

Youth-Friendly Behaviors

“The counselor at my school found out that my mom just lost her job. He brought me into his office and asked me if my family needed support with anything. I told him that my mom is really worried about being able to keep up with the bills. The counselor was so great. He called a local organization that helps people cover their electricity bills, and they gave me information that I can share with my mom. He also gave me information about how my family can sign up for food stamps. He said he was going to check back with me next week to see if he can help us out further. It calmed me down to be able to talk with him.”



Which youth-friendly behaviors did the counselor demonstrate?

YOUTH-FRIENDLY BEHAVIORS

1. Discusses with youth what information they share will be kept **private**.
2. Provides and/or supports **fair treatment** and equal opportunity for ALL youth.
3. **Listens to** and objectively considers what youth have to say.
4. **Accommodates needs** of individual youth (tardiness, bringing a friend along, etc.).
5. Uses **positive body language** and an approachable, warm tone in communicating with youth.
6. Patiently **helps** youth **navigate** referrals and any other **systems** that may be challenging.
7. Communicates **clearly** with youth (avoids jargon, etc.).
8. Uses sensitivity, maintains neutral language and body language, and **withholds judgment** when discussing things like sexual health, substance use, interpersonal violence, sexual orientation, gender and personal expression, and mental health with youth.

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“I was trying to get a summer job, so I went to a workforce development office. I showed up late to my appointment because I had to drop my little brother off at a friend’s house first. I know I shouldn’t have been late, but the person I met with made me feel so bad about it. I feel like she talked down to me the whole time. I don’t know if she’s really going to help me or not.”



What could the adult in this scenario do differently to be youth-friendly?

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“I’ve been feeling really sad for a while now, so my mom sent me to talk to a therapist. I didn’t think it would be very helpful, but the therapist was so nice. He really listened to me and explained depression in a way that I could understand. I feel less overwhelmed and am looking forward to meeting with him again in a few weeks.”

Which youth-friendly behaviors did the therapist demonstrate?

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