



Ensuring the Safety and Security of BBYO Teens

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---------------|
| I. Introduction | Pg. 2 |
| II. Ensuring Safe Environments | Pg. 3 |
| III. Power Dynamics | Pg. 4 |
| IV. Teens At Risk | Pg. 5 |
| A. Mental Health | Pg. 6 |
| B. Suicidal Ideation | Pg. 7 |
| C. Substance Abuse | Pg. 7 |
| D. Intimacy, Relationships, and Privacy | Pg. 8 |
| E. Teen on Teen Violence and Bullying | Pg. 9 |
| F. All-Abilities | Pg. 9 |
| G. LGBTQIA+ Inclusion | Pg. 9 |
| V. Communicating with a Teen | Pg. 10 |
| VI. Documentation | Pg. 11 |
| VII. Parent Expectations | Pg. 12 |



I. Introduction

BBYO impacts the lives of tens of thousands of teens every year throughout the international Jewish community. By establishing and normalizing responses to teens at risk, BBYO is helping to ensure a safe and secure environment, and is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and positive environment for all teens that participate in our programs. The following policy is intended to keep teens within the BBYO movement mentally, emotionally, and physically safe.

When there is concern of a teen being at risk: whether through suspicion of abuse, a mental health concern, suicidal ideation, or something else, BBYO has a responsibility to act. It is imperative that BBYO personnel – staff, advisors, or other volunteers – respond to possible risk in accordance with local laws and the policies set forth in this document. The first thought of all BBYO personnel is to keep the teens in their care physically, emotionally, and mentally safe.

These policies are intended to be distributed and apply to all BBYO personnel and programs. BBYO recognizes that there are different laws globally concerning the safety and security of teens and that the laws of the given jurisdiction prevail above any other policy.

For BBYO's child abuse prevention and mandated reporting policy please see [this document](#), and for any questions about definitions please see [this document](#).

For any questions regarding this document or its implementation see the [Safe Environments Sharepoint page](#) or contact the Director of Inclusion.



II. Ensuring Safe Environments

BBYO is committed to providing an emotionally, mentally, and physically safe and respectful environment for our teens. All interactions with teens must be **appropriate, observable, and interruptible**. BBYO personnel are expected to always conduct their interactions with teens in open-spaces and in connection with their role as a mentor and adult. They should consider how interactions may be perceived by others and conduct themselves accordingly.

An important part of that commitment includes being aware of the visibility of spaces and eliminating the availability for unsupervised interactions. BBYO personnel will limit one-to-one interactions with teens whenever possible, and when unavoidable, one-to-one interactions will be conducted in an open, observable, and interruptible spaces. BBYO personnel will never be alone with a teen behind a closed door or in a space where no-one else can see or intervene.

When evaluating program spaces, BBYO personnel are required to consider the following:

- Space is open and visible;
- Doors have windows;
- Blinds remain open at all times (except during lockdown);
- Hotel rooms, bathrooms, and/or locker rooms provide privacy, while allowing for adult supervision;
- Any space that is not visible should not be used for one-on-one teen-to-teen or teen-to-BBYO personnel interaction.



III. Power Dynamics

Power dynamics are the way different people or different groups of people interact with each other. These dynamics are directly impacted by the power, whether perceived or real, that one person or group has over another. The power that one person has over another could be their job, physical appearance or strength, race, socio-economic status, gender, social status, and more. These dynamics are present at BBYO programs as they are outside of BBYO.

Feeling safe to speak up in any situation is essential in creating an environment where every teen, staff, advisor, and volunteer feels safe. While staff and advisors are in a position of authority, they must not attempt to utilize that authority to manipulate or abuse teens. The same power dynamics may exist between teens in leadership positions and BBYO members.

To achieve healthy power dynamics across BBYO programs it is important to continually consider the following:

1. **Co-create rules with teens** - while you may know what you want the rules to be, run them by and have teens agree to them by involving them in the decision-making process. Provide context if there are rules that are essential for safety.
2. **Set clear expectations** - teens should know from the start what is the expected behavior of them and of you and any advisors or volunteers. They should also know where they can go to for help if they feel rules have been violated or disrespected by other teens, staff, or advisors.
3. **Communication** - Listen to teens and ask open-ended questions. Do not assume you know what they are saying if you don't know, ask.
4. **Resolve conflicts early** - Respond to issues and concerns immediately. If a teen or other staff member claims that there is an issue, it must be addressed, even if you think that it is immaterial. Address conflict when it arises and if you need it get help from other staff or advisors.

Remember that BBYO believes in an environment where every teen has a voice, and no person is more important than another. It is important that power dynamics and the simple ways that those dynamics can impact peer relationships be discussed with all teens, and especially teens in leadership positions.



IV. Teens at Risk

BBYO is committed to dealing with challenges surrounding teen mental health, suicide, bullying, drugs and alcohol, and inclusion. It is the goal of BBYO to deal with all of these issues immediately and sensitively. It is our goal to understand the developmental forces at play, and to respond to teens in a way that supports them, and keeps everyone safe. Mental health professionals are specially trained and BBYO personnel are not expected to act in that capacity. As appropriate, they or their supervisors should seek expert help.

These are steps that BBYO personnel can take to ensure the safety of teens, and respond to the crisis at hand (every step may not be necessary in every situation):

- Gain more information from the teen(s);
- Contact parent(s) UNLESS there is a concern for the teen's safety by including the parent;
- Ensure teen's safety and well-being and act in accordance with plans put in place by teen's parents and other professionals;
- REPORT UP to the regional lead, area director, site director, Wellness Specialist, and/or the AVP of Passport;
- Complete a [BBYO Incident Report form](#);
- Continue to observe/monitor the teen's behavior.

In handling any issue of teen safety, it is expected that BBYO personnel will treat the teen and the matter at hand with respect and confidentiality.

BBYO personnel cannot promise a teen that information will not be shared with parents. If there is a concern about a teen's mental, physical, or emotional safety, a REPORT UP must be made and parents may be contacted.

Due to changes in personnel structure throughout the year and different programs the reporting chain may vary slightly. Overall the process looks as follows:



(YOU) REPORT UP

- REPORT UP:
 - YEAR ROUND to the Regional Lead AND the Area Director
 - MOVEMENT EXPERIENCES & PASSPORT to the Site Director AND Wellness Specialist, OR AVP of Passport

(THEY) REPORT UP

- Regional Lead or Area Director to the Senior VP of Community Impact
- Site Director or AVP of Passport to the Chief Movement Experiences Offer

(YOU) DOCUMENT

- Complete Incident Report Form

It is important to note that there may be an incident or concern that is not specifically addressed in BBYO's policy. In these cases, it is important that BBYO personnel consult with their regional lead, Area Director, Site Director, Wellness Specialist, and/or AVP of Passport to decide how best to keep the teen safe.

For all of these issues and responding to teens, an [Incident Report Form](#) must be filled out. To learn more about how to fill out an Incident Report Form see this document.

If issues arise of teens violating the BBYO Code of Conduct, BBYO personnel should consult the Code for the appropriate discipline and communicate with their regional lead, Area Director, Site Director, Wellness Specialist, and/or AVP of Passport. It is important to remember with any disciplinary action that these are not bad teenagers, but instead a teen who made a bad choice or who may be struggling. We want teens to understand the decision they made and that there are consequences of that decision, but we also want to recognize that this is a single moment and not a reflection on them as a human. For more guidance on responding to Code of Conduct violations and BBYO's philosophy of discipline, please see [the BBYO Code of Conduct Implementation Guide](#).

A. Mental Health

Any teen who has recently been hospitalized or is receiving intensive mental health care, must have their participation in BBYO overnight programming cleared by the Director of Inclusion. The following may be needed by the Director of Inclusion for the teen to participate:

- Note from the teen's physician or mental health professional noting current mental state and ability to participate while recognizing the stress of a convention or overnight program;
- Safety Plan; that allows the staff to feel comfortable with potential needed intervention.
- Conversation with the family, regional staff/site director/AVP of Passport, and the teen.

The ability to participate in overnight programming is at the discretion of BBYO personnel. BBYO personnel may require another adult or caregiver to attend with the teen to ensure their safety. An



[Incident Report Form](#) should be filled out documenting the decision, and any communications or information shared with the Director of Inclusion or regional staff about a teen's fitness to participate in overnight events following a hospitalization should be recorded and documented.

B. Suicidal Ideation

Suicide is the second leading cause of death amongst children ages 10 – 34. Suicidal thought is defined as thinking about killing oneself or expressing a plan/desire to kill oneself. A teen who is expressing that they are thinking about hurting themselves should be taken seriously. BBYO personnel should never leave a teen who is expressing suicidal thought alone.

BBYO personnel who have ANY concerns or information that a teen may be having suicidal thoughts MUST immediately:

- Contact a regional lead, Area Director, Wellness Specialist, Site Director, or the AVP of Passport. It is not the role of BBYO personnel to determine if a plan or threat is credible, they must pass this information up to a regional lead, Area Director, Wellness Specialist, Site Director, or the AVP of Passport, and connect the teen with help.
- The regional lead, Area Director, Wellness Specialist, Site Director, or the AVP of Passport will then consult with a mental health provider or crisis hotline.
- Teen's parent(s) will be contacted, and a plan made for teen's safety.
- Teen must be shadowed at all times until a safety plan can be made and the teen is either transported and admitted to the hospital or is placed in the care of their parents.
- If the teen is involved in an international program or must travel to get home, BBYO will arrange for the safest way for the teen to travel home and contract with the teen to travel without incident of self-harm.
- If needed the Senior VP of Community Impact or the Chief Movement Experiences Officer will be contacted.
- An [Incident Report form](#) must be filled out.

Please see above for the participation of any teen who has recently been hospitalized for suicidal ideation.

C. Substance Use

Teens are prohibited from using E-cigarettes, Juuls, tobacco products, and alcohol while participating in a BBYO program. According to the United States Controlled Substances Act of 1970, marijuana is considered as a Schedule 1 drug. Despite it being legal in several states across the US, any use of marijuana during any BBYO program is not allowed by BBYO teens at BBYO programs. Use of marijuana or any other drugs will result in immediate removal from the current program and/or suspension from participation in future BBYO activities.

BBYO personnel who are made aware of teens abusing substances during a BBYO sanctioned and sponsored event must:



- Immediately check on the safety of the teen participant.
- Notify regional lead, Area Director, Wellness Specialist, Site Director, or the AVP of Passport, and consult the Code of Conduct.
- Contact teen's parents.

Any questions about this policy should be addressed with the Senior VP of Community Impact or the Chief Movement Experiences Officer.

D. Intimacy, Relationships, and Privacy

BBYO must allow teens to pursue healthy, consensual relationships with each other within the bounds of communal norms. BBYO's policy on intimate relationships is as follows:

BBYO recognizes that teens may engage in consensual physical and intimate relationships. At all BBYO activities, it is expected that teens will adhere to societal norms, what would be considered appropriate in a public setting, when expressing their relationships physically. Any teens who publicly engage in inappropriate touching, exposure, or movement for the purpose of sexual stimulation will be asked to stop and could be removed from a program. Additionally, sexual activities may never take place in living quarters or outside the boundaries and rules established for a particular event environment.

Utilizing one's board position or position of leadership, or any attempt to coerce or manipulate another teen into sexual contact will not be tolerated and will include disciplinary consequences. Additionally, any non-consensual fondling, groping, or other physical or sexual contact will include disciplinary consequences.

There are many additional documents to help you navigate the topic of relationships, intimacy, and privacy at BBYO:

- Questions of promoting healthy relationships in one's region, utilizing the community agreements at all overnight experiences, or the lens through which to discuss and educate on healthy relationships can be found [here](#).
- Helpful language when approaching people who may be engaging in activities that make you or others feel uncomfortable can be found [here](#).
- The meaning of terms as they relate to defining inappropriate physical behaviors (consent, assault, rape, power, etc.) as well as the consequences of engaging in those actions must be reviewed and posted at all BBYO overnight experiences.
- Definitions can be found [here](#).
- Posters for events can be found [here](#).

Any allegation of non-consensual conduct amongst teens should be followed-up on by BBYO full-time staff. BBYO full-time staff should follow this step-by-step guide when responding to any allegation of peer-to-peer sexual assault. Procedures for participants reporting incidents, including BBYO's anonymous third-party reporting line and [online reporting form](#), must be made readily available to all participants and staff.



More information on Relationships, Intimacy, and Privacy can be found on BBYO's [Healthy Relationships Sharepoint page](#).

E. Teen on Teen Violence & Bullying

Bullying and hazing are prohibited at BBYO. These activities run in direct opposition to BBYO's principles and goals and have no place within BBYO. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all BBYO personnel that when they notice bullying dynamics within their groups to address these issues and attempt to deflate these situations.

If an incidence of bullying or hazing occurs during a BBYO event and/or is brought to the attention of BBYO personnel, BBYO personnel must act in accordance with the BBYO Code of Conduct.

If the bullying has occurred on social media or digitally and is brought to the attention of BBYO personnel, they will take action. Action includes:

- Use the information at hand (screen shots, teen testimony, etc.) to better understand what has occurred.
- Take the appropriate steps to ensure the emotional, mental, and physical well-being of all teens involved.

If BBYO personnel are being made aware of bullying occurring outside of BBYO. It is the responsibility of personnel to liaise with parents/caregivers, the school, or others involved to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the teen.

F. All-Abilities

BBYO strives to include all people and make reasonable accommodations for teen participants. BBYO personnel who need assistance should reach out to the Director of Inclusion. More information and resources on inclusion at BBYO can be found [here](#).

G. LGBTQIA+ Inclusion

Teens will be assigned sleeping rooms with the gender they identify with. This will be done by:

- For regional programs, BBYO staff will coordinate with the Director of Inclusion to ensure that teen is given all the necessary accommodations, is rooming with the gender they feel most comfortable with, and any additional needs are met.
- For Movement Experiences events: Prior to the event, BBYO will request permission from both teens and their guardians which states that they consent to rooming with a gender non-binary, gender non-conforming, or transitioning teen. This should be done by using registration documents.
- For all programs: Teens will be given a private area to change, and can use it if they are so inclined.

Questions about this policy or its implementation can be addressed with the Director of Inclusion. More information on inclusion at BBYO can be found [here](#).



V. Communicating with a Teen

Some teens who are struggling or who are victims of abuse may come out and tell a trusted adult what is going on, while others may display concerning behaviors (cutting, disengaging from peers and friends, significant and sudden changes in mood, affect, or more), or a parent may tell an advisor or staff member about something that is happening with their teen. In all of these instances, it is important that personnel know how to appropriately respond to teens, REPORT UP to their regional lead, area director, Wellness Specialist, site director, or AVP of Passport and REPORT OUT to the civil authorities if necessary.

If you have concerns about a teen, it is ok to tell them that and ask some questions. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when talking with them:

- Listen, let the teen talk (you might get all you need).
- Let the teen guide the conversation. Do not supply words, diagnoses, or acts for the child, or ask questions that assume details.
- Ask open-ended questions: Tell more about that, When you say X what does that mean to you, What happened?
- Keep questions simple.
- Recognize this may be difficult for the teen, and they might not be ready to tell you everything.
- It's not your job to investigate.
- Also, if the teen is comfortable, it can be helpful to have another adult in the conversation to listen and help understand what might be happening with the teen.
- Take notes and complete an incident report form.

Remember if you have concern or suspicion that a teen has been abused, you do not need proof. You must **REPORT UP AND OUT** when you suspect abuse has occurred.



VI. Documentation

BBYO personnel are required to fill out an [Incident Report Form](#) for any **concerning behavior displayed by a teen, any Code of Conduct violation, and/or mental, emotional, or social health challenge**. BBYO personnel must document all concerning behaviors, teens at risk, and reports of trauma, crisis, and abuse or neglect. Finally, any communication with parents or caregivers should be documented with an Incident Report Form.

For more information on how to fill out an Incident Report Form, see our step by step guide to completing an incident report form.



VII. Parent Expectations

BBYO recognizes the rights of parents to know what is going on with their teens. BBYO will provide parents information on BBYO's policies and guidelines for dealing with teens. If their teen needs additional support, parents will be contacted and consulted on how best to help their teen. If there is a concern that a parent is the one possibly hurting a teen, communication will be with the non-offending caregiver or contact the appropriate authorities.