**Rotary District 7610 PETs Youth Protection Training (outline to training slides) January 20, 2024 Phil Rusciolelli © 703-431-3859** **pbrusciolelli@aol.com**

**Youth protection, what is it? Who is being protected? What are the youth programs in which your club participates?**

**What are Rotary’s guidelines for protecting youth who participate in Rotary sponsored programs?**

**And what should Rotarians know about these guidelines?**

**Well, Rotary has very defined guidelines for youth protection and reporting incidents.**

**Hi, I am Phil Rusciolelli, the District 7610’s Youth Protection Officer**

**Youth Protection (YP) training not only addresses protection of youth who associate with rotary programs but is also an opportunity for Rotarians to refamiliarize and sensitize themselves with Rotary International and District policies that address harassment and abuse. This training hopefully will make us aware of the possibilities of abuse or harassment, even in our own clubs and, if necessary, provide us with guidance for responding to, and reporting such incidents.**

**The following District 7610 Youth Protection Training slides with this outline constitute the Annual Rotary Youth Protection Training for, Level 1-Volunteers, defined as, those youth volunteers having casual contact with youth and supporting Rotary-sponsored youth programs in a supervised situation-setting.**

**Club presidents are advised to use this outline and the Youth Protection Power Point Slides to provide YP training for their members and, certify to the District Rotary Youth Director on the district Youth Protection Certification document the club’s annual YP training**. **The handout provided to you supports the district Youth Protection Training slides. These training slides can be found at the district website under Youth Programs.**

**S2: Rotary Code of Policies and the RI Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth requires maintaining a safe environment, safeguarding, and protecting youth from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, and preventing abuse and harassment.**

**S3: Rotary International YP is a “zero-tolerance” program. The DG must certify YP compliance to RI, implement RI YP policies, appoint a YPO, and report to authorities and RI all allegations of abuse and harassment. YP training is a requirement for district leadership and members.**

**S4: The DG is required to conduct an independent district investigation and remove from youth programs those accused until resolution, with termination of membership if a conviction or there is admission of crime.**

**S5: If the investigation is inconclusive then additional safeguards must be put in place to assure protection. Subsequent claims will necessitate prohibition or clearance may allow member reinstatement. But there is always the necessity to track those prohibited, and those prohibited cannot hold youth leadership positions.**

**S6: A major aspect of YP is openness with the youth you encounter. Talk openly about your YP commitment because you may learn something.**

**S7: The levels of responsibilities for YP are that members must foster a harassment free environment and that clubs and districts are required to investigate all allegations and respond in a timely manner.**

**S8: We can prevent harassment with good judgement in planning events, using the Rotary principles of tolerance and, integrating our Rotary Code of Conduct of integrity, ethical standards, fair actions, professionalism and above all, maintaining a harassment-free environment.**

**S9/10: We must recognize Harassment as pervasive or extreme behavior in verbal or physical actions that denigrate, insult, or offend a person or group based on characteristics that include age, ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socio-economics status, or gender identity.**

**S11: Recognize and immediately identify and address inappropriate behavior in youth volunteers.**

**S12: Grooming or preparing a person to be abused or harassed may be identified by isolation, special treatment, providing gifts, maintaining secrets, touching, desensitizing, or forcing consent.**

**S13: Also, recognize the signs of abuse and harassment in youth such as: physical changes, anxiety, depression, or withdrawal, changes in eating habits or body image, delinquency or age-inappropriate behavior, or aggression.**

**S14/15: Again, address inappropriate behavior immediately, report appropriately, and at the first sign, contact, review, and communicate expectations and consequences.**

**S16/17/18: Indication of an abuse or harassment issue, however, is sometimes not evident. Delayed reporting for reasons of guilt, embarrassment, fear of not being believed emphasize the need to be sensitive to the signs. How do we process a report of abuse or harassment. These are the steps: 1. assure of Rotary policy of appropriateness and confidentiality of the report, 2. get the facts, be sensitive, 3. address safety concerns, non-contact, possible medical concerns, 4. remove accused from youth activities**, **5. report to police, 6. report to RI.**

**S19/20: Following up on allegations include, prohibitions, terminations, identifying safeguards, maintaining confidentiality as follows; 1. Implementing and ensuring prohibitions, 2. terminating membership, 3. Being vigilant that an inconclusive investigation may require different safeguards, 4. keep records to protect youth, members, and support continuity for leadership.**

**S21: Remember that when responding to media inquiries, the DG has overall response authority, with support/advice of YP leaders.**

**S22: Most important for YP is to maintain a safe environment, being aware and recognizing signs, to prevent abuse and harassment. There are actions every Rotarian should do when it comes to youth programs; set the example, talk about abuse and harassment, establish boundaries, work in groups/NO one on ones, empower youth, stay committed.**

**S23/24: But also be aware of actions we should never witness when working with youth or otherwise; the use of insulting words, bullying, derogatory remarks in social media, gossiping, impeding someone’s movements, making sexual comments, repeating derogatory jokes, making unwelcome physical contact, commenting about someone’s physical appearance, leering, using/displaying sexual words/objects, commenting on someone’s age, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual preference.**

**S25: There are additional RI YP references: Rotary Youth Protection Guide, Rotary Youth Exchange Handbook, Interact Guide for Rotary Club Sponsors and Advisors, RYLA Handbook, Rotary Media Crisis Guide.**

**S26: Again, the foregoing D7610 Annual Youth Protection Awareness slides with this outline constitute annual Rotary Club Youth Protection Training for Rotarians and for Level 1-Youth Volunteers.**

**Club YPOs (CYPO) and Volunteers coordinating youth activities should further apply and take RI Protecting Youth Program Participants and Preventing and Addressing Harassment Training Courses found at the My Rotary website under Knowledge and Resources. Following completion of these training courses, volunteers should submit their certificates of training to the District Rotary Youth Director** District7610YouthProtection@gmail.com **.**

**Background Checks (BCs) are needed to be completed by youth volunteers identified as having close relations with youth or working in a position of trust, supervising, or coordinating youth programs, i.e., CYPOs, District Youth Program Coordinators, DYPO, Youth Program Directors. In the past, Eastern States Student Exchange (ESSEX) has processed our non-Rotary Youth Exchange BCs. Now, “One Source” is the district agent to process BCs. All information to complete the BC is on the district form Application to Complete a Background Check found on the district website under Youth Programs.**

**Why BCs? Public Safety/Volunteer Dedication/Reputation Mgt./YP. What is included in BCs? History Trace/County and State Criminal History/Multi Court Jurisdictional Database/National-Federal Criminal/National Sex Offender Registry/Global Report.**

 **S27 Here are several scenarios that provide some discussion and decision making to underline this Youth Protection training.**

**S28 You reported an allegation that a member of your Club sexually abused a young person, and authorities are investigating. The Club member is well-respected and has never been accused of wrongdoing. Several Club members have attested to the person’s character and are sure that nothing happened because the student did not report anything for two weeks. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

**S29 You received an e-mail from a Rotary Club President who says that a member who occasionally volunteers for Youth Exchange activities has been stalking another adult Club member and sending that member lewd photos. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

**S30 An Interact advisor is mentoring an Interact Club member], and they often spend time alone. At a recent event, you notice them apart from the group, standing very close, touching, and whispering to each other. You’re concerned that their relationship may be inappropriate. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

**S31 A Youth Exchange student (who is usually very outgoing and involved in extracurricular activities), recently has been missing school and spending a lot of time in their room, using social media. You’re worried something is happening, but it could just be homesickness. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

**S32 A participant at an overnight RYLA event tells you, a counselor, that they were sexually assaulted, by another participant. The young person doesn’t want their parents to know, and the camp is scheduled to end the following day. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

Options and answers are on the training slides.