

Radical Rules of Positive Partnership Etiquette

Special thanks to SYPF Enhancement Programs for their contributions and ideas!

The Golden Rules:

**There are multiple perspectives in every partnership. Listen.
Respond to partners as you want to be responded to.**

Radical Rules that Apply To All Partners:

- You are hosting each other. Please treat accordingly. Make each other feel welcome and at home.
- Create expectation with specific start and end times. Don't be late or early. Honor the times.
- Know what is expected as well as what to do if youth are unprepared. This includes safety and transportation.
- Return phone calls and e-mails promptly, even to say, *"We'll have an answer on Friday!"*
- Assign a single contact person for excellent two-way communication
- Stand behind your written and verbal commitments. If challenges arise, keep the commitment and adjust around it.
- Notify your partner of changes or a last-minute crisis ASAP. If you make a mistake or calendar error, own up and try to make amends. Realize that those kinds of errors happen and they can create problems.
- If your partner or its staff does anything that seems unsafe for participants, act. Address the issue in a timely fashion with the supervisor soon after.

Radical Rules that Apply to the "Special Program" Provider:

- Sign a contract. Send email reminders before anything is due to you.
- Connect with a reliable staff member at the host site who you can count on to get things done. Develop an open and honest relationship – let him/her know if things are not going well.
- Meet each staff who supervises campers. Review expectations directly with campers. Hope that staff have prepared them, but don't expect that staff have prepared them.
- Thank camp staff for their help upon arrival and leaving.
- Know any individual youth challenges before you meet the group: asthma, trauma, physical challenges, learning disabilities, mental health issues, medications needs. Communicate about these or last-minute group issues before you connect with the group.
- It is acceptable to ask for a refundable or non-refundable deposit as a sign of commitment to reduce the number of hosts who cancel at the last minute or don't show up. If you charge a fee, it is also acceptable to expect payment based on the original projections if the camp does not inform you of changes in a timely manner. Clarify in your contract.
- If the camp does not provide staff during the program, your staff should have in their hand the following info each time they meet with the camp:
 - written agreement to time, activities, camper/staff ratio, partner expectations
 - names of campers present in activity
 - organizational director's name/cell #
 - emergency contact information on all campers
 - specific list of safety/health/allergies of campers
 - instructions for how to handle emergencies of any kind during your program time

Radical Rules For Providers of Youth Participants:

- To both your provider and your own staff, explain your program's purpose and the goals you want to accomplish through the partner, especially if the special program extends over weeks. It builds credibility.
- Don't use the drop-in as a random time-filler or diversion. Make it a regular or integral part of your program. Edify it. If you do not respect it, campers will not.
- Start each day with a quick daily schedule and reminder of upcoming events. Create an air of anticipation for the special program that day or that week. Be careful not to use attendance in a special program as a behavioral reward. This reduces the impact of the program on all youth and disregards partner expectations.
- Contact the partner one week before arrival. Share any changes (including expected size of group or ages of participants), special needs, issues. Remember that changes in number (whether up or down) can cost the program provider a great deal since they often have to purchase supplies, prepare their own staff.
- Be sensitive to the fact that while this provider is helping you, you are helping them reach their own outcomes. Be supportive and helpful.
- Prepare the campers. They should be ready, on time, know what they will experience, have the supplies needed. In some cases, you may want to prepare them with questions to ask or ideas for how to be helpful.
- If the guest is coming to you, meet him at the door, help her bring things in and set up, get him water or a snack, share any last-minute challenges, and introduce him to the staff who will sit in the program with your campers. Help clean up!
- Maintain your ratios even when special program staff is present.
- Unless arranged ahead of time, remain with your campers and in charge of their safety and behavior. Staff should be fully present and fully engaged in supporting the presenter and redirecting participants, as needed.
- Enthusiastically introduce, edify, respect, and make that special program provider feel great. It sets the tone for your campers and models your expectations of them.
- Drop-in time is not time off for camp staff. They should stay off their phones, not use the time to eat snacks in the back of the room. Remain a model of good listening. Kids will act as they react. Also, unless requested, staff should not participate. They should help campers participate. Review these expectations with your staff and ask the provider if your staff expectations were met
- Expect participants to send a gracious thank you note! Sharing something they learned or enjoyed, along with a photo, is even better.
- Give the special program provider prompt feedback and talk through the experience: *What worked well? What did you enjoy? What was challenging? How could we have done a better job? If you repeat the program, what would you like to do differently?*
- Call the provider director with any serious concerns about a program provider staff.
- If a deposit is expected, pay it. If a payment is expected, pay it promptly. Many programs are free to you because they've struggled to raise funds just as you have. When you don't follow through, or don't follow through with a deposit, it hurts their program, too.

ONE Radical Rule of Etiquette for Extended or Multiple Visits:

Gather key staff from both partners – ahead of time – to:

build relationships through informal conversation/conversation starters

share program cultures, how you do things, your populations, values

attach faces with names

learn partner's program, connect dots between activity/meaning, share ways to support each others' work.