

ENSURING THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BBYO TEENS

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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 they 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 any questions regarding this document or its implementation please contact [BBYO's Senior Director of Wellness and 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 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 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.

If a teen appears to be struggling at or on a BBYO program, staff will:

- Check in with the teen
- Communicate with caregivers
- Implement strategies to support success

BBYO will work with caregivers, appropriate mental health professionals, and the teen to build out appropriate help and support within the limitations of the program.

However, BBYO programs are not a therapeutic environment. As a result, there may be times when a decision is made to remove a teen from programming due to mental, emotional, or social health needs.

Teens who express or who are dealing with the following challenges may be sent home from a BBYO program:

- Suicidal thoughts

- Threats of harm to self or others

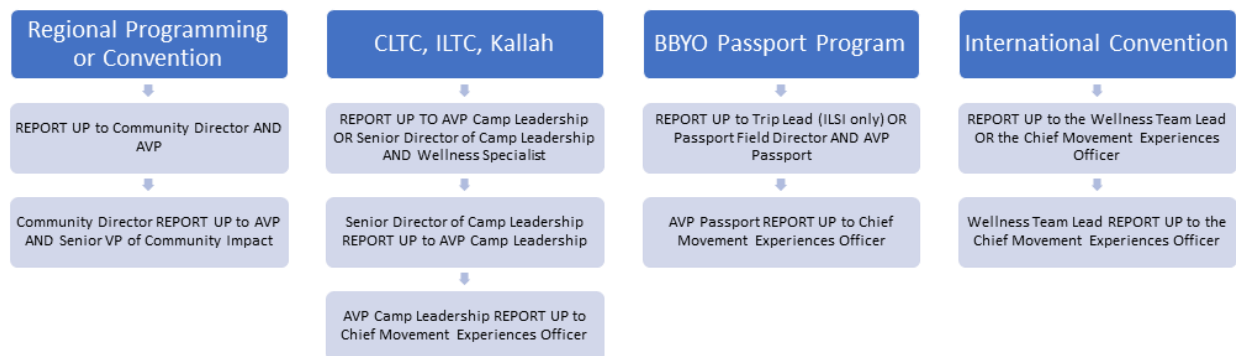
Teens who engage in the following behaviors may be dismissed from a program or require daily check-ins, asked to consult with their home-based therapist, or require additional staff support (potentially at parental expense):

- Non-suicidal self-injury behaviors
- Disordered eating
- Aggressive behaviors
- Depression that interferes with participation in program
- Extreme anxiety that interferes with participation in program
- Need for individualized support not known before program

In managing 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:



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 REPORT UP via the reporting chain above to consult and 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 by BBYO personnel. 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 supervisor per the reporting chain above. 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 humans. 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. Participation Guidelines

For any overnight program, all teens must complete their CampDocs profile and are asked to include any relevant information regarding their mental, emotional, and social health.

Any teen who has hospitalized for mental health challenges or diagnoses in the last year or is receiving intensive mental health care (such as a residential treatment center, day hospital program, etc.), must have their participation in BBYO overnight programming cleared by the Senior Director of Wellness and Inclusion, prior to participation in overnight events.

The following may be needed by BBYO's Senior Director of Wellness and 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

Teens in the following situations may not be allowed to participate in BBYO programs:

- An in-patient, hospital program
- A day hospital program
- Recent dismissal from a residential treatment program, wilderness program, or other equivalent
- Inability to be in school or participate in school programming
- Level of support that would require a one-to-one

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 Senior Director of Wellness and Inclusion or regional staff about a teen's fitness to participate in overnight events following a hospitalization should be recorded and documented.

Parents are encouraged to reach out to the Senior Director of Wellness and Inclusion to discuss teen needs and accommodations prior to programs to best ensure teen support. With appropriate knowledge and planning, BBYO can accommodate needs and set up systems of support for teens.

B. Suicidal Ideation

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 will be taken seriously.

If the teen is at a BBYO chapter program, regional convention, summer program, Passport trip, or International Convention, staff should:

- REPORT UP via the reporting chain on page 6

- For additional support, consult with the Senior Director of Wellness and Inclusion or other mental health professional or crisis hotline (988 or Crisis Text Line).
- Contact teen's parent(s) or caregiver
 - Make a plan made for teen's safe return to parent
 - If the teen is participating 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 OR have parents fly to meet their teen and transport them home
 - 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
 - An [Incident Report form](#) must be filled out

If a teen is not in BBYO's care, staff should:

- Contact teen's parent(s) or caregiver
- Make them aware of allegations or information that has been shared with you
- 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. Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

Non-suicidal self-injury or self-harm is when a person hurts their own body on purpose by cutting, burning, pulling one's hair out, etc. It is a way to cope with mental or emotional pain, sadness, anger, or stress and is generally not associated with suicidal thoughts or actions.

If it is discovered that a teen is engaging in non-suicidal self-injurious behaviors while at a BBYO program, staff should:

- REPORT UP via the reporting chain on page 6
- Ensure teen is safe and get medical attention if necessary
- Contact parents
- Work with onsite Wellness Specialist or the Senior Director of Wellness and Inclusion to safety plan for safe continuation at program or for teen departure from program
 - Depending on the severity of the self-harm and teen's ability to safety plan, a teen may be dismissed from a program so that they can receive appropriate help
- An [Incident Report form](#) must be filled out

If it is discovered that a teen is engaging in non-suicidal self-injurious behaviors while not at a BBYO program:

- Contact teen's parent(s) or caregiver
- Make them aware of allegations or information that has been shared with you
- An [Incident Report form](#) must be filled out

D. Substance Use

Teens are prohibited from using e-cigarettes, Juuls, tobacco products, marijuana, edibles, 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 using substances during a BBYO program:

- Immediately check on the safety of the teen participant
- REPORT UP via the reporting chain on page 6
 - Consult and take appropriate action in accordance with the [BBYO Code of Conduct and Community Commitment](#)
- Contact teen's parents
- An [Incident Report form](#) must be filled out

If it is discovered that a teen is engaging in using substances while not at a BBYO program:

- Contact teen's parent(s) or caregiver
- Make them aware of allegations or information that has been shared with you
- An [Incident Report form](#) must be filled out

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 staff and navigate the topic of relationships, intimacy, and privacy at BBYO can be found on the Healthy Relationships page on SharePoint.

It is expected that BBYO personnel will review the Community Standards, consent, and avenues for reporting at every overnight program. 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. Additionally, BBYO personnel will

ensure that the “[Safety, Health, and Wellness](#),” and “[Know Your Terms](#)” posters are hung at all events.

Any allegation of non-consensual conduct amongst teens should be followed-up on by BBYO full-time staff and reported up via the reporting chain on page 6.

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 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
- Contact parents of teens involved
- Take any necessary disciplinary steps

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 well-being 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 Senior Director of Inclusion. More information and resources on inclusion at BBYO can be found on the BBYO inclusion SharePoint page.

G. Gender Inclusive Rooming

BBYO seeks to provide an inclusive rooming community and recognizes that our teens have a variety of gender identities, not limited to only male and female. At all events, teens will be assigned sleeping rooms with the gender they identify with. This will be done by:

Prior to event:

- Using registration documents, BBYO will ask both teens and their guardians to select whether they consent to rooming with a teen whose gender identity may be different than their own
- Staff will then place teens in rooms using the above information and taking into account any roommate requests
- Staff will coordinate as needed with the Senior Director of Wellness and Inclusion to best support the teen

At event:

- Teens will be given a private area to change which they may use if so inclined.

In any gender inclusive rooms, BBYO aims to honor roommate requests as well. A teen and their guardian must indicate in registration forms that they agree to participate in a rooming arrangement that is gender inclusive.

More information on teen rooming policies 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 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 okay 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 BBYO 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.

VII. Parent Expectations

BBYO recognizes the rights of parents to know what is going on with their teens. BBYO will provide parents with 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 contacting the appropriate authorities.