

# QUALITY TIPS FOR QUALITY PROGRAMS

## YPQA HELPFUL HINTS

Quality Tips for Quality Programs (QTQP) is a series of short tips created by the Youth Development Advisory Committee (YDAC) for YEN programs to consider. YPQA Helpful Hints are designed to help programs score better on the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) one item at a time.

May 26, 2017

### A LOOK



### AT THE YPQA ITEM

#### STAFF ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

##### Your activity will score a 5 if:

Staff make frequent use of open-ended questions (e.g., staff ask open-ended questions throughout the activity and questions are related to the context, most youth have the opportunity to answer questions that seek opinions or require thoughtful answers).

##### Your activity will score a 3 if:

Staff make limited use of open-ended questions (e.g., only use them during certain parts of the activity or repeats the same questions).

##### Your activity will score a 1 if:

Staff rarely or never ask open-ended questions.

### STAFF ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

This is the second item of the "encouragement" scale found under the Supportive Environment domain. Open-ended questions stimulate deep thinking, problem solving, and more conversation as opposed to closed-ended questions that tend to elicit short answers and do not require much thought. Asking youth what they think also allows staff opportunities to understand youth's point of view. Moreover, when staff ask youth open-ended questions, youth will be likely to feel that staff care about what they think.

#### DOS and DON'TS to score a 5 almost every time:

**Do** ask relevant questions that challenge youth to think! For example, don't just ask, "What is a credit score?" This is a closed-ended question because it has only one right answer. Be sure to ask questions like, "How can you plan to increase your credit score?" or "What would having a good credit score mean to you?"

**Do** ask questions in the beginning, middle, and end of your session. Beginning questions can be a review of previous learning or asking youth about themselves. Questions in the middle will likely be focused on encouraging youth to talk about the activities they are working on. At the end of the session, reflection questions help youth to synthesize what they have learned.

**Do** encourage youth to share answers to open-ended questions with each other in pairs or small groups, either verbally or in writing.

**Don't** rely on questions that start with "Do you...", "Will you...", or "Can you..." These types of questions are closed-ended and are likely to elicit a "yes" or "no" response that can curtail communication.

**Don't** include choices in your questions such as, "Are you angry or happy?" These types of questions might be useful to help young children communicate at times, but are also closed-ended.

*For questions or more information on these YPQA Helpful Hints, contact Project RISE's Associate Director of Youth Development, Dr. Diana Lores, at [dlores@nova.edu](mailto:dlores@nova.edu).*