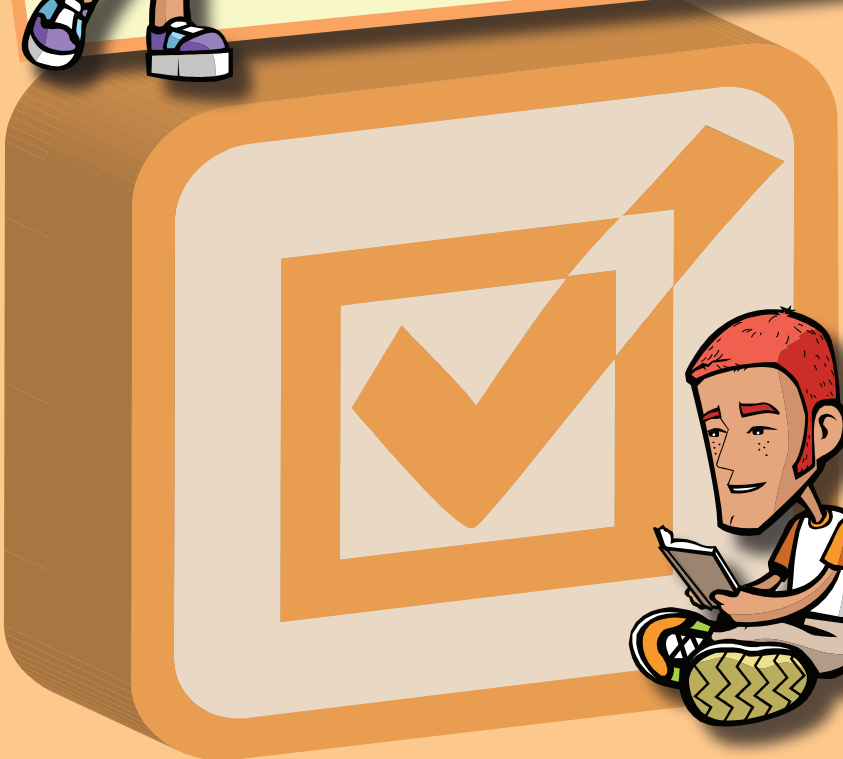


**CHECKING IN FOR:**



# Your Safety at OYA



# The Basics

## Our Mission

While you are in OYA custody, it is important to us that you remain safe and free from all types of abuse. OYA and community placement agencies work very hard to help youth change their behavior. Most of the youth in OYA or community placements are working to change their behavior too. We want to help all youth become successful in an environment that is safe.

### What's Inside:

Read this booklet to learn how to stay safe at OYA:

2 PAGE	The Basics
4 PAGE	The Problem of Abuse
6 PAGE	Staying Safe
8 PAGE	How to Report Abuse
10 PAGE	If Abuse Happens...

## SO, HOW WILL THIS BOOKLET HELP ME STAY SAFE?



This booklet gives you important information about your safety in OYA facilities and community placements. Youth and staff member safety is one of the most important values of OYA.

This pamphlet tells you how to:

- ✓ Be safe in OYA facilities and community placements.
- ✓ Get help if you are abused or harmed.
- ✓ Take the right steps to report if you are abused or harmed.

## OYA Has a Zero Tolerance for Any and All Abusive Behaviors

This means that if a youth or staff member is abusive, OYA will investigate the abuse. The investigation will follow laws and rules that make the person accountable.

# The Problem of Abuse

Whether you are living in the community, a close custody facility residential program, or foster home, the possibility always exists that another person may be abusive. Abuse can be physical, emotional or sexual.

This means abuse can include:

- **Hitting.**
- **Intimidation.**
- **Bullying.**
- **Threatening.**
- **Sexual abuse.**

It is wrong for anyone to threaten or hurt another person. Everyone deserves to be safe. Unfortunately, some **YOUTH OR EVEN STAFF MEMBERS** may try to harm you.

**Abusive behaviors are criminal acts and will be investigated and prosecuted when possible. This includes sexual behavior.**

## Sexual and Romantic Activity

All sexual or romantic activity between staff members and youth is prohibited and against the law. Also, sexual activity between youth in residential or correctional facilities is prohibited and in most cases is against the law.



## WHO DO YOU MEAN BY STAFF MEMBERS?

When we talk about staff members in this booklet, we're talking about any adults who are assigned by OYA to work with or help OYA youth. Staff members work in or volunteer with facilities, residential programs, foster homes and OYA offices.



## OYA Works Hard to Keep You Safe

Staff members will do everything they can to prevent abuse. The actions they will take include:

- ✓ **Supervising youth closely.**
- ✓ **Creating and enforcing rules to keep staff members and youth safe.**
- ✓ **Holding a person accountable (no matter who they are) if they abuse someone else. This means staff members will report the abuse so it can be investigated.**

# Staying Safe

Promoting safety is not only what staff members do, but what you, as a youth, must do. Here are some things you can do to remain safe.

## Pay attention to:

### ✓ Where you are.

Avoid being isolated away from the main group where staff members can't see you. Position yourself in plain view. Abuse happens more often when a youth is isolated and alone with another person than when the youth is part of a group.



### ✓ Situations that make you feel uncomfortable.

Trust your gut feeling. If a situation feels wrong, it most likely is. Work to get yourself out of the situation and then report the situation to a staff member or adult you trust.

### ✓ Special attention someone may be giving just to you.

This may be favors, romantic or sexual gestures or talk. This includes sharing secrets. You need to report this to a staff member or adult you trust.

### ✓ Who you tell private information to.

Youth have been known to use this information to get another youth to do something they don't want to.

## Do not:

### ✓ Accept any offer of protection.

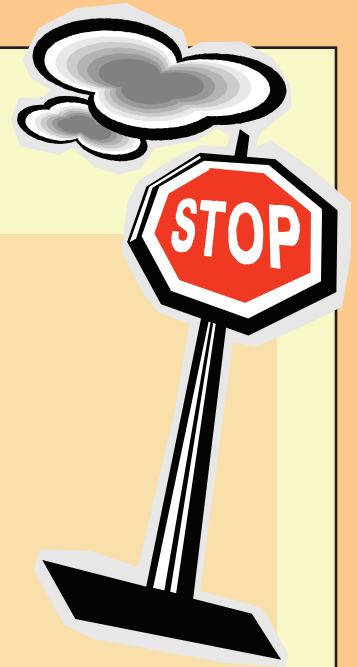
Someone offering to protect you from consequences or harm from anyone else will want something in return.

### ✓ Accept a loan or gift.

Do not borrow, gamble or trade anything. Avoid owing anything to anyone.

### ✓ Let manners get in the way of keeping yourself safe.

Do not be afraid to shout **"NO"** or **"STOP IT NOW."**



## Take action!



Tell a staff member immediately if someone tries to isolate you, singles you out, gives you anything special, wants to trade or loan an item, or offers you protection.



It is very important that you report these things to a staff member or adult you trust.



If the staff member or adult you trust doesn't take you seriously or does not believe you, tell another staff member or adult you trust about it.

# How to Report Abuse

If you are abused or know of someone that has been abused, you need to **report** it. Remember, abuse can be emotional, physical or sexual. Reporting can be hard to do but it will make sure that you or others are safe from more harm. It also means that the person who caused the harm may not harm you or others any more.

This is a very important way to make sure where you live is safe.

## HOW DO I REPORT AT A COMMUNITY PLACEMENT?



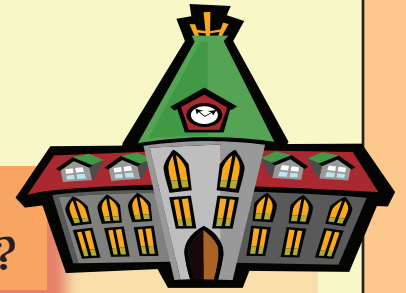
Talk to or send a letter or note to any of the following:

- ✓ **Counselor**
- ✓ **Your Probation or Parole Officer**
- ✓ **A police officer**
- ✓ **Parents or guardians**
- ✓ **Your attorney or advocate**
- ✓ **Chaplains or ministers**
- ✓ **An adult you trust**

Or, you can make a report by:

- ✓ **Calling the OYA Complaint Hotline at 1-800-315-5440**  
- an investigator from the Professional Standards Office will take your confidential call and follow-up on your report.

## HOW DO I REPORT IF I'M LIVING AT AN OYA FACILITY?



Talk to or send a letter or note to any of the following:

- ✓ **Group Life Coordinators**
- ✓ **Nurses**
- ✓ **Treatment Managers**
- ✓ **QMHPs**
- ✓ **Your Probation or Parole Officer**
- ✓ **Your attorney or advocate**
- ✓ **Parents or guardians**
- ✓ **Chaplains or ministers**
- ✓ **An adult you trust**

Or, you can make a report by:

- ✓ **Calling the OYA Complaint Hotline at 1-800-315-5440**  
- an investigator from the Professional Standards Office will take your confidential call and follow-up on your report.
- ✓ **Filing a grievance.**

Each OYA facility has a confidential process to inform counselors that a youth needs to speak with them. All facility staff members know what to do if you have been harmed and how to help you become safe.

# If Abuse Happens...

## What are the steps I should take if I'm sexually abused?

If you are in an OYA facility or community placement and have been sexually abused, it is important that you do the following:

- ✓ Report the sexual abuse to a staff member or adult you trust.
- ✓ Seek medical help right away.

It is important that you avoid the following until you seek medical help. The following things help preserve evidence so OYA can take action against the person who abused you.

### Do not:

- Shower or wash
- Eat or drink
- Use the restroom
- Brush your teeth
- Change your clothes

## What happens if I report that I've been abused - emotionally, physically or sexually?

You will get medical attention if you need it. OYA will take steps to make sure you are as safe as possible from more abuse and will work hard to keep things confidential. We will tell you how to get counseling. The abuse will be investigated and criminal charges will be pursued.

## What will happen if I abuse someone?

We will investigate the abuse and will seek criminal charges. If you are found guilty you will likely face more time in OYA custody, be placed in a correctional facility, or placed in detention or jail depending on your age and the charges filed. If you have trouble controlling your actions, seek help so that you don't harm anyone.



## What should I do if I witness abuse or even just suspect I witnessed abuse?

You need to report any abuse or suspected abuse you witness. An investigation will take place to find the truth. You won't get in trouble if you make an honest report.

## What will happen if I make a false report?

Staff members take reports of abuse very seriously. If you choose to make a false report of abuse against anyone, it will be discovered. Anyone making a false report will be held accountable. This includes loss of privileges and possibly new criminal charges. Our goal is to provide the safest programs possible. Being honest in what you say and do is a big part of staying safe.



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**OYA Complaint Hotline 1-800-315-5440**