



Youth Inclusion Workshop Guide: Following the Rules

Workshop Description: This workshop includes information and practice for reviewing and revising program rules and systems to support inclusiveness of all youth while communicating with parents, caregivers, and youth on a regular basis. Staff will develop a greater awareness and understanding of what constitutes inclusive program rules and systems. The activities help identify what types of rules should be in place for youth programs as well as how they should be implemented. In addition, staff will become familiar with current program rules and systems and evaluate their effectiveness.

Preparation Time: The preparation time for this workshop is approximately two hours. This preparation time should include reading background information on the Youth Inclusion Training website and in this workshop guide, collecting materials, reviewing program rules currently in place, and gathering any additional information you may need.

Instruction Time: It will take approximately 50 minutes to 1 hour to complete all activities within this guide.

Materials:

- Printed copies of program rules with three questions from *Model Assessment/Revision of Rules* activity.
- Large sheets of paper.
- Blank sheets of paper and writing utensils for the *Build Your Own Rules* and *Compare Contrast Program Rules* activities.

Preparation Instructions:

You should read the content related to this topic on the Youth Inclusion Training website, specifically the content related to Rules, Systems, and Language. In addition, you should review the background information in this workshop guide and any others related to this topic (e.g., Responding to Bad Behavior, Language and Inclusion, etc.). Additional preparation is necessary for this workshop and involves assessing your own program rules and systems prior to facilitating the activities. The preparation assignment will walk you through questions to ask of your own program rules and systems in terms of providing an inclusive environment for all youth and families.

- Assess program systems inclusiveness:
 - Review whether the following program systems are in place: staff recruitment system, staff training system, communication system, and a system for creating, updating, and enforcing rules.
- Answer the following questions regarding your program:
 - For the systems that require documentation, do they include a way to log incidents and information about staff response to the report?
 - Are these systems in place, in use, and used correctly?
 - Does the recruitment system hire staff that reflect the diversity of the youth in your program?
 - Does the training system for staff teach them how to respond to bullying, harassment, and discrimination?
- Review the program rules that are in place and be prepared to facilitate a discussion with staff. Use these questions to guide the review of program rules:



- Do you include youth in the creation and updating of program rules?
- Are all groups of youth specifically protected in the program's current rules?
- Are all the rules communicated on a regular basis to youth and their families?
- How are youth held accountable for abiding by the rules?
- Is the accountability system inclusive?
- Do rules include a no-tolerance policy for hate speech?
- Who do the rules support and who, if anybody, do they privilege?

Knowledge: Understanding Strategies for Inclusive Rules and Systems

Good youth programs are safe and welcoming for all youth and communicate this value to the participants and families involved in the program.²¹ One way this is done is through the development of clear and understandable rules and systems that prohibit harassment, bullying, and discrimination and by training youth program staff to implement and model those rules.^{11, 8}

A good youth program has program managers and staff who work with youth to develop and periodically review rules to ensure specific protection for youth who may feel excluded.

A good youth program **communicates rules regularly to the youth in the program and shares them with their families.**^{21, 6, 24}

Rules in a good youth program should include a **no-tolerance rule** regarding hate speech, including remarks and language that demeans one population.^{25, 26, 23}

A good youth program has robust systems to implement rules, support youth safety and belonging, and ensure youth have input into program structure and activities.

- Systems are a **uniform way** to make sure the same steps are taken each time an action occurs.
- Systems build **an expectation for how rules will be followed** and set the boundaries for acceptable behaviors in a program.

Objectives:

- Build awareness and understanding of what constitutes inclusive program rules and systems.
- Build understanding of whether current youth program rules and systems are inclusive.

Introduction (5-7 minutes):

- Describe the topic of following and incorporating inclusive rules in youth programs. Highlight the importance of communicating regularly with parents and guardians and youth, including a no-tolerance rule for hate speech, and providing a system for the development of all youth.
- What to say: "Today we are going to talk about our program's rules and systems and analyze whether or not they support the development and inclusion of all youth."

Prior Knowledge (5-7 minutes):

- What to say: "First we are going to start off with what you already know about how rules and systems affect whether youth feel included."
- Ask the staff what they know about how rules and systems affect how youth feel included in the program. These might be words, terms, or phrases. Record staff responses on large sheet of paper or whiteboard.



- Some prompts for discussing effective rules and how to implement them may include the following: What is the first thing you think of when you think about rules? What makes you want to follow a rule? What makes a rule strict? How are rules typically implemented? What makes implementation effective or ineffective?
- Ask the staff if they have ever wondered how rules and systems impact youth and if they have questions they would like answered about how rules and systems can support an inclusive program and youth. Ask the staff what they think they will learn during this session or what else they would like to learn about rules and systems. Again, record responses.

Activities:

Activity: *Build Your Own Rules* (20-30 minutes)

- Describe the *Build Your Own Rules* activity:
 - What to say, “We are going to do a couple of activities that address what are effective rules for a program and how to implement those rules.”
- Lead the *Build Your Own Rules* activity:
 - Start with discussion regarding the differences between a rule and a system. Possible facilitating prompts may include the following: Can anyone define what a rule is? Can anyone define a system? What are some examples of rules? Examples of systems?
 - If staff do not know how to define either rules or systems, you can refer to the definitions provided in the knowledge section of this workshop.
 - Split staff into smaller groups of three to four and provide each group with two pieces of paper and some writing utensils.
 - Instruct the staff to create a web of rules they would want implemented in the youth program. In the center of the paper, staff should write “Program Rules” and list the rules that the staff believe should be implemented branching off the center.
 - After each group is done with their web, have them share their rules aloud. Record the rules on a large sheet of paper. If there are repeats between the groups, indicate the repeated rule by putting a tally next to it on the piece of paper.
 - Instruct the groups to do the same thing but for systems. This second web should be focused on how the rules discussed from the previous web should be implemented in a consistent manner. At the center of the paper, staff should write “Systems to Implement Rules.”
 - Again, once each group is finished, have the groups share their responses, recording what is said. Leave recorded responses hanging so staff can see and refer to their responses for the next activity.

Activity: *Compare Contrast Program Rules* (10-15 minutes)

- Describe the *Compare Contrast Program Rules* activity:
 - What to say, “Using the ideal rules you just came up with, we are now going to compare similarities and differences between the program rules currently in place. This should allow you to obtain a better understanding of what rules and systems allow a program to be run.”
- Lead the *Compare Contrast Program Rules* activity:
 - With the same groups as before, hand out a copy of the program’s rules to each group and a piece of blank paper. On the program’s rules handout there will be three questions located at the bottom. Instruct staff to ignore these questions until the next activity.



- Have one member create a Venn diagram. Label the diagram “Created Rules and Systems,” “Current Program Rules and Systems,” and “Same.”
- Using the *Program Rules* handout and the responses from the previous activity, have each group fill out their diagram. Share the diagrams as a large group, highlighting what similarities and differences were found between rules and systems that are already in place and the staff’s ideal rules and systems.

Activity: Model Assessment/Revision of Rules (20 minutes)

- Describe the *Model Assessment/Revision of Rules* activity:
 - What to say, “Now, keeping these similarities and differences in mind, we are going to analyze how effective our program’s current rules are at understanding that each youth is unique and helping promote their development.”
- Lead the *Model Assessment/ Revision of Rules* activity:
 - For this activity, start out by assessing one of the program’s rules together as a large group by asking the following questions:
 - Does the rule include protections from harassment, bullying, and discrimination?
 - How should the rule be shared with youth and their families?
 - How is the rule implemented?
 - These questions are also located on the *Program Rules* handout for the staff’s convenience.
 - Discuss with staff whether the rule needs to be revised to make it more inclusive.
 - Break into groups of three to four individuals and assign each group approximately one rule and one system currently in place.
 - Have each group engage in the same process that was completed as a large group, determining whether the rule/system needs to be revised to be more inclusive.
 - Have the small groups share either their assigned rule or system and any revisions they made. If a group feels like no revisions or modifications are necessary, they should be prepared to explain why.

Reflection and Recap (5 minutes):

- Return to the staff’s responses gathered at the start of the workshop (see Prior Knowledge activity). Ask the staff what they learned during the course of the workshop and record the information on the same paper or a new blank page if there is no room. Draw attention to topics that were on the list generated earlier, new topics, and questions that were answered.
- Ask follow-up questions, such as “What part of the activity made you realize that?”

Resources:

None

Sources:

Footnotes in this document can be found as references within the Youth Inclusion Implementation Guide at http://reach.umn.edu/inclusion/pdf/Youth_Inclusion_Implementation_Manual.pdf