

DISCUSSION TOOL: RECRUITING AND ENGAGING MALE ADOLESCENTS IN PREP PROGRAMMING

Purpose: Young men have a critical role in preventing premature fatherhood, pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). However, grantees often share that it is difficult to recruit and engage young men in their Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) projects—particularly within implementation sites that are not schools. Grantees aiming to engage male adolescents should make sure their PREP programming is not only appealing to young men but that it challenges gender-exploitative activities that reinforce or take advantage of gender inequalities and stereotypes. This tool can be used to guide a discussion about engaging male adolescents in your PREP projects.

Instructions: Use this tool to reflect on your organization’s readiness to recruit and engage male students and staff in community and juvenile justice settings. The tool is broken into three sections: sociocultural considerations, programmatic planning, and workforce development.

Sociocultural Considerations

“Sociocultural” refers to a wide array of societal and cultural influences, including race, ethnicity, gender, and beliefs and value systems, which impact our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. By engaging young men, you should consider how gender norms influence their decision to interact with the program.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS	
1. What is the current demographic make-up of the youth in your program?	
2. How do sociocultural factors such as race, ethnicity, and beliefs and value systems influence gender norms for young men in your community?	
3. What issues are young men in your community interested in and which organizations address them?	
4. Based on your answers to these questions, where do you need additional support in your programming?	

Programmatic Planning

Young men are not always considered the primary audience of existing programs. There are several ways to tailor your programming to meet the specific needs of young men. Make sure your program includes hands-on, active components because lectures are often ineffective for reaching young men. Programming should incorporate active engagement with group activities, group discussion, and peer facilitation.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS	
1. How does your program affirm the value of young men?	
2. How does your program include young men in your promotional materials?	
3. How might your program challenge existing gender norms and guide male adolescents into new definitions of “masculinity”?	
4. How do you incorporate additional resources that may pertain to young men, including legal assistance, child support, education programs, and employment assistance.	
5. How do you engage young men when you plan your program?	
6. Based on your answers to these questions, where do you need additional support in your programming?	

Workforce Development

Staff are the face of the organization and help to create an environment where young men feel empowered to make decisions for themselves and for their community. Staff should feel confident and comfortable recruiting and engaging young men. Although it is not always necessary, hiring male staff and recruiting male volunteers can be a key component for engaging young men in your program. It is important that they understand the importance of their role as a trusted mentor in the program.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS	
1. How does your staff reflect shared experiences of participants?	
2. How does your program currently recruit male staff or staff who are comfortable working with young men?	
3. What type of knowledge and support do staff have to support young men?	
4. How are staff embedded in the community in different settings to reach young men?	
5. Based on your answers to these questions, where do you need additional support in your programming?	

RESOURCES

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- Youth First. (2013, June). *Male friendliness assessment tool*. <https://files.ctctcdn.com/de1a686c101/f5d1a0ad-f61e-44ba-8f73-9e89a06a22e0.pdf>

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