

Let's take a journey with Jay as she visits a youth drop-in center to check out an afterschool program.



INTERACTION 1: YOUTH WORKER

"I am always writing stories in my spare time, so my friend Carmen told me that I should check out the arts program at the local youth drop-in center after school. I was a little nervous because I had never been to the drop-in center before. When I got there, there was a lot going on. I saw a group of teens playing video games, others making food for the group dinner, and others studying. It seemed like a cool place, but I wasn't sure I would fit in.

That's when I met Kyrie. He introduced himself as a youth worker and asked me if it was my first time at the Drop-in Center. I told him that it was, and he asked me what my name was and I told him 'Juliania Pena-Guerrero.' He asked me to spell it. People always mess it up, but then he said it back to me and made sure he got the pronunciation right. So nice! And to top it off, he asked me if I had another name I prefer to use, and I said that I go by "Jay." Then he said, "Jay, why brought you to the drop-in center today?" He even used my name right! I told him that I wanted to check out the arts program, and he told me some more about it.

He then asked me to fill out some paperwork. So, I sat down to fill out a little form, and you know what was cool? There was a field for preferred pronouns and gender identity. Even though mine are *she*, *her*, and *hers*, and I'm cisgender, I'm glad they asked.

When I was done, Kyrie said that he wanted to take a few minutes to explain the other services at the drop-in center. He told me about the homework help group, the employment training program, free dinners throughout the week, and confidential counseling services. He asked me if I needed bus token to get home. I told him that I did, so he gave me one. Once we finished the paperwork, he gave me a tour of the drop-in center. After that I hung out a bit in their library corner before the arts program started. I was excited to see a book by my favorite author, Benjamin Alire Saenz and read that while I waited."

What behaviors of the youth worker were culturally responsive?

What ways is the organization culturally responsive?

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INTERACTION 2: PROGRAM COORDINATOR

"When it was time for the program to start, I took a seat on a couch in the lounge. I noticed a big piece of paper hanging up that said 'Group Norms' at the top. I was reading it when a woman got up and introduced herself as Rachel, the arts program coordinator. I felt like the only new person in the group and was nervous that she was going to make me stand up and introduce myself. Luckily, she said it was time to start check-in. Everyone in the group got the chance to say their name and share how their week had been. It was a chill way to get to know everyone.

Rachel then said that Simone, another teen in the group, was going to lead an icebreaker. Simone gave us all pipe cleaners and asked us to make a shape or symbol to describe ourselves. When we were done making our shapes, we all got the chance to share what our symbols represented. I made a pencil because I love to write and draw.

Rachel then told us that we were going to make lanterns today while learning about the Chinese Lantern Festival. Before we got started, Allen, another teen in the group, shared with us the meaning of the Chinese Lantern Festival and showed up pictures of his family celebrating. I honestly know nothing about Chinese culture, so it was cool to learn about his family's traditions.

We spent the rest of the hour making our lanterns and chatting. At one point, another person in the group started to speak in a Chinese accent to be funny. I could tell it was making Allen uncomfortable. I was relieved when Rachel noticed and said that teasing and making stereotypes was not tolerated at the drop-in center. The rest of the program was really fun. I'm glad Carmen recommended I check it out."



**What behaviors of the program coordinator were culturally responsive?
What ways is the program culturally responsive?**

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INTERACTION 3: EMPLOYMENT COORDINATOR

"After going to the arts program for a while, I decided to make an appointment with the employment coordinator at the drop-in center. I had been wanting to get a job for a while to help my family with our bills. My appointment was at 4pm, but I had to wait a while before he came to find me in the lounge. He said, 'is Juliana here?' I said yes, and then told him that I went by Jay. He laughed and said, 'Good, that's way easier to say!' He introduced himself as John and brought me to his office.

First, he asked me to fill out a form. I filled it out as best as I could, but I didn't know all the information like my social security number. When he reviewed the form, he asked me if I had a social security number. I told him that I did, but I couldn't remember it off the top of my head. I wasn't sure he believed me. He told me to bring it in for our next appointment.

Then we started talking about my work interests. I told him that I loved books, art, design, and stuff like that. He said the book store would be a great place for me to work, but that they don't typically hire teens. That was disappointing to hear. We then talked about when I would be available to work. He said that I'd probably have the most success applying for jobs in retail or fast food and he showed me a list of places that were hiring.

He then told me about a few upcoming workshops at the drop-in center to develop resumes and practice interviews. I was happy to hear that, because thinking about an interview makes me really nervous. It will be good to have some practice. John then got up and told me that he had to leave for a meeting. My appointment with John felt really rushed. He must be really busy."

What behaviors of the employment coordinator were culturally responsive?
What behaviors of the employment coordinator were not culturally responsive?