

# **YOUTH OUTREACH EVENTS SUGGESTIONS**

**Reproductive Health Program July 2016**

## **Using Outreach to Build Relationships**

Word of mouth is a powerful draw for your clinic, especially when it comes to birth control for youth where we know that confidentiality is key. A great way to draw youth to your clinic is through one or more youth-specific events. Keep in mind these events are great opportunities to not only engage with youth, but strengthen partnerships in your community including with local School Based Health Clinics.

## **Mini-Grants**

This handout provides some possible ideas for events. We are here to help! If you would like help in this process, feel free to reach out to Liz Gharst at [elizabeth.a.gharst@state.or.us](mailto:elizabeth.a.gharst@state.or.us) or 971-673-0363.

The RH Program is offering mini-grants which can be used for one or more events. Our mini-grant specifies that youth must be involved in the planning, however the most effective way to ensure that youth in your community will want to participate in any event you hold by asking them what they want.

## **Ask Youth What They Want**

Ways to engage youth:

- Polls on your organization's Facebook page—have them vote for event choices and let youth know you will chose the option with the most votes
- A Facebook post asking for comments—let youth know you are planning an event and ask for suggestions
- A suggestion box in the waiting room
- A survey in the waiting room—have them vote for event choices and let youth know you will chose the option with the most votes
- Create a youth advisory group that you regularly consult about clinic changes and community outreach

While you are asking for input, if a youth seems excited that you are holding an event, invite them to participate on the planning committee.

## **Incentives**

If you are asking youth to help you plan your event, some suggested incentives are:

- Provide food at meetings and events
- Transportation reimbursement
- Childcare
- Gift cards
- Volunteer credit – work with schools to offer volunteer hours
- Also ask youth what they would like as incentives

If you are holding an art show, poetry/spoken word slam, photo competition, or other similar event, consider providing a prize for one or more winners.

## **Messaging and Materials at Your Event**

Many of these events suggested below will bring youth in, but are not direct sexual health events. You can choose health related themes for some of the events, but the goal of other events may be solely to engage with the youth. If this is the case, consider what staff and materials to bring with you to the event. Plan to have information about your services available so youth know how to access them. Ask youth on your planning committee what information most important to provide at the event – e.g. healthy relationships, STIs, talking to parents, flyer with clinic hours, etc.

## **Existing Community Events**

We know a lot of you are already participating in events in your community including health fairs and community events. Consider also participating in other community focused events not related to health that may be a good venue for you to talk about health services as well such as movie nights in the park, local music festivals, or back to school nights.

## **What to Bring**

Here are some suggested items for when you are tabling and providing resources at an event.

- Brochures – for your clinic and other important community resources and agencies
- Interactive Activities – think of a fun game to play to engage the community and get them thinking about the topics of healthy sexuality and relationships. Ideas: jeopardy, a matching game, condom line-up, myth/fact questions, etc.
- Prizes for participating in activities – ask your community what they would like.
- Condoms and lube
- Birth control teaching kit or birth control methods – great opportunity to do education
- Print business cards or flyers with links to websites and resources for caregivers/parents and youth

## **Importance of Events Promotion**

It is good practice to ensure part of your budget is dedicated to marketing and outreach for your event. You can plan an amazing event, but if youth haven't heard about it, your attendance may be low. This is one of the most common oversights when organizations are planning an event. Use the youth on your planning committee to help identify the best avenues to advertise your event. Also using multiple advertising venues is key.

Ways to advertise:

- Post the information on your website so that if someone googles for information that they can find it.
- Create a Facebook event and post reminders with the link to the event so their friends can see if a youth has indicated that they are “interested in” or “going to” the event.
- Print flyers and distribute, or ask youth to distribute flyers, at places their peers hang out.
- Get your event in the local events calendar, church program, or school events board.
- If you are planning one big event, consider a radio spot to announce your event.
- Work with the agencies you refer your clients to for other services such as IPV and drug and alcohol treatment agencies. Ask them to send out an email blast about your event or include in their newsletter or e-newsletter.

## **Ideas to Get Your Creative Juices Flowing**

It's important to think about providing food, childcare, transportation and incentives at all the community events you coordinate.

### Theater in education

Assemble a group of youth to write their own play or video script under the guidance of a professional or local theater group.

*Play:* Consider how they will perform their play. Ask youth what venue is most appropriate – school, church, local theater stage, etc. Can you use the play to facilitate a community dialogue? Maybe one or more clinic staff could help youth facilitate the dialogue.

*Video:* Consider if you need video equipment or just want to shoot the video on a smart phone. Will it be one take or more than one take? If it is more than one take, do you or does one of the youth have access to video editing software? Consider holding a screening party to show the film and also consider if there is an online venue to promote it such as your website or organization Facebook page.

### Dance events

#### *LGTBQ Prom*

Do you live in a part of the state that is challenging for LGTBQ youth? Consider creating a safe space for them such as a prom and allow the youth to choose the theme and music.

#### *Concert*

Host a concert showcasing youth artists in the area. If there are not a lot of youth artists in your area, have youth choose their favorite local bands.

#### *Dance battle*

Host a dance battle with a dj. Consider taking videos of the battle and posting to social media.

#### *DJ Dance Party and Fashion Show*

Have youth choose their favorite dj. The fashion show does not have to be with designers. Let youth choose a theme for the night and dress up—have everyone who wants participate in a fashion show enter to show off their creativity.

### Art/Literary Events

#### *Art Show*

Is art popular in your community? Host an art show that exhibits young artists. Find out which youth are competing in county fairs for their art and encourage them to participate.

#### *Poetry/Spoken Word Slam*

Have youth pick a theme or leave it open ended depending on what they prefer. Host a night for them to show off their talent. Consider taking videos of the event and posting to social media.

#### *Short Story Slam*

Is there a creative writing group at a local bookstore that is active? Have youth create short story entries and host a night for them to share their stories.

## Sports Events

### *Soccer or Basketball Tournament*

Host a soccer or a basketball tournament. Consider allocating part of the budget for purchasing equipment or uniforms that can be used after the event.

### *Host a Junior Rodeo*

Trying to get more young men into your clinic? Is rodeo popular in your area? Consider hosting a junior rodeo.

## Social Events

### *Recurring movie nights or TV show watching nights*

If you do not have a TV at your clinic, consider partnering with a local organization, school, or church. Consider having appointment times just before or during the movie/tv show if you are hosting at your clinic.

### *Pool Party*

Host a pool party at a local community center and have an outreach table with information about services.

### *Talent Show*

Have youth plan and host a talent show. Consider taking videos of the battle and posting to social media.

## Events at the Clinic

### *Swag Bag Event*

Ask for donations and buy items for “swag bags” and hold a “swag bag” event where if youth come they can take a bag and a gift card home them (can be \$5 or \$10, does not have to be a high amount). Provide music, food, and prizes to draw large crowds in. Consider having schedulers available so youth can make appointments while they are there in addition to providing information about your services.

### *Youth Summit*

Host a “Youth Summit” day at your clinic with different workshop topics important to youth such as life skills, communication skills, healthy relationships, or birth control 101. Consider blocking out the day for walk-in youth appointments so youth can take advantage of services while they are there.

### *Teen Nights at the Clinic*

Have an extended hours evening periodically. Provide food and plan activities while youth are there. Consider having both scheduled and walk-in appointments available.

## **Final Note**

Many of these suggestions came from previous events held by community based organizations in Oregon. As a reminder, feel free to contact Liz Gharst at [elizabeth.a.gharst@state.or.us](mailto:elizabeth.a.gharst@state.or.us) or 971-673-0363 for any help you would like including examples of successful past events.