal authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) for criminal proceedings in the county. The office works well with local police, fire and social services staff in collaboratively addressing youth-related incidents. The lead state's attorney is a former school resources officer that understands the need for proactive services that help youths make positive informed decisions.

Fulton Area Unified Police Authority is the local police department that serves the MAFA service area. The agency is a primary stakeholder for the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force for three reasons: 1.) They interact with youths in the community daily and are often the first to discover a youth firesetting incident. 2.) They have three school resource officers who enjoy stellar relationships with students and school officials alike. 3.) The police chief is very proactive and wants additional collaboration with the MAFA on community-based endeavors.

Fulton County Mental Health Authority is the agency that provides community-based mental health services within the MAFA response area. The agency has programs that support families with children in need of behavioral and mental health services but currently it is unknown to what extent. An optimal situation would be for the agency to serve as a member of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force to consult on how behavioral and mental health services could become available to firesetting youth and their families.

Fulton County Public Schools is a primary stakeholder because of their direct engagement with primary and secondary school-age children. The schools reinstated their fire and life safety programming after the pandemic subsided and again welcome MAFA staff as allied partners. The fire and life safety education staff member has an excellent relationship with the school system. In terms of resources, a key contribution would be helping to select and/or create appropriate lesson plans that support the prevention of youth firesetting. Presenting the lessons in tandem with MAFA staff may also be a possibility.

The main reason why the previous youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force dissolved was likely a combination of the loss of resources due to the economy, sudden staff retirements within the MAFA, lack of succession planning and a national pandemic.

A key action item that will be listed later is that the fire and life safety staff member should initiate personal contact with each of the former youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force member agencies to determine their interest in rejuvenating the group.

### **Secondary stakeholders**

Step 3 in Part 2 pertains to the secondary stakeholders that may be considered to assist with rejuvenation of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

Public school Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is a lead consideration for secondary stakeholder because of their support to the overall school system. While some communities' PTAs have struggled to maintain strength, they have not in the MAFA area. The PTAs at both MAFA's primary and secondary schools have robust participation and substantial budgets to support student/teacher/school needs. Of great interest is the secondary school PTA's continuing support to help with the behavioral and mental health wellness of its students.

Fulton Area Community Foundation is a community-based trust consortium dedicated to managing the distribution of funds from benevolent individuals who directed their estate remains be reinvested into community service. The foundation manages several trusts dedicated to supporting the advancement of youth. Investigation should take place to see if the foundation may be a likely avenue of support to a youth firesetting prevention and intervention effort.

Maxwell Publishing is a family-owned printing business specializing in book printing. The organization is a major supporter of youth-related projects and often prints items for nonprofit groups at no or low cost.

Greater Mason Property Owners Association is a group of property owners whose membership is comprised of people who own rental properties in the greater Mason area. While this group can be outspoken and sometimes abrasive, it has strong political influence with local elected officials and other policymakers. Membership is strong, and the group is always interested in ways they can mitigate risk to their investments. The group has been known to support initiatives that reduce crime.

Mason Area Housing Authority (MAHA) manages all public housing occupancies within the MAFA service area. There are six large complexes in Mason and a spattering of two- and three-unit dwellings throughout the township areas. The MAHA has a reputation of being a tough but fair overseer of public housing. Incoming tenants are educated on housing policies, and sanctions are imposed for violations. Statistics support reduced crime in and around the housing complexes due to the MAHA culture of safety. The MAHA would likely be interested in assisting the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

Allied Neighborhoods First (ANF) is a group comprised of the six neighborhood associations in Mason. The group meets quarterly to discuss collective issues involving their associations. As with the property owner group, this group enjoys influence with local elected officials and other policymakers. The police department has a staff officer assigned to each of the six associations,

and the police chief attends the quarterly meeting of the collective groups. While the group does not have a large budget, they represent an opportunity to educate those active in neighborhoods on the prevention and intervention of youth firesetting.

Once primary stakeholders are engaged as a task force, it will be a team decision on what secondary agencies will ultimately be contacted to assist the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

### **Potential missing or nonexistent resources**

Step 4 in Part 2 called for reflecting on the local resources the student does not have access to, and identifying any agencies or groups key to a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force that either don't exist in the locality or cannot/will not be able to assist. It also asked for suggestions on how modifications could be made to compensate for the lack of these local resources, such as combining stakeholder services or potentially doing without them.

At this early point in rejuvenation of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force, it is unknown what resources (external to the MAFA) we have or do not have. Investigating the interest from past group members/primary stakeholders will likely provide answers. A challenge that can be predicted is getting agencies to provide extensive levels of support as every one of them is faced with budget constraints and staffing shortfalls. Hence, the task force approach makes good sense with the theme of "We can do a lot with a little from everyone."

### **Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and trends analysis summary**

Step 5 in Part 2 engaged student groups in a discussion of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and trends (SWOTT) common to the development, enhancement or rejuvenation of a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. The following is a summary of the SWOTT for the MAFA youth firesetting prevention and intervention:

#### Strengths:

- Full-time MAFA staff member dedicated to community risk reduction and trained in youth firesetting prevention and intervention.
- Proactive fire chief that supports community risk reduction.
- Fire department staff interested in helping with youth firesetting prevention and intervention.

#### Weaknesses:

- Dated and incomplete materials left over from former youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.
- Loss of resources and inactivity resulted in loss stakeholder engagement.
- MAFA is not doing what they could be doing to enhance RMS/NFIRS.

Opportunities:

- Original primary stakeholder groups still exist and are active in community.
- Tax base strong within the townships.
- Several promising secondary stakeholders.

Threats:

- Availability of primary stakeholders to engage due to available resources/workloads.
- Large areas of resource-challenged residents in the city of Mason.

Trends:

- NFA peers cite issues with their NFIRS reporting and RMS reliability.
- Youth firesetting cases are becoming more complex.
- Staffing challenges within organizations are common everywhere.
- Fire departments are becoming reengaged with youth firesetting prevention and intervention.

**Part 3: Evaluating and/or Proposing Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Components and Administrative Tools**

Step 1 of Part 3 calls for students to define the existing state of their youth firesetting prevention and intervention program's primary components (if they have a program). The components include:

- Youth firesetting identification mediums.
- Intake process.
- Interview/screening component.
- Intervention services.
- Follow-up process.
- Overall evaluation of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

The pre-course assignment for the NFA youth firesetting prevention and intervention program directed everyone to research their local youth firesetting problem and what the organization/community was doing about it. It further called for organizations with a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program to come prepared to discuss its existing state.

As stated in Part 1 of this assignment, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force/program that once served the MAFA area is somewhere between dormant and nonexistent. The remnants of a dated youth firesetting prevention and intervention program handbook were located, and the following was noted:

1. Youth firesetting identification mediums: There is nothing listed in the handbook pertinent to the youth firesetting identification mediums. This should be developed once a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force is constructed.
2. Intake process: The policy needs to be rewritten as staff and contacts have changed through the years. It states a 72-hour callback window to those requesting services, and that is too long a time frame.
3. Interview/screening component: There is a very old (and lengthy) screening tool that appears to have been developed by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) decades ago. Based on what has been learned in the National Fire Academy (NFA) “Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention” (YFPI) class, the policies/best practices for interviewing and screening need to be rewritten by the MAFA lead staff member in collaboration with new task force member agencies.
4. Intervention services: The old youth firesetting prevention and intervention handbook has a list of participating task force agencies but lacks a description of what each agency provided. This needs review and revision once a task force is assembled.
5. Follow-up process: The old policy calls for a one-year follow-up to occur on each youth firesetting case. This seems too long a time frame. Also, there is no policy or guidance to follow on what should be done during a follow-up visit (or contact) with a firesetting youth and their family/caregiver. This will need to be developed.
6. Overall evaluation of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program: Nothing exists. The fire and life safety staff member will be attending the NFA “Demonstrating Your Community Risk Reduction Program’s Worth” (DYCRRPW) course and focusing on this issue during that experience.

Step 3 of Part 3 calls for defining the existing state of the student’s youth firesetting prevention and intervention program’s administrative tools (if they have them) that support their overall program to include:

- Staffing to deliver program services.
- Training program for fire department and partner agencies.
- Program budget and ancillary resources to support the program.
- Data management protocols.
- Program marketing.
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) and standard operating guidelines (SOGs).
- Memoranda of understanding (MOUs).
- Youth firesetting prevention and intervention handbook.



As with the program components, what remains of the administrative tools to support the rejuvenation of the MAFA area youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force is weak at best.

**Staffing:** Delivery of program services should not be an issue with the MAFA. The chief will likely support the fire and life safety staff member to serve as the initial team leader for the program. Multiple fire department staff have already expressed interest in learning more about youth firesetting prevention and intervention. The staffing challenge will likely come from the primary stakeholder agencies who are approached to participate.

**Training:** Fire department and partner agencies will be another role played by the fire and life safety staff member. They will lead the development and present training to the fire department. It is also planned to have a second MAFA staff member attend the NFA YFPI course. Once primary stakeholders are engaged, they will receive training on youth firesetting prevention and intervention from the fire department. In turn, the stakeholder agencies will provide reciprocal training to the fire department and other stakeholder groups on their specific role as part of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

**Budget and resources to support the program:** May be somewhat of a challenge and take time to secure. While the fire department will support staff to function within the program, they do not have a budget to provide services such as social and mental/behavioral health. In addition, the fire department does not have authority to adjudicate firesetting youth or require legal guardians to participate with intervention services. Hence the rationale for a task force approach.

**Data management protocols:** Will be established with help from the SFMO. As explained in Part 1, the SFMO is the AHJ for fire incident reporting throughout the state. The MAFA enjoys an excellent relationship with the SFMO, and they have already agreed to help with data collection and supportive education on how to build/secure both demographic/case information pertinent to youth firesetting. A policy will follow as the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program is constructed.

**Program marketing:** Will be a job the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force builds once it is in place. The MAFA enjoys an excellent relationship with local news media outlets, so program marketing should not present a major challenge.

**SOPs/SOGs:** Will be another task that will be handled by the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force. While the existing remnants of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program handbook include some guidelines, they are dated and likely not practical in today's environment.

**MOU:** Same as above.

**Youth firesetting prevention and intervention handbook:** Will be reconstructed by the task force.

#### **Part 4: Developing a Draft Action/Evaluation Plan: Home Community Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program**

The final component of Activity 6.1 is the development of a draft action/evaluation plan for the student's youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. The action plan begins at the point where the student is nearing completion of the NFA YFPI six-day course and ascends through a 12- to 18-month period. The objectives are listed in ascending order.

1. Within two weeks of returning to work, the fire and life safety staff person will meet with the MAFA fire chief to present a draft action/evaluation plan on moving forward with rejuvenation of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Evaluation measure: record of meeting.

2. Within one month, the fire and life safety staff person will receive confirmation from MAFA senior administration as to the level of internal resources that initially can be invested into a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Evaluation measure: documentation of support.

3. Within two months, the MAFA fire chief will designate the fire and life safety staff person as the team leader for youth firesetting prevention and intervention because of their KSAs to function as a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program manager and task force leader.

Evaluation measure: documentation of designation.

4. Within four months, the fire and life safety staff person will work collaboratively with the SFMO and determine the extent of the youth firesetting problem in the MAFA area.

Evaluation measure: statistical reports.

5. Within five months, the fire and life safety staff person will recruit at least five other MAFA members who are interested in working within a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Evaluation measure: documentation of interest.

6. Within six months, the internal MAFA youth firesetting prevention and intervention work group will research past activity of the former youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force to identify previous members and suggest new stakeholders.

Evaluation measure: summary of findings.

7. Within seven months, the fire and life safety staff person will meet with organizations identified as primary stakeholders to recruit members for the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

Evaluation measure: record of meetings.

8. Within eight months, the first meeting of the rejuvenated youth firesetting prevention and intervention community-based task force will be held.

Evaluation measure: documentation in youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force minutes.

9. Within nine months, an organization (likely the MAFA) will be designated as the lead youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force member.

Evaluation measure: documentation in youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force minutes.

10. Within 10 months, the internal MAFA youth firesetting prevention and intervention work group will have provided awareness training to all fire department personnel about the extent of the local youth firesetting problem, prevention/intervention strategies, progress on the development of a task force and the fire department's role in the overall effort.

Evaluation measure: documentation of training.

11. Within 11 months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force organizations will have trained one another on the services that each will provide pertinent to youth firesetting prevention and intervention.

Evaluation measure: documentation of training.

12. Within 12 months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force will have collaboratively developed the components of the program and administrative tools to support them.

Evaluation measure: documentation of program components and administrative tools.

13. Within 13 months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force will have approved SOGs/SOPs, including MOUs and legal agreements.

Evaluation measure: documentation of SOGs/SOPs and MOUs.

14. Within 14 months, resources will be in place to sustain the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program for at least one year.

Evaluation measure: documentation of resource commitments.

15. Within 14 months, members of the MAFA, in conjunction with local school officials, will have developed/implemented a youth firesetting prevention and intervention prevention component to be taught by classroom teachers with support from fire department members.

Evaluation measure: documentation of the program package.

16. Within 15 months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force will oversee pilot testing of the program with a cadre of no greater than six families.

Evaluation measure: documentation of the pilot delivery/results.

17. Within 16 months, a marketing strategy will be in place to educate the community on best practices to prevent and intervene in youth firesetting situations.

Evaluation measure: documentation of the marketing strategy.

18. Within 18 months, the Mason Area youth firesetting prevention and intervention program will be fully operational and delivering comprehensive services to the community.

Evaluation measure: evidence and evaluation of program activity/impact.

## STATEWIDE YOUTH FIRESETTING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM

### ACTIVITY 6.1 (Example)

#### **Part 1: Explaining Your Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program's Existing State and Developing a Vision for the Future**

##### **Existing state of program**

The state of \_\_\_\_\_ does not currently have a state level/statewide youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. However, we do currently have multiple independent programs working throughout the state. The state also has a robust fire prevention program that is supported on the state level by the state Department of Fire Services (DFS).

##### **Aspired vision for youth firesetting prevention and intervention program**

The vision is to create a state level/statewide youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Key initial leaders of a statewide program would be the (state) DFS. The SFMO would act as a clearinghouse and support system to the program.

Initial program leaders would engage a task force of stakeholders to include the fire service, law enforcement, juvenile justice, educators, private business and representatives from organizations throughout the state that have successfully established programs. Ultimately, the DFS would serve as the central data repository for the program. The department would also maintain lists of current youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs and allied resources such as mental health, social service, etc., for referral purposes.

A longer-term goal would be to develop an approved youth firesetting prevention and intervention education and intervention program that local jurisdictions can implement while feeding data to a statewide repository. Ideally, it would be desirable to foster a funding mechanism such as a grant process to support startup programs.

## **Part 2: Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Task Force Composition — Building or Enhancing Your Team**

### **Resources your agency can provide**

The DFS serves as the primary statewide agency for fire service-related matters. This includes training, education, hazardous materials and policy/fire codes.

The DFS can provide information in the form of analytical data and suggested best practices for policy and curriculum. Our organization has the resources to provide financial assistance through state grants, and we can provide dedicated people to this cause.

As a landing spot for statewide data, the DFS will be able to provide statistical analysis back to our communities in the form of youth firesetting trends and success (or lack thereof) our youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs are facilitating.

### **The primary stakeholders**

In the development stage of our program, there are multiple primary stakeholders who will hold a position on our youth firesetting prevention and intervention taskforce. These stakeholders will have a voice in the direction of this program and provide a measurable contribution based on their identified field of work.

In addition to key fire service groups that already have functioning programs, three stakeholder groups should be invited to join the youth firesetting prevention and intervention taskforce:

- The Department of Education can provide real-world advice and guidance when it comes to learning modalities and primary/secondary prevention curriculum development.
- The Department of Mental Health can be a conduit to mental health services and guidance. They may also be able to provide avenues to incorporate nonclinical mental health education into our program.
- The local Department of Social Services can provide an access point to general social services for an entire family unit. The expectation for this relationship would include access to programs to benefit the family and general counseling services to provide the involved youth an opportunity to learn healthy coping skills.

Working with DHSS could create opportunities to provide additional assistance to firesetting youths and their families. DHSS provides services at a community level that helps individuals and families make progress toward achieving self-sufficiency through food assistance, early education, fuel assistance, workforce development, etc.

## The secondary stakeholders

While not intended to have a decision-making seat on a youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force, there are several secondary stakeholders that should be considered for consultation/requests for assistance.

- Department of Corrections (DOC) has a production service that makes furniture and signs, embroiders clothing, and produces print material. A partnership with DOC would be beneficial to help produce all print materials needed for the program to include flyers, brochures, forms, etc.
- Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR): State fire control falls under the DCR and is the state's forestry firefighting service. Many of the resources and experience discussed to this point are more geared towards fires set on residential/educational properties. Outdoor fires, however, are often where experimentation/thrill-seeking fires may occur. By involving state fire control, our task force would get not only a new perspective on youth firesetting behavior, but also a new perspective on fire safety (in this case, outdoor fire safety).
- Property Insurance Underwriting Association (PIUA) provides basic property insurance on eligible property for applicants who have been unable to gain access to insurance through the voluntary market. PIUA has a long and generous history with the SFMO. They have funded an ignitable liquid and explosive detection canine program for many years. The partnership could be expanded, and they may be able to offer financial assistance to youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs. PIUA may also be interested in providing an educational component, in that they insure properties and could provide guidance on how to avoid property damage through various preventative measures.
- Shriner's Children's Hospital is a pediatric specialty hospital research and teaching center. It is the only burn center verified by the American Burn Association that is strictly for children. This would truly be a special relationship for our proposed task force to foster. The Shriner's hospital could provide information on burn injuries and education on fire safety in general. In efforts to prevent youth burn injuries, they may be interested in assisting with financial support and help with marketing through their outreach programs. They could even be considered for a hospital-based youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

## Potential challenges to moving forward — SWOTT analysis

Step 4 in Part 2 directed students to identify resource challenges that may be faced when developing, enhancing or rejuvenating the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program. The following integrates the summary of challenges into an overview of the small group discussion related to each personal SWOTT analysis.

Strengths:

The DFS has multiple staff interested in helping to develop a statewide youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force. The interested group also includes members of the SFMO. These staff are completing the NFA six-day YFPI course.

Weaknesses:

Funding will most certainly be a serious challenge as there will be competition for priorities for both implementation and funding of this effort.

Additionally, the current overload on both the mental/behavioral health and social services industry presents a significant challenge to overcome. For this reason, the lead agencies for the proposed task force need to identify the key leaders from these agencies to ask for assistance, be clear what support they are asking for, and identify what benefit the support agency might see as the result of joining a partnership.

Opportunities:

While securing community resources that would be a challenge, a great opportunity to explore would be partnerships with the professional sports franchises located in the state. Both organizations are well-respected for their philanthropic efforts. Either of these organizations could potentially hold events and possibly provide financial support, marketing and other contributions. Either team could provide a spokesperson who would serve as a public advocate on behalf of not only the statewide program, but on addressing the dangers and challenges associated with juvenile firesetting. The challenge would be competing for their interest and support.

Threats:

There exist several challenges to launching a youth firesetting prevention and intervention statewide program. First and foremost, the state fire marshal is the ranking official that must agree to become the lead agency for a statewide program. Not only that the office should be the lead agency, but that they should create a model or best practices for the other youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs. If the fire marshal is not interested in supporting the statewide effort, the task force may not get off the ground.

In addition, buy-in must come from the established youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs and from the departments across the state that lack a program. Collectively, all entities must trust one another. This is going to be a different type of relationship, with the SFMO being the “umbrella.” The office needs local fire agencies to know it’s not here to run their program, oversee their program or act as big brother/sister. The office is here to provide resources and ensure that programs across the state are sending a consistent message and work product. This must be a tenant of this program because the youths in these programs should be getting the same quality of program whether they live in an affluent community, low socioeconomic community, urban community or rural community.



Trends:

All members of the table group discussion agreed that approaching the issue of youth firesetting needs to be a community-based process. This just makes good sense, not only from a resource perspective, but the need for services from a multiagency perspective. The prevention and intervention of firesetting demands a “village” approach.

### **Part 3: Evaluating and/or Proposing Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program Components and Administrative Tools**

#### **Existing program components**

The assignment calls for us to define the existing state of our youth firesetting prevention and intervention program’s primary components (if you have a program). These include:

- Youth firesetting identification mediums.
- Intake process.
- Interview/screening component.
- Intervention services.
- Follow-up process.
- Overall evaluation of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

While there is not a state-level youth firesetting prevention and intervention program currently, there are several independent fire service groups that have operational programs. Our vision is to engage leaders associated with these programs, evaluate effectiveness and develop robust youth firesetting prevention and intervention program components that can be offered throughout the state by local jurisdictions.

#### **Existing administrative tools**

The assignment calls for us to define the existing state of our youth firesetting prevention and intervention program’s administrative tools (if you have them) that support your overall program to include:

- Staffing to deliver program services.
- Training program for fire department and partner agencies.
- Program budget and ancillary resources to support the program.
- Data management protocols.
- Program marketing.
- SOPs and SOGs.
- MOUs.
- Youth firesetting prevention and intervention handbook.

As stated previously, while there is not a state-level youth firesetting prevention and intervention program currently, there are several independent fire service groups that have operational programs. Our vision is to engage leaders associated with these programs, evaluate effectiveness and develop youth firesetting prevention and intervention administrative tools that can become templates (per se) and used throughout the state by local jurisdictions.

An administrative need at the state level would be the presence of technical software to serve several needs. A vision would be to have all programs across the state access similar software for records management to track case demographics. This would be a good start and could lead to the possibility of integrating a system that organizations could utilize to document youth firesetting case files. Ultimately, a goal would be to have software to perform analytical processes to create a baseline and future youth firesetting assessment based on specific criteria that is tracked. This will identify what our specific youth firesetting problems are and provide information in the future on the overall effectiveness of our programs.

**Part 4: Developing a Draft Action/Evaluation Plan: Home Community Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Program**

**Action plan**

The long-term (18 to 24 months) goal is to ensure that all counties within the state have access to at least one locally operated youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, the following objectives (action items) will be accomplished:

1. Within a month of returning from the NFA, the DFS will identify baseline data that provides an informed picture of the need for additional youth firesetting prevention and intervention programs in the state.

Evaluation measure: statistical data located, review made and findings noted.

2. Within two months, the lead visionaries for the proposed youth firesetting prevention and intervention statewide task force will deliver a proposal to the state fire marshal seeking approval to move forward with initial planning efforts.

Evaluation measure: summary of meeting.

3. Within three months, and contingent on fire marshal approval, the lead visionaries will recruit key primary stakeholders to serve on a statewide youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force.

Evaluation measure: record of stakeholder commitment.

4. Within four months, the primary stakeholders (task force) will have met to begin work on a statewide youth firesetting prevention and intervention program.

Evaluation method: minutes of the meeting.

5. Within six months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention primary stakeholders will have developed an MOU delineating the agreed responsibilities of the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force member groups.

Evaluation measure: MOU document development.

6. Within eight months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force organizations will have trained one another on the services that each will provide pertinent to youth firesetting prevention and intervention.

7. Within 10 months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force, with assistance from the state fire academy program development unit and legal section, will have developed a youth firesetting prevention and intervention program to include applicable program components, administrative tools and SOGs for statewide use at the local level.

Evaluation measure: development and review of the program components, administrative tools and SOGs.

8. Within 11 months, a subcommittee of the task force will work with school officials to begin development of a youth firesetting prevention component that can be integrated into primary and secondary schools.

Evaluation measure: documentation that work has been started.

9. Within 12 months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force will have recruited five localities to participate in the establishment of localized programs that operate under the state-level umbrella.

Evaluation measure: written commitment from the localities.

10. Within 14 months, key staff from all localities participating in the umbrella program will be trained to the specified level (related to position of operation) required to operate within the youth firesetting prevention and intervention program parameters.

Evaluation measure: record of training.

11. Within 15 months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force will have supervised the development of a youth firesetting program demographical data tracking system for use by all participating localities to evaluate the overall program's effectiveness.

Evaluation measure: data tracking system created, operational and evaluated.

12. Within 15 months, a sub-work group from the task force will begin providing awareness training to fire department personnel within the state about the extent of the local youth firesetting problem, prevention/intervention strategies, progress on the development of a task force and the local fire department's role in the overall effort.

Evaluation measure: documentation of training.

13. Within 17 months, and contingent on legal counsel/stakeholder approvals, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention task force will have supervised the development of a secure cloud-based youth firesetting program case management tracking system for use by all participating localities.

Evaluation measure: case management system created, operational and evaluated.

14. Within 17 months, schools throughout the state will begin using and evaluating a youth firesetting prevention educational component that is integrated into primary and secondary school curricula.

Evaluation measure: record of school participation and evaluation of material.

15. Within 18 months, the youth firesetting prevention and intervention statewide program will have been pilot-tested and be ready to advance into full operational level with participating localities.

Evaluation measure: record of program activity, services provided and evaluation.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

This page left intentionally blank.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achenbach, T. M., & Edelbrock, C. (1987). *Manual for the youth self-report and profile*. University of Vermont.
- American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *The diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.).
- American Psychiatric Association (2013). *The diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed).
- American Psychological Association (2017). *What is cognitive behavioral therapy?* Clinical Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. <https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/patients-and-families/cognitive-behavioral>
- Anderson, N. E., & Kiehl, K. A. (2014). Psychopathy: Developmental perspectives and their implications for treatment. *Restorative Neurology and Neuroscience*, 32(1), 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.3233/RNN-139001>
- Arizona Revised Statute 13-1702, Title 13 Criminal Code, Arson.
- Arizona Revised Statute 13-1703, Title 13 Criminal Code, Arson.
- Arizona Revised Statute 13-1704, Title 13 Criminal Code, Arson.
- Bandura, A. (1973). *Aggression: A social learning analysis*. PrenticeHall.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. General Learning Press.
- Bandura, A., & Walters, R. (1963). *Social learning and personality development*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Becker, K. D., Stuewig, J., Herrera, V. M., & McCloskey, L. A. (2004, July). A study of firesetting and animal cruelty in children: Family influences and adolescent outcomes. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 43(7), 905–912. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.chi.0000128786.70992.9b>
- Boudreau, J., Kwan, Q., Faragher, W., & Denault, G., (1977). *Arson and arson investigation: Survey and assessment*. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Bradford, J., & Dimock, J. (1986). A comparative study of adolescents and adults who willfully set fires. *Psychiatric Journal of the University of Ottawa*, 11(4), 228–234.
- Bronowski, J. (1976). *The ascent of man*. Little Brown and Company.

- Bumpass, E., Fagelman, F., & Brix, R. (1983). Intervention with children who set fires. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 37(3), 328–345.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, March 2). *Develop SMART objectives*. Public Health Professionals Gateway. [https://www.cdc.gov/phcommunities/resourcekit/evaluate/smart\\_objectives.html](https://www.cdc.gov/phcommunities/resourcekit/evaluate/smart_objectives.html)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, April 6). *Fast facts: Preventing adverse childhood experiences*. Violence Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, February 26). *Developmental disabilities*. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/index.html>
- Clark, D. (2004). *Big Dog and Little Dog's performance juxtaposition*. <http://knowledgejump.com/>
- Cleckley H. (1941). *The mask of sanity: An attempt to reinterpret the so-called psychopathic personality*. Mosby.
- Coleman, J. (1961). *The adolescent society*. New York Free Press.
- Cosgrove, B. (2002). *Accident or arson?* Rutledge Books, Inc.
- Cowan, D. (2001). *Great Chicago fires*. Lake Claremont Press.
- Cowan, D., & Kuenster, J. (1996). *To sleep with the angels*. Ivan R. Dee.
- Dahl, R. E. (2004). Adolescent brain development: A period of vulnerabilities and opportunities (keynote address). *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1021, 1–22.
- DeHaan, J. (2002). *Kirk's fire investigation* (5th ed). Prentice Hall.
- DeVoe, J. F., Peter, K., Kaufman, P., Miller, A., Noonan, M., Snyder, T. D., & Baum, K., (2004). *Indicators of school crime and safety: 2004*. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2005-002/NCJ205290). U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Eder, D. (1995). *School talk: Gender and adolescent culture*. Rutgers University Press.
- Edinburgh Youth Social Inclusion Partnership. (2004). *Understanding young firesetters project final report*.
- Falls, D. (2006). *A case of transition to an urban high school: Listening to the voices of freshman students*. Proquest/UMI.



- Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2004). School fires. *Topical Fire Research Series*, 4(6), 1–4.
- Fineman, K. (1980). Firesetting in childhood and adolescence. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 3, 483–500.
- Fineman, K. (1995). A model for the qualitative analysis of child and adult deviant behavior. *American Journal of Forensic Psychology*, 13, 31–60.
- Fineman, K., Brudo, C. & Brudo, E. (1979). *Interviewing and counseling juvenile firesetters*. U.S. Fire Administration.
- Folkman, W., & Siegelman, E. (1971). *Youthful firesetters: An exploratory study in personality and background*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.
- Foster, J. (2019). *Children and teenagers who set fires: Why they do it and how to help*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Franklin, G. A., Pucci, P. S., Arbabi, S., Brandt, M. M., Wahl, W. L., & Taheri, P. A. (2002, August). Decreased juvenile arson and firesetting recidivism after implementation of a multidisciplinary prevention program. *The Journal of Trauma: Injury, Infection, and Critical Care*, 53(2), 260–266. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00005373-200208000-00012>
- Freud, S. (1930). *Civilization and its discontent*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Gale, T. (2006). *Encyclopedia of mental disorders*. Retrieved June 14, 2006, from <http://www.minddisorders.com/Py-Z/Pyromania.html>
- Gaynor, J., & Hatcher, C. (1987). *The psychology of child firesetting detection and intervention*. Brunner/Mazel, Inc.
- Ghory, W. & Sinclair, R. (1980). *Connecting teacher talents to student gifts*. MacMillan and Company.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597–607.
- Gottschalk, J. (2002). *Firefighting*. DK Publishing, Inc.
- Hall, K., Gibbie, T., & Lubman, D. I. (2012). Motivational interviewing techniques: Facilitating behaviour change in the general practice setting. *Australian Family Physician*, 41, 660–667.
- Hall, R., & Brakhage, C. (Eds.). (1997). *Introduction to fire origin and cause* (2nd ed.). Protection Publications.

- Hare, R. D. (1996). Psychopathy: A clinical construct whose time has come. *Criminal Justice Behavior*, 23(1), 25–54.
- Hatch, J. (1995). *Qualitative research in early childhood settings*. Praeger.
- Heath, G., Gayton, W., & Hardesty, V. (1976). Childhood firesetting: A review. *Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal*, 21(4), 229–237.
- Holland, C. (1969). Elimination by the parents of firesetting behavior in a seven-year-old boy. *Behavior Research and Therapy*, 7, 135–137.
- Hopkins, L. (2022). Native American sweat lodge. *The Wild Rose Dreamers Lodge*. <http://thewildrose.net/sweat.html>
- Islamawareness.net. (n.d.). *Jinn according to Quran and Sunnah*. <https://islamawareness.net/Jinn/jinn.html>
- Jewish Virtual Library. (2006). *The synagogue: Ner Tamid*. [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaism/ner\\_tamid.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaism/ner_tamid.html)
- Jones, R., Ribbe, D., & Cunningham, P. (1994). Psychosocial correlates of fire disaster among children and adolescents. *Journal of Thematic Stress*, 7, 117–122.
- Kaufman, I., Heins, L., & Reiser, D. (1961). A re-evaluation of the psychodynamics of firesetting. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 31, 123–136.
- Kolko, D. (1999). Firesetting in children and youth. In V. B. Hasselt & M. Hersen (Eds), *Handbook of psychological approaches with violent offenders: Contemporary strategies and issues* (pp. 95–115). Plenum Press.
- Kolko, D. J. (1985). Juvenile firesetting: A review and critique. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 5, 345–376.
- Kolko, D. J. (1989). Firesetting and pyromania. In C. G. Last & M. Hersen (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychiatric diagnosis* (pp. 443–459). Wiley and Sons.
- Kolko, D. J. (2001). Efficacy of cognitive-behavioral treatment and fire safety education for children who set fires: Initial and follow-up outcomes. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines*, 42(3), 359–369.
- Kolko, D. J. (Ed.). (2002). *Handbook on firesetting in children and youth*. Academic Press.
- Kolko, D. J., & Kazdin, A. E. (1986). A conceptualization of firesetting in children and adolescents. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 14(1), 49–61.

- Kolko, D. J., & Kazdin, A. E. (1991). Motives of childhood firesetters: Firesetting characteristics and psychological correlates. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 32(3), 535–550.
- Kolko, D. J., Day, B. T., Bridge, J. A., & Kazdin, A. E. (2001). Two-year prediction of children's firesetting in clinically referred and nonreferred samples. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines*, 42(3), 371–380.
- Kolko, D. J., & Vernberg, E. M. (2017). *Assessment and intervention with children and adolescents who misuse fire: Practitioner guide*. Oxford University Press. <https://www.oxfordclinicalpsych.com/view/10.1093/med:psych/9780190261191.001.0001/med-9780190261191>
- Kolko, D., & Kazdin, A. E. (1994). Children's descriptions of their firesetting incidents: Characteristics and relationships to recidivism. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 33(1), 114–122.
- Koson, D. & Dvoskin, J. (1982). Arson: A diagnostic study. *Bulletin of the AAPL*, 10, 39–49.
- Kuhnley, E., Henderson, R., & Quinland, D. (1982). Firesetting by children. *Journal of American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 21, 560–563.
- Lambie, I., Ioane, J., Randell, I., & Seymour, F. (2013). Offending behaviours of child and adolescent firesetters over a 10-year follow-up. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines*, 54(12), 1295–1307. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12126>
- Leading Effectively Staff. (2021, August). Use active listening skills to coach others. *Center for Creative Leadership*. <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/coaching-others-use-active-listening-skills/>
- Levin, B. (1976, March). Psychological characteristics of firesetters. *Fire Journal*, 36–40.
- Lewis, N., & Yarnell, H. (1951). *Pathological firesetting (pyromania)*. Coolidge Foundation Publishers.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Macht, L. & Mack, J. (1968). The firesetter syndrome. *Psychiatry*, 31, 277–288.
- MacKay, S., Paglia-Boak, A., Henderson, J., Marton, P., & Adlaf, E. (2009). Epidemiology of firesetting in adolescents: Mental health and substance use correlates. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines*, 50(10), 1282–1290. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2009.02103.x>
- Madslie, J. (2004). Website explores the dangers of playing with fire. *BBC News Online*. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/3850119.stm>

- March of Dimes Hawaii Chapter. (n.d.) “SMART” objectives [PDF]. [http://www.infanthearing.org/coordinator\\_toolkit/section5/18\\_smart\\_objects.pdf](http://www.infanthearing.org/coordinator_toolkit/section5/18_smart_objects.pdf)
- Martin, G., Bergen, H. A., Richardson, A. S., Roeger, L., & Allison, S. (2004, March). Correlates of firesetting in a community sample of young adolescents. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 38(3), 148–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/j.1440-1614.2004.01318.x>
- Martin, S. (Ed.). (2003). *Arizona criminal and traffic law manual* (2003–2004 ed.). LexisNexis Mathew Bender & Company, Inc.
- Mayo Clinic. (2020, September). *Mindfulness exercises*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>
- McKerraccher, D., & Dacre, A. (1966). A study of arsonists in a special security hospital. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 112, 1151–1154.
- Meade, J. (1998). Fire power. *Education Week*, 18(11), 1–8.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study application in education* (Rev. ed.). Jossey Bass.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Sage Publications.
- Miller, N., & Dollard, J. (1941). *Social learning and imitation*. Yale University Press.
- Miller, W. R. & Rollnick, S. (2013). *Motivational interviewing: Helping people to change* (3rd Ed.). Guilford Press.
- Milner, M. (2004). *Freaks, geeks, and cool kids: American teenagers, schools and the culture of consumption*. Routledge.
- Yale School of Medicine. (2022). Yale center for traumatic stress and recovery (YCTSR). *Child Study Center*. <https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/services/community-and-schools-programs/yctsr/>
- National Fire Protection Association. (n.d.). *US school fires, grades K-12, with 10 or more deaths*. <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/Building-and-Life-Safety/Structure-fires-in-schools/US-school-fires-with-ten-or-more-deaths>
- Naylor, S. (1997, November). Agni. *Encyclopedia Mythica*. Retrieved June 9, 2006, from <http://pantheon.org/articles/a/agni.html>
- Neufeldt, V. (Ed.). (1988). *Webster's new world dictionary of American English* (Third College Edition). Simon & Schuster, Inc.

- O'Connor, J. J. (1987). *Practical fire and arson investigation*. Elsevier Science Publishing Company, Inc.
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2019, March 1). *Juvenile justice and delinquency prevention act reauthorization 2018*. [https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/media/document/jjdpa-as-amended\\_0.pdf](https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/media/document/jjdpa-as-amended_0.pdf)
- Patterson, G. (1982). *A social learning approach* (Vol. 1). Castilia.
- Patton, M. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation*. Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Perks, D. L. C., Watt, B. D., Fritzon, K., & Doley, R. M. (2019, July-August). Juvenile firesetters as multiple problem youth with particular interests in fire: A meta-analysis. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 47*, 189–203. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2019.04.003>
- Peters, B., & Freeman, B. (2016). Juvenile firesetting. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 25*(1), 99–106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2015.08.009>
- Philbin, W. (2001, March 9). Two boys booked after fire forces school evacuation. *The Times Picayune*, A1.
- Phoenix Fire Department. (2006). *Youth firesetter intervention program database* (Active Version) [Data file]. Phoenix Fire Department's Youth Firesetter Intervention Program.
- Phoenix Fire Department's Urban Services Division. (2001). *Youth firesetter intervention program [Brochure]*.
- Poole, D., & Lamb, M. (1998). *Investigative interviews of children*. American Psychological Association.
- Prins, H. (1986). *Dangerous behaviour, the law and mental disorder*. Tavistock.
- Prins, H. (1994). *Fire-raising: Its motivation and management*. Routledge.
- Puri, B. K., Baxter, R., & Cordess, C. C. (1995). Characteristics of fire-setters. A study and proposed multi-axial psychiatric classification. *The British Journal of Psychiatry: The Journal of Mental Science, 166*(3), 393–396. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.166.3.393>
- Putnam, C., & Kirkpatrick, J. (2005, May). Juvenile firesetting: A research overview. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, 1–8. United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

- Ramaswamy, S., & Seshadri, S. (2017). Our failure to protect sexually abused children: Where is our 'willing suspension of disbelief'? *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 59(2), 233–235. [https://doi.org/10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry\\_123\\_17](https://doi.org/10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry_123_17)
- Rigby, K. (2002). *New perspectives on bullying*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Root, C., Mackay, S., Henderson, J., Del Bove, G., & Warling, D. (2008, February). The link between maltreatment and juvenile firesetting: Correlates and underlying mechanisms. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32(2), 161–176. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2007.07.004>
- Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Sage Publications.
- Sakheim, G., & Osborn, E. (1994). *Firesetting children: Risk assessment and treatment*. Child Welfare League of America.
- Santrock, J. (2001). *Child development* (9th ed). McGraw-Hill.
- Satterfield, J. (2017, June 30). Arson charges dropped against teens in Gatlinburg wildfire case. *Knoxville News Sentinel*. <https://www.knoxnews.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/06/30/gatlinburg-wildfire-arson-charges-dropped-against-teens/443129001/>
- Schactel, E. (1943, November). On color and affect: Contributions to an understanding of Rorschach's Test. *Journal of the Biology and Pathology of Interpersonal Relations*, 5(4), 393–409.
- Schalock, R. L., Borthwick-Duffy, S. A., Bradley, V. J., Buntinx, W. H. E., Coulter, D. L., Craig, E. M., Gomez, S. C., Lachapelle, Y., Luckasson, R., Reeve, A., Shogren, K. A., Snell, M. E., Spreat, S., Tasse, M. J., Thompson, J. R., Verdugo-Alonso, M. A., Wehmeyer, M. L., Yeager, M. H. (2010). *Intellectual disability: Definition, classification, and systems of support* (11th ed.). American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.
- Scott, D. (1974). *The psychology of fire: What fire can mean to certain people and how it can be exploited for money, power, or sexual gratification*. Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Scriven, M. (1991). *Evaluation thesaurus* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.
- Slavkin, M. (2000). What every professional who works with adolescents needs to know about firesetters. *Adolescence*, 35(140), 759–778.
- Stadolnik, R. (2000). *Drawn to the flame: Assessment and treatment of juvenile firesetting behavior*. Professional Resource Press.

- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications.
- Stewart, L. (1993). Profile of female firesetters: Implications for treatment. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 163, 248–256.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020, April 29). *Understanding child trauma*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma/understanding-child-trauma>
- Swaffer, T., & Hollin, C. R. (1995). Adolescent firesetting: Why do they say they do it? *Journal of Adolescence*, 18, 619–623.
- Terjestam, P., & Ryden, O. (1996). Firesetting as normal behavior: Frequencies and patterns of change in behavior of 7–16-year-old children. *Research Report Swedish Rescue Services Agency*, 21–147.
- Thomas, S., & Pollio, H. (2002). *Listening to patients: A phenomenological approach to nursing research and practice*. Springer Publishing Company.
- U.S. Fire Administration. (2001). Dormitory fires. *Topical Research Series*, 14, 1–3.
- Vaughn, M. G., Fu, Q., Delisi, M., Wright, J. P., Beaver, K. M., Perron, B. E., & Howard, M. O. (2010, May-June). Prevalence and correlates of fire-setting in the United States: Results from the National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 51(3), 217–223. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.comppsy.2009.06.002>
- Vision 20/20. (2021). Model performance measurement and evaluation. *CRR Education*. <https://strategicfire.org/crr/education>
- Vreeland, R., & Waller, M. (1979). *The psychology of firesetting: A review and appraisal*. United States Government Printing Office.
- Welsh, R. (1971). The use of stimulus satiation in the elimination of juvenile firesetting behavior. In A.M. Graziano (Ed.), *Behavior therapy with children* (pp. 283–289). Aldine-Atherton.
- Wiersma, W. (1995). *Research methods in education: An introduction* (6th ed.). Allyn and Bacon.
- Wilcox, D., Nishi-Strattner, L., & Kopet, T. (2001). *Assessment of juvenile firesetters*. Portland Psychological Evaluations Research.
- William, G. (2000). Introduction to Aboriginal fire use in North America. *Fire Management Today*, 60(3), 8–12.

- Williams, D. (2005). *Understanding the arsonist: From assessment to confession*. Lawyers and Judges Publishing Company, Inc.
- Williams, D. (2013). *Understanding the arsonist: From assessment to confession*. Lawyers & Judges Publishing Company, Inc.
- Wolford, M. (1972). Some attitudinal, psychological and sociological characteristics of incarcerated arsonists. *Fire and Arson Investigator*, 22, 1–30.
- Wooden, W., & Berkey, M. (1984). *Children and arson America's middle class nightmare*. Plenum Press.
- Yarnell, H. (1940). Firesetting in children. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 10, 272–286.
- Yarrow, L. (1960). Interviewing children. In P. J. Mussen (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in child development* (pp. 561–602). Wiley.
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research. Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (Ed.). (2004). *The case study anthology*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Zwiers, M., & Morrisette, P. (1999). *Effective interviewing of children: A comprehensive guide for counselors and human service workers*. Edwards Brothers.



# ACRONYMS

This page intentionally left blank.

**ACRONYMS**

<b>ACE</b>	adverse childhood experience
<b>ADD</b>	attention deficit disorder
<b>ADHD</b>	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
<b>AHJ</b>	authority having jurisdiction
<b>ANF</b>	Allied Neighborhoods First
<b>ASD</b>	autism spectrum disorder
<b>ATF</b>	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
<b>BATS</b>	Bomb Arson Tracking System
<b>CBT</b>	cognitive behavior therapy
<b>CD</b>	Conduct Disorder
<b>CDC</b>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<b>COPD</b>	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
<b>CPSC</b>	Consumer Product Safety Commission
<b>DCR</b>	Department of Conservation and Recreation
<b>DFS</b>	Department of Fire Services
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>DHSS</b>	Department of Health and Social Services
<b>DOC</b>	Department of Corrections
<b>DSM</b>	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
<b>DYCRRPW</b>	“Demonstrating Your Community Risk Reduction Program’s Worth”
<b>EBD</b>	emotional behavioral disorder
<b>EMAC</b>	Educational Messaging Advisory Committee

<b>EMS</b>	emergency medical services
<b>EMT</b>	emergency medical technician
<b>FAQ</b>	frequently asked question
<b>FASD</b>	fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>FLSE</b>	Fire and Life Safety Educator
<b>FLSEF</b>	“Fire and Life Safety Educator Fundamentals”
<b>GED</b>	General Equivalency Diploma
<b>ICRA</b>	“Introduction to Community Risk Assessments”
<b>IDD</b>	Intellectual and developmental disabilities
<b>IEP</b>	individualized education plan
<b>IFSAC</b>	International Fire Service Accreditation Congress
<b>IFSTA</b>	International Fire Service Training Association
<b>IG</b>	Instructor Guide
<b>ISCRR</b>	“Introduction to Strategic Community Risk Reduction”
<b>JPR</b>	job performance requirement
<b>KSA</b>	knowledge, skill and ability
<b>LEDS</b>	Law Enforcement Data System
<b>MAFA</b>	Mason Area Fire Authority
<b>MAHA</b>	Mason Area Housing Authority
<b>MI</b>	motivational interviewing
<b>MOU</b>	memorandum of understanding
<b>NEISS</b>	National Electronic Injury Surveillance System

<b>NFA</b>	National Fire Academy
<b>NFIRS</b>	National Fire Incident Reporting System
<b>NFPA</b>	National Fire Protection Association
<b>OCY</b>	Office of Children and Youth
<b>ODD</b>	oppositional defiant disorder
<b>OSS</b>	Office of Social Services
<b>PIUA</b>	Property Insurance Underwriting Association
<b>PTA</b>	Parent-Teacher Association
<b>RMS</b>	Records Management System
<b>SAMHSA</b>	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
<b>SAW</b>	Student Activity Worksheet
<b>SFMO</b>	State Fire Marshal's Office
<b>SM</b>	Student Manual
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant/Realistic and Time-bound
<b>SOG</b>	standard operating guideline
<b>SOP</b>	standard operating procedure
<b>UCR</b>	Uniform Crime Reporting
<b>USBDC</b>	United States Bomb Data Center
<b>WCIRM</b>	Whole Community Integrated Risk Management
<b>YFIS</b>	"Youth Firesetting Intervention Specialist"
<b>YFIRES</b>	Youth Firesetting Information Repository and Evaluation System
<b>YFPI</b>	"Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention"
<b>YFPM</b>	"Youth Firesetting Program Manager"

This page intentionally left blank.