Characteristics of Youth-Friendly Clinical Services

Adapted by Healthy Teen Network from Engender Health’s “Youth Friendly Services: A Manual for Service Providers”

Characteristics of Youth-Friendly Programming
✓ Youth feedback is sought and incorporated continuously
✓ Affordable fees
✓ Boys and young men welcomed and served
✓ Wide range of services available including pregnancy and birth control counseling, HIV and other STI testing and treatment
✓ Use of numbers instead of names in the waiting room
✓ System to "red-flag" youth with particular confidentiality concerns
✓ Flexible hours; offering lunch, evening, and weekend appointments
✓ Well-established mechanism to allow for slightly longer visits with adolescents
✓ Use of first names by all clinic staff to make the environment more informal and welcoming
✓ Walk-in clients welcomed and appointments arranged rapidly
✓ Participation in the federal 3408 drug discount purchasing program
✓ Well-established linkages and referrals to mental health, education, employment and social services
✓ System in place to provide continuous support to staff who work with young clients so that they remain comfortable and confident addressing their needs and concerns
✓ Procedures in place for gathering staff opinions on the quality of adolescent services provided
✓ Well established protocol to ensure that youth receive preventive counseling as recommend by the American Medical Association's Guidelines for Adolescent Preventive Services (GAPS)
✓ Mechanism in place to make referral appointments for youth and ensure they know exactly where and when to go
✓ Staff who can communicate with youth in their own language. Enforcement of translation service protocols
✓ Well established protocol so adolescents are asked for the most appropriate contact information rather than their home contact details
✓ System in place to keep providers up to date on contraceptive technology and provide opportunities for refresher training to update their skills and knowledge
✓ Well established protocols to ensure health providers remember to ask about risk-taking behavior, including unprotected sex, substance use, and violence, as well as about issues related to mental health
Characteristics of Youth-Friendly Health Facilities

✓ Convenient location
✓ Adequate space
✓ Counseling areas that provide visual and auditory privacy
✓ Examination areas that provide visual and auditory privacy
✓ Comfortable surroundings
✓ Ensure high quality adolescent health education materials are available in all the languages that young people in the community speak and for various reading levels, including low literacy
✓ Clear and visible information about youth clinic hours
✓ Automated voice messaging on telephones providing information about location, visiting hours, and telephone number for counseling
✓ Display teen focused magazines and poster on the walls
✓ Contraceptives options are on display in the waiting area
✓ List of fees for different services available in the waiting area
✓ Entrance and/or waiting room for adolescents separate from the one for adult clients
✓ Reception area that provides adolescents privacy to talk with receptionist without being overheard

Characteristics of Youth-Friendly Providers

✓ Familiarity with adolescent physiology and development
✓ Knowledge of appropriate medical options for adolescents according to age and maturity
✓ Trained on counseling
✓ Trained on working with and serving youth
✓ Skills to communicate fluently in the youth language
✓ Effective interpersonal skills
✓ Ability to relate to youth in a respectful manner
✓ Skills to honor privacy and confidentiality of youth
✓ Knowledge of mandatory reporting requirements
✓ Skills to engage in conversations about body image and development, sex, relationships, contraceptive method options, and gender norms
✓ Skills to bring myths to the surface, to discuss and dispel them
✓ Skills to take and/or update sexual health assessment at every visit
✓ Ability to explain to adolescents the reason for a particular test and what is involved
✓ Knowledge about parental consent regulations
✓ Skills to know how to emphasize the protections of confidentiality
✓ Clear understanding of the state’s law on informed consent and confidentiality in regards to a) contraceptive services; b) HIV and other STI testing and treatment; d) substance abuse treatment; and e) mental health care
✓ Everyday practice of staff to provide adolescents a slip of paper with their correctly spelled diagnosis and medications, if applicable
✓ Competent in providing referral advice
✓ Understanding and access to the latest information/publications relating to adolescents’ sexual and reproductive health
✓ Access to medical guidelines and protocols relating to service delivery for adolescents

Characteristics of Youth-Friendly Clinical Services

✓ Suggested characteristics of youth-friendly clinical services