Youth-Friendly Referral Systems

It can be challenging for youth to approach adults for advice, especially if their questions involve sensitive topics like sex, substance abuse, or depression. It's up to adults to create a safe space and sustainable process to help teens access the services they need. Consider these aspects of an effective referral system to connect teens to youth-friendly services.

Health

Center

Policies

Understand federal and state laws and develop relevant policies that impact your referral process.

Outreach

Promote youth-friendly services in a variety of formats that teens will notice.

- Posters
- Presentations
- Social Media

Referral Staff

Identify and train trusted, "askable" adults to provide effective referrals.

- Teachers & counselors
- Program facilitators
- Front desk or other staff

Referral Guide

Compile a paper or electronic list of youth- friendly services (e.g., health centers, mental health services, job training) in your community.



Linkages

Build or strengthen your relationships with local youth-friendly service agencies and health centers.

- Tour organizations
- Host a meet and greet for partner agencies
- Develop MOUs

Tracking Referrals

Develop a paper or electronic tool and implement a system to track and evaluate referrals.



Procedures

Create step-by-step instructions for referral staff to know the best ways to make and track a referral. How to Make
a Referral

Who
What
Where
When
Why

Need help developing a sustainable referral system?

Contact the Adolescent Health Initiative, adolescenthealthinitiative.org.

For more information, check out "Developing a Referral System for Sexual Health Services," published in 2015 by CAI, the National Coalition of STD Directors and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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