

CARE FOR OTHERS

Interpersonal Characteristics Domain

Caring means showing concern for the well-being of others. Volunteers can establish authentic relationships that show respect and care for the youth. Through this relationship as a caring adult, you can serve as an advisor, guide, coach, and mentor in the lives of young people. Care helps establish a sense of belonging¹ for the youth, and you are setting the groundwork for authentic youth engagement.

You can also show care for others by creating a space for youth to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group. Research shows that young people benefit from time spent in positive and safe settings with adults and peers². For the physical environment, ensure it is inviting and accessible for all. Work together with the youth to eliminate any barriers or hazards.

For the emotional environment, work with the youth to:

- Set group expectations,
- Model positive,
- Constructive feedback, and
- Quickly address any bullying, put-downs, or destructive behaviors.

As an adult working with young people, you can care for others by creating a space that is also welcoming and inclusive of all. Youth thrive when they feel they are a part of something meaningful and productive and have the opportunity to build relationships with others who have shared interests. This is done when all individuals are welcomed and valued. Value all youth voices and perspectives.

References

- ¹Arnold, M. E., & Gagnon, R. J. (2019). Illuminating the process of youth development: *The mediating effect of thriving on youth development program outcomes*. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, 7(3), 24-51.
- ²Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). *The Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills*. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

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