

Street Youth Legal Services (SYLS) provides legal information, summary advice, referrals, and legal representation to street-involved young people. The service is delivered primarily in two formats: routine weekly drop-in clinics located at social service agencies, and regular workshops conducted mainly at shelters for homeless youth.

Street-involved young people often have legal concerns, but complex barriers impede their access to legal information and services. The most obvious barrier is a complete lack of financial resources. However, there are also barriers brought about by social isolation and mistrust of traditional institutional environments. In many cases SYLS clients are not aware of what resources are available in the community in general, and the legal community in particular.

The objective of SYLS is to provide young people with legal information in a way that overcomes these barriers. The program is designed to bring legal information directly to young people while providing them with an avenue through which they can access legal resources.

Should youth require legal representation in addition to what we are able to provide, they are directed to and assisted in connecting with the appropriate legal service including Legal Aid Ontario's clinic system, the private bar, the lawyer referral service and youth focused advocacy offices.



The purpose of the Street Law Smarts Fact Sheets are to assist staff working at street-youth serving agencies help young people with their legal problems. The sheets outline common areas of law affecting street-involved youth, providing information, referral and template suggestions to manage legal problems. Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY) has partnered with SKETCH Working Arts for Street Involved Youth to create: Acting Out – Street Law Smarts! workshop series for agency staff. This interactive training brings the experiences of young people together with lawyers to help you spot legal issues. The training provides an opportunity for professionals working with youth to practice how they and the organizations they work for can support young people navigate the legal system, and problem-solve together to promote equality and fairness in your agency and in society. The trainings bring to life many of the legal issues found in the Street Law Smarts Fact Sheets.

To book a training, please contact the SYLS lawyer at JFCY or the Connect to Youth Program Coordinator at SKETCH Working Arts.



SYLS Lawyer, JFCY
416.920.1633



Kerry Boileau
416.516.1559

The law can be complicated, and what may seem like simple details (e.g. whether the person 17 or 18) may have a big effect on the situation (e.g. whether they would be charged as a youth or an adult). It is often very helpful to get advice from a lawyer about the specific situation. **Nothing in these facts sheets are meant to be legal advice. The best idea is always to contact a lawyer such as the Street Youth Legal Services lawyer.**

The facts sheets were last updated in January 2015. Please call to ask if there is a more recent version or check our website to download any updates.

The SYLS program is hosted and supported by the Legal Aid Ontario clinic, Justice for Children and Youth, and it is funded by charitable foundations such as the Law Foundation of Ontario and private donors. We rely on donations to keep the program alive. Please visit our website or contact us if you would like to make a donation.



Street Law Smarts Fact Sheets

January 2015



Justice for Children and Youth
1203 - 415 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario M5B 2E7
Tel. 416.920.1633
Fax. 416.920.5855
www.jfcy.org



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