

YOUTH OUTREACH EVENTS SUGGESTIONS

Reproductive Health Program

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 to strengthen partnerships in your community including with local School Based Health Clinics.

This handout provides some 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 or 971-673-0363.

Ask Youth What They Want

Ways to engage youth:

- Polls on your organization's Facebook page — ask youth to vote for event choices, letting them 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 — ask youth to vote for event choices, letting them 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:

- 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 the 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 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 is 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 already participate in events in your community, including health fairs and community events. You may also want to consider participating in events not related to health (e.g., such as movies in the park, local music festivals, or back to school nights) as they may also be good opportunities to talk about your services.

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.

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 and distribute flyers, or ask youth to distribute flyers where their peers hang out.
- Get your event in the local event 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 and/or include in your 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 one of the youth have access to video editing software? Consider holding a screening party to show the film, also consider 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 an event for them in a safe space 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 to 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 an active creative writing group? 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. 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 or 971-673-0363 for help.