Promoting Safe Interactions
with Youth

ONLINE TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

A guide to effective of the training and concepts within

Promoting Safe Interactions With Youth

August 2020

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OFFICE FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON
Undergraduate Academic Affairs

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

This guide is intended to support effective implementation of the *Promoting Safe Interactions with Youth* online training, and the concepts within this training. In this guide you will find resources for implementation and suggestions for discussion and reflection that will allow staff and volunteers to appropriately apply the concepts in your specific program setting.

TRAINING OVERVIEW

DEVELOPMENT OF *PROMOTING SAFE INTERACTIONS WITH YOUTH*

This training was initially developed in 2016 by the Office for Youth Programs Development and Support and was updated in 2020. Content was informed by nationally recognized best practice references on safe and high quality interactions[1], the University Standards for Interacting with Youth, and also by University of Washington youth program practitioners and safety representatives. Drafts of the training were reviewed by a diverse array of stakeholders including University youth programs, safety representatives, and Compliance and Risk Services. The majority of images included in this training were contributed by University of Washington youth programs in order to offer a representative portrayal of youth and adults reflected in our programs.

TRAINING GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of creating this training was to equip the UW youth program community with a comprehensive set of guidelines for safe interactions centered around a commonly recognized set of best-practices known as the University Standards for Interaction with Youth. Programs should align with these principles, and employees and volunteers should be trained regarding common dos and don'ts for interacting with youth.

This training provides a foundational overview of safe and unsafe/inappropriate interactions between adults and youth. After completing this online module, participants will be able to differentiate between safe and unsafe interactions, and will be able to name overarching best practice concepts for high quality interactions. Further professional development is recommended in order to effectively apply these concepts in a specific youth program setting.

Per UW Administrative Policy 10.13, youth programs are required to review the University Standards with their staff and retained signed copies acknowledging staff have read and agree to the standards and the subsequent reporting policy for Standards violations. It is recommended to incorporate these Standards into a more robust code of conduct. The UW Youth Program Conduct Code was developed for programs to utilize in full, or adapt as needed to fit your program context.

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[1] References include, among others: *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-Serving Organizations: Getting Started on Policies and Procedures*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Caring for our Children, 3rd edition*, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. American Camp Association Accreditation Standards. Youth Protection Network for Higher Education member institutions.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

This online training is intended for University of Washington employees or volunteers who will have ongoing interactions with youth (anyone under the age of 18 years old) in the course of their job duties or volunteer role. The content of the training is inclusive of any youth setting, regardless of type or age group. This training is required for all [Authorized Personnel](#) in University youth programs. This online training should be incorporated into your orientation process so that the information is received prior to any work with youth. Authorized personnel cannot interact with youth prior to viewing and completing this training.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THIS TRAINING

This training is available online through Bridge TMS and on YouTube for those without UW Net IDs. It uses a PowerPoint format with voice narration. The training runs 30 minutes in length and consists of four separate videos. The four video sections of the training include:

1. *Your role*
2. *Safe Communication*
3. *Safe Physical Contact*
4. *Safe Supervision*

A summary of each section is included in the following section.

All Authorized Personnel are required to complete and pass the brief quizzes that follow each section of the training in Bridge TMS. If your personnel cannot access the training via Bridge, they may complete the quiz via a google form available by emailing uwminors@uw.edu. To view your staff's completion of the knowledge assessment through either route, you may log into the Youth Program Registration System.

KEY CONCEPTS COVERED IN THIS TRAINING

YOUR ROLE…

This section addresses the unique role of working with youth. There is an emphasis on high standards for quality, given the reputation of UW, expectations of parents and University requirements, and professionalism. Professional boundaries are discussed to provide general guidelines for practicing healthy and appropriate boundaries when interacting with youth.

SAFE COMMUNICATIONS….

This section provides specific examples of safe and affirming communication, including encouraging as well as corrective communication. Examples of harmful communication are also provided, including those that are verbally abusive, sexually toned, or otherwise inappropriate. Virtual communications, including use of social media accounts, e-mail and text are also addressed.

SAFE PHYSICAL CONTACT…

General principles for safe physical contact are addressed in this section, along with specific examples of safe and harmful contact. Strategies are provided for dealing with situations involving youth initiated physical contact.

SAFE SUPERVISION…

This section provides guidelines for adequate supervision, and strategies for avoiding 1:1 interaction with youth.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Effective application of important concepts learned in a training relies on frequent, repeated opportunities to reflection and reinforcement said concepts. Below are recommended strategies to reinforce the concepts introduced in this training, via follow up discussion(s).

PREPARING FOR A FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION

The person(s) who will lead the discussion should have completed the online training prior to doing so. Print out a copy of the presentation so you can note and highlight sections that you want to follow up on with your audience.

Consider the following:
- What are the top 3-5 key points from the training that you want to emphasize, or explore in further detail with your employees and volunteers?
- How will follow-up on these concepts fit into your regular staff or volunteer training?
- Consider your priorities: reviewing your specific program guidelines/code of conduct, discussing scenarios, having staff individually reflect on the concepts, or a combination?

Put this training into your own program context.
- Review your staff/volunteer handbook and code of conduct to ensure clear alignment and note additional program-specific guidelines not addressed in the training.
- Think ahead about specific situations involving staff or volunteers and youth that have come up in the past, and bring them into the discussion.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Organized by training sections to be used in small or large group settings.

YOUR ROLE - PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES
- What situations might come up where you need to set a professional boundary? What can you say in these situations to help the youth understand your intent in setting the boundary?
- What is the main purpose of your role supporting youth? What does your role say about the kinds of conversations, activities and work you will be doing together? What does not fit

within the scope of your role? If you are approached about a topic or issue that is outside of your role, what can you do?
- Why is it important to have a code of conduct? What should be communicated to youth about the code of conduct?

SAFE COMMUNICATION
- Brainstorm the various types of safe and harmful communication
- What are some examples of positive reinforcement that can be used in your program environment?
- What are some examples of constructive statements used to correct behavior?
- What situations might we need to use text, e-mail or social media? How can we safely do this? What if a youth contacts you via social media?
- What strategies can we use that minimize the need to rely on texting?

SAFE PHYSICAL CONTACT
- When might physical contact be necessary in your interactions with youth?
- Practice asking for consent before initiating physical contact.
- What about accidental physical contact, what situations might come up and what can be done if it happens?
- What cultural norms apply to the youth we are working with regarding physical contact?

SAFE SUPERVISION
- Why is it important to avoid 1:1 interaction with youth?
- What are things we can do to reduce being left alone with youth?
- What does adequate supervision look like in our program? What different situations require different staff ratios?

SCENARIO-BASED EXERCISES

These exercises can include discussion or role play. Role play is an effective method for practicing certain scenarios.

YOUR ROLE - PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES
- What should you do if you have a pre-existing relationship with a minor who is participating in your program? How does that change your relationship?
- It is the end of the program and a participant comes up to you with a gift as a thank you for helping them. What do you do?
- You are leaving a group event and notice that one youth participant is waiting by themselves outside. What do you do?

SAFE COMMUNICATION

- What would you do to address a situation where a youth is being disruptive in a group activity?
- What if a youth contacts you via social media?
- What would you do if you learned that a colleague is frequently texting a youth?
- What would you do if you noticed that a colleague has a connection on their personal social media account with a youth in your program?

SAFE PHYSICAL CONTACT

- How do you handle a youth who initiates a hug?
- What would you do if a youth is injured and needs physical contact to administer first aid?
- What would you do if a youth approaches you expressing discomfort with the way they were touched by another adult?

SAFE SUPERVISION

- What do you if you find yourself left alone with a minor?
- You notice there are not enough staff or volunteers around to handle a particular activity, given the number of youth. What do you do?
- What would you do if you walked into a room and found a staff alone with a youth?

RESOURCES

[Promoting Safe Interactions with Youth online training](#)

[Online training For Non UW Net ID holders](#)

[UW Youth Program Conduct Code](#)

[Standards for Interacting with Youth](#)

[Definition of Authorized Personnel](#)

[Online References and Resources on Youth Safety](#)