



Promoting Safe Interactions with Youth

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

ONLINE TRAINING

Implementation Guide

A guide to effective implementation of the training and concepts within
January 2017

W **OFFICE FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT**
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON
Undergraduate Academic Affairs

cshelton@uw.edu

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Implementation Guide

This guide is intended to support effective implementation of the *Promoting Safe Interactions* online training, and the concepts within this training.

In this guide will 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 the *Promoting Safe Interactions with Youth* online training

This training was developed in 2016 by the Office for Youth Programs Development and Support. Content was informed by nationally recognized best practice references on safe & high quality interactions¹, and also by University of Washington youth program practitioners and safety representatives. Drafts of the training were reviewed by a diverse array stakeholders including University youth programs, safety representatives and Compliance and Risk Services. All 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 is to equip the UW youth program community with a comprehensive set of guidelines for safe interactions that are centered around a commonly recognized set of best-practices. Not every program has adopted all of the practices referenced in the training, and there is currently no University requirement to do so. However, it is strongly encouraged that programs align as much as possible with these principles, and that employees and volunteers are trained regarding common dos and don'ts for interacting with minors.

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. This training is intended to provide an introduction to such concepts. Further professional development is recommended in order to effectively apply these concepts in a specific youth program setting.

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.

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.

This online training can be used with new and current employees and volunteers. It is recommended to incorporate this training into an orientation process so that the information is received prior to any in-depth work with youth. Completion tracking can be accomplished through use of a Catalyst WebQ made available- see below for details.

Structure and format of this training

This training is an online YouTube video using a PowerPoint format with voice narration. The training runs 21 minutes in length. There are four main sections of the training:

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

At the end there is also a brief section on responding to concerns of abuse. A summary of each section is included in the following section.

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 and expectations of parents, 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 minors.

Concerns about Abuse...

There is a final section reviewing the basic steps of making a report of suspected child abuse, per UW Administrative Policy 11.8.

Implementation Resources

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.

***Promoting Safe Interactions* Assessment of Knowledge (Catalyst WebQ)**

Programs who wish to track that employees or volunteers have viewed the online training can do so by having them demonstrate knowledge attainment through a brief quiz. The Catalyst quiz will be made available as a copy to the program for dissemination and downloading results. Contact the Office for Youth Programs Development and Support to request a copy of this WebQ.

Code of Conduct: Guidelines for Working with Minors

It is recommended to not only train employees or volunteers, but to also have them acknowledge in writing that they will abide by a code of conduct in their interactions with minors. This model policy is developed for programs to utilize in full, or adapting as needed to fit your program context. The content of this Code of Conduct aligns with the *Promoting Safe Interactions with Youth* online training.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Below are recommended strategies to effectively reinforce concepts from the online 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 make notes of and highlight sections that you want to follow up on with your audience.

Questions to consider as you prepare:

- 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?

Putting this Training into your own program context

- Review your staff/volunteer handbook and code of conduct to see where there is clear alignment, and where there are alternative practices, or additional 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 minors 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 our 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 minimize 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 do 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?

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Link to *Promoting Safe Interactions with Youth* online training:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WzM_AswjyI0

To request a copy of the Catalyst WebQ: contact cshelton@uw.edu; include your program name and/or department, the UWNetID for the administrator of the quiz, and approximate number of people who will take this quiz in the next year.

Link to Model Policy: [Code of Conduct: Guidelines for Interacting with Minors](#)

Online references and resources on youth safety:

<http://www.washington.edu/youth/youth-protection/>