



## **Volunteering at The Space**

About The Space: *Yakima Neighborhood Health Services (YNHS) and an advisory committee of community leaders opened The Space in June 2016 after identifying a community-stated need to provide safe, affirming resources for queer-identified young people in Yakima County. Since then, The Space has worked with more than 80 unduplicated individuals ages 13-23. Additionally, The Space has provided more than 1,500 services—from snacks and meals to ongoing mental and behavioral health support to housing—to those 80 individuals.*

The Space's goal: *Our goal is to serve Yakima-area Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Questioning and allied youth between the ages of 13 and 23 by providing a safe space for them to connect to peers and needed resources while linking them with the YNHS network of services.*

Trauma-informed care: *A person-centered approach stemming from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study, trauma-informed care is, basically, recognizing that trauma, especially at developmental milestones, has lasting effects on a person's lived experience. With that in mind, The Space uses a trauma-informed care (TIC) approach for daily activities and programming. That means that, depending on the group's collective state of well-being, we may not have a rigidly structured agenda for any given day. Some days we might just watch movies and hang out. Some days we might have an open dialogue about suicide prevention or sexual health or queer politics. Some days we might have a guest speaker. Trauma-informed care is about acknowledging every person's right to be safe and cared for in the places where they spend their time.*

Volunteering at The Space: *The Space is open 1-6:30 p.m., Monday-Friday (except on days when YNHS is closed). Below is a description of **some** things you may do as a volunteer (please keep in mind that many of them may not apply to you, and you will **never** be asked to do everything on this list on a given day ☺).*

### While volunteering:

- Ensure that attendees sign in (pronoun, preferred name, time in and visit reason)
- Offer new attendees a pride bracelet or other swag (and wear yours, if you have one! ☺)
- Have attendees fill out the “Gratitude Board” and show them the “What’s Happening?” board
- Offer snacks and/or drinks



Safe Zone

- Brief new attendees on community agreements and, if possible, ask them when they can take some one-on-one time to fill out an intake
- Introduce new attendees and give them a quick tour
- Brief the group on “what’s happening today” if there’s a plan (Ex: “Today we’re watching a movie. If you’re not feeling that, you can hang out upstairs in the library, work on homework, grab a snack, etc.”)
- Make sure Space attendees are within earshot or eyeshot
- “One-to-five” rule: One volunteer for every five attendees (there will always be one staff member on-site and hopefully at least one volunteer)
- Be especially aware of where in The Space attendees are spending time (i.e., if there are five attendees upstairs and five downstairs, one volunteer should be upstairs and one should be downstairs)
  - If attendees need to use the shower, ensure that you or another volunteer show the attendee the lock on the bathroom door upstairs, tell them you’ll be upstairs if they need anything and stay upstairs until the attendee is safely out of the shower area (Note: the shower head is available as needed, but is not on the shower when the shower is not being used—please let staff know if youth ask to use the shower ☺)
- Allow attendees to navigate The Space freely (please do not “follow” attendees. If you do follow, please let them know why: “I’m coming with you upstairs to check out what’s going on up here” or “I’m going to hang out with you all up here. Is that OK?”)
- Use inclusive language (honor gender identity, sexual orientation, race, disability or ability, etc.), and if you don’t know someone’s pronouns, ask!
- Keep an eye and ear out for intentional separation (make sure to include/offer to include those who seem isolated or left out)

#### After volunteering:

- Scan the area for messes and encourage attendees to pick up, as needed
- Remind attendees of the next day’s hours
- If you know an attendee might not have a meal that evening or for lunch the next day, offer them leftovers or snacks (try to do this discreetly, if possible)
- Make sure each attendee signs out (this isn’t always possible, so just try your best)
- Check in with the “Feelings Board”
- Check in with attendees who seem to not have a ride or “next place to go.” Tell them to hang tight without drawing attention/singling out. (Note: if you want to give an attendee a ride, please let Wyatt or staff know first and try to call guardian or person at destination)
- Turn off the lights downstairs in the “family room” and kitchen
- Make sure The Space is empty



Safe Zone

- If there is any maintenance or supply need, please let staff know or write it on a sticky note in the office upstairs
- **If you have closing rights**, arm the alarm using the keypad in the kitchen by the refrigerator.
  - Make sure the screen reads, “System Ready” and the light to the left of the screen is green.
  - Enter code “0670” followed by “Enter.” You will see a message that reads, “Time to leave 060 seconds.” You will have a minute to exit.
  - Check the side door and make sure that at least the handle lock is pushed in
  - Exit the front door, pushing the handle lock in first and locking the deadbolt (using a “1” key) once you’ve exited.
  - Double check that both doors are locked