



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 340B 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 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 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

Suggested Citation: Healthy Teen Network. (2015). Tip Sheet: Characteristics of youth-friendly clinical services. Baltimore, Maryland: Garrido-Fishbein, M. & Banikya-Leaseburg, M.