

Physical and Psychological Safety



This checklist is part of the 8 Key Qualities of Youth Engagement.*

This quality of youth engagement is achieved through practices such as these:

- Creating group guidelines and organizational values which are promoted and visibly posted in meeting areas
- Ensuring staff /volunteers/leaders live and breathe these values and refer to them daily
- Hosting meetings/events in locations that are easy and safe to travel to, and arranging rides for evening activities
- Addressing harassment and discrimination if they arise
- Ensuring participation is always optional
- Having a counsellor on-site during activities/events that address difficult issues
- Familiarizing participants with health and safety information and protocol (locations of first-aid kits, fire escapes/extinguishers, etc.)
- Checking in with participants who seem withdrawn yet allowing them "space"
- Adjusting adult practices/norms to better accommodate young people's participation (wearing casual clothing, using plain language, not using acronyms, meeting in a casual environment, etc.)

* According to Eccles and Gootman¹⁴, there are eight key qualities associated with positive developmental settings: Physical and Psychological Safety, Appropriate Structure, Supportive Relationships, Opportunities for Belonging and Meaningful Inclusion, Positive Social Norms, Support for Efficacy and Mattering, Opportunities for Skill Building and Learning and Integration of Family, School and Community Efforts