



YSO Policy: Sexual Health and Inquiries

Youth workers should be prepared to face situations in which youth approach them with questions and concerns regarding sexual health topics. Youth workers should examine their own biases in regard to contraceptive use, pregnancy, abortion, and other topics related to sexual health in order to assess their capacity for having productive conversations with young people.

This policy is from a recreational fitness program for youth. For this policy, BE SAFE recommends the following:

- The addition of a procedure that includes regular trainings for staff and youth by credible sexual health professionals, resource guides for staff and youth, a clear parental notification policy, and steps to guide youth to accurate resources;
- Require all staff to be trained on responding to youth's concerns about sex and sexuality;
- Suggest that youth participants and staff establish ground rules for the program at the beginning of each program cycle that emphasize a safe, supportive, and open environment;
- Include a section that refers staff to the organization's mandated reporting policy;
- Include a section that refers staff to a list of "credible organizations" that the program feels comfortable using as resources for trainings, workshops, and services for staff and youth.

Policy:

Staff serve as mentors to the youth at Program A and may be faced with situations where youth approach them wanting to discuss pregnancy, sexuality education, contraceptives, etc. In these situations, staff should be equipped with the proper tools to guide youth to accurate resources. It is not necessary to have all of the immediate answers however, resources should be available for youth and staff to better guide them in the information they are seeking.

Regarding sexuality education, staff should not take it upon themselves to give these "lessons" to youth. Program A would like to ensure that youth are given clear and accurate information, and instead should re-direct youth to credible sources that are suitable for their age group.

If sexual abuse or dating violence is revealed or suspected, staff should immediately contact program director to determine what next steps should be taken and proceed in assisting that youth.

