



## **WORKING WITH TEENAGERS**

As you prepare yourself to be a Tribal Elder, there are issues which you must consider that could have an adverse impact in terms of dealing with youth. There are many issues that have surfaced over the last few years in youth-oriented activities regarding liability, sexual misconduct, etc.

It is imperative that you are aware of the following:

- Maintain a hands-off policy when working with youth. This includes hitting, wrestling, kissing, having someone sit in your lap, etc. You are an adult entrusted to work with teenagers. No matter how “mature” a teenager may be, remember this policy.
- Protect yourself by not being alone with one teen in your area, especially in an enclosed environment. Always have somebody else with you. If you need to talk in private, step away from the group but don’t separate yourself to another location.
- Use appropriate language and insist that those around you do the same.
- Smoking, drugs or alcohol are not allowed at camp. **NO EXCEPTIONS**
- If a fight ensues or other violence is threatened, clear the area. You can attempt to verbally diffuse or end the situation without placing yourself or others in harm’s way. If a weapon is displayed, do not attempt to disarm the person. Contact our security person and a member of the District Staff immediately.
- If a person is injured and on the ground. **DO NOT MOVE THEM.** Contact the camp nurse and a member of District Staff immediately.
- Be careful when conducting any activity so that nobody is injured. Be aware of the surroundings and avoid any possible hazards.
- Confidentiality is important; however, let the group know that you are a mandated reporter. If a youth confides in you or the group, it should stay with you or the group. If there is a concern that needs further consideration (such as suicide, impending harm to oneself or another, current sexual abuse, etc.) you are **mandated to inform the PRYDE chairperson**, who may contact a professional agency for further assistance. **DO NOT** discuss the situation with anyone but the PRYDE chairperson, including other Elders or adults at camp.
- Utilize common sense in dealing with your group members. Try to develop a rapport with as many members as possible, avoiding favoritism, elitism, etc. which could hinder your rapport with the entire group. Remain neutral.