
Health Promotion Policy



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Health Promotion Policy Statement

At Carlow Regional Youth Service (CRYS) we work at supporting the health of young people through a strategic approach towards health promotion within our work and through specific health programmes.

We acknowledge that everyone has a responsibility to promote health at CRYS. Health promotion is at the heart of our Strategic Plan (2019-2022) and we work to promote health and well-being with all stakeholders of our organisation.

1. Aims and Objectives

The Aim of developing a health promotion policy for CRYS is to provide all stakeholders of our organisation with a guideline for quality health promotion through effective youth work practice. Through a 'Whole Organisation Approach' we promote health by:

Building quality: Working to continually improve the quality and strength of our organisation through good governance, efficient management systems and effective communication.

Harnessing the potential of our volunteers to enrich our resources, expertise and add insight into our programmes

Building skills and capacity: The development of young people's personal skills, social skills and talents are at the forefront of our Health Promotion Policy at CRYS. We also work to enhance the skills and capacity of staff and volunteers in tandem with young people while encouraging self-belief, empowerment and authenticity for all.

Advocacy and policy development: Working incessantly to encourage young people to have a voice, and indeed to base all policies on quality health promoting practice and structures.

Effective communication and information provision: With the aim of continually building on our quality youth work practice; we strive to provide clear and accurate health information through a comprehensible youth-centred approach.

Consultation with Young People: All youth work is carried out with an opportunity for young people to input into the planning, implementation and evaluation process. Specific forums and committees are in place to ensure that young people have a meaningful input in our service to represent themselves and their peers.

2. Scope of the Policy

Our Health Promotion Policy is aimed at:

- Young people in Carlow and surrounding areas who wish to avail of youth work services
- Our Board members who govern our work
- Staff working within the service
- Our volunteers who assist us to deliver our goals
- Our partners working both regionally and nationally

3. Clarification of the Role of Health Promotion within the Organisation

According to the Ottawa Charter for health Promotion;

“Health Promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over their health and its determinants, and thereby improve their health” (WHO, 2005).

We at CRYs promote health through a ‘Whole Organisational Approach’. We acknowledge that in order to effectively promote health we must encompass a multi-level strategy that encourages and facilitates well-being for all.

This is carried out under the following principles from the Ottawa Charter;

- 1. Developing personal skills through health education*
- 2. Partnerships with others*
- 3. Creating supportive environments*
- 4. Policy development*

At CRYs the Health Promotion Committee work to ensure that our health promoting initiatives and structures are being recorded effectively and are meeting the needs of those within the Organisation. We at CRYs believe that by ensuring there is an upstream and inclusive approach to promoting health we are making it an everyday priority.

Our Organisation adopts a range of Health Education approaches such as a Life-Skills Approach, a Comprehensive Health Education Approach, and a Peer-Led Approach.

As underlined in our Three Year Strategy; the Health Promotion approach offered by CRYs is such that it ensures that its work is;

- **Respectful of young people** and founded on a belief that young people can respond to the issues facing them
- Founded on the **needs of young people** themselves with a commitment to ensure their safety and well-being
- **Establishing and maintaining positive relationships** with the young people we engage with
- Informed by a commitment to provide **skilled specialised services to young people at risk**
- Underpinned by the principle of **voluntary participation of young people**
- **Inclusive** of all young people and strengthened by diversity
- Based on **continually improving quality** in order to develop best practice
- Underpinned by **mutual respect** between colleagues, clients, parents and external agencies
- Founded on **team work and a professional approach** to our work encompassing openness and support between colleagues
- Enhanced by a **positive approach** and pride in our work, a passion for change, and a good sense of humour where needed
- Based on a **commitment to working in partnership** with external agencies

Through our Health Quality Mark Award, it is evident that the principles of health promotion are deeply embedded in our everyday values and constitution at CRYS.

4. Health Promotion in Action- Guidelines for Good Practice

All management, staff and volunteers are requested to measure, plan, implement and evaluate in their practice in order to ensure their practice is within the valuable standard that is adopted at CRYS.

Through the use of the APIE (Assessment, Planning, Implementations, and Evaluation) Model of Practice staff are guided through the process of each stage of youth work practice, each step given as equal precedence as the other.

Evidence of this should be documented in each project when holding activities and programmes, from recording minutes of board meetings; to recording feedback of evaluations from young people in group work and activities. We recognise that without

applying the APIE Model to our work at CRY5 there would be a very poor level of quality in our practice, and therefore it is essential in an Organisation for promoting health and wellbeing.

5. Specific Roles and Responsibilities

At CRY5 all stakeholders are recognised as having a key role as health promoters. This includes our Board of Management, CEO, staff, volunteers and young people. The current health promoters are the Health promotion team.

The current Health Promotion Team includes Karen Mullins (Sports Development/ Chairperson), Declan Wall (YARC), Jo O'Mara (CBDI) Aisling Reade (Youth Diversion Project/ Secretary). Our Organisation prides itself on promoting the health and well-being of all who we engage with, and we see ourselves as being a part of a health promoting community and wider world.

We understand that health promotion cannot simply be achieved independently, and is best taking place as a part of a wider network of health promoters.

i. Aim of the Health Promotion Team:

Promoting the health of young people and staff through a strategic approach and through specific health-promoting initiatives.

ii. Objectives:

a) Develop and oversee a health promotion strategy for CRY5 which will strengthen the focus on health within our programmes. This strategy will explore:

- Mental health promotion
- Physical health
- Substance misuse
- Sexual health promotion
- Spiritual health
- Any other form of promoting health and well-being of young people, staff, management and volunteers.

b) Work towards the of establishing out Silver Health Quality Mark and achieving Gold Health Quality Mark awarded by the National Youth Health Programme at NYCI.

c) Strengthen our capacity to measure; explore emergent health needs within each of our projects. Consider evidence based responses to needs identified.

d) Training prospects and opportunities for staff and volunteers. This will include the information sharing of Health Promotion to all staff, enhancing the skills and training currently in use, and developing interests and recognised gaps in health related areas of youth work. Areas of expertise for current staff will be firstly explored, and training in new areas for staff members will be on a needs basis only. Training will only be provided where deemed relevant, appropriate and feasible within the service.

e) Work to evaluate the impact of our initiatives to promote the health of young people and in particular those facing specific challenges in their lives.

iii. Working Methods

- Tasks decided and allocated to team members
- Deadlines set for tasks
- Reports from members on particular tasks
- Small working groups when necessary
- Workshops with wider CRYS staff when necessary
- Minutes are taken by secretary
- Minutes to be sent to CEO/ Board as progress indicators as required

6. Staff/ Volunteer Training, Support and Supervision

A training and skills audit will be carried out among all staff and volunteers to assess the current level of training, skills and interests within our personnel. It is evident from previous audits that we have a highly trained, educated and skilled host of staff.

This training audit will be revisited and renewed annually by the HR Manager.

In relation to our volunteers; the NYCI 'Starting Out' training is available to volunteers and those over the age of 16 as a structured and recognised quality training programme adopted by CRYS. Every volunteer must adhere to mandatory Tusla Children's First online training in order to gain a volunteer role with the Organisation.

From the recent Health Promotion needs assessment it is evident that CRYS have a highly supportive environment for staff and indeed young people. This level of support can be noted through all areas of practice with particular emphasis on the peer-supportive working environments of staff, an efficient organisational structure and one which adheres to current best practice guidelines through Children's First, the Employment Equality Act and the Equal Status Act.

All staff, including volunteers and students have access to line-management and support.

7. The Organisation's Health Promotion Work in the Community Context

At CRYS we recognise the need for partnership in our community. We understand that health promotion in the Community Context cannot be achieved in isolation. We see our role when working in tandem with other agencies and organisations as a cog within a wider mechanism in our society, and we work to place health on the top of our agenda. We work to develop a shared vision in our partnerships, identifying and agreeing shared structures and regularly evaluating how we work with others in our community.

8. Dissemination of the Policy

CRYS will disseminate the new Health Promotion Policy by:

- The Policy will be ratified by the CRYS Board of Management who will officially sign off on the Policy when it is complete.
- It will be rolled out among staff, volunteers and management using relevant case studies/ scenarios to test its usefulness and showcase ways to implement the policy in their work.
- The Policy will then be implemented into the Organisation and this will be overseen by the health promotion team. The policy will be made available to all staff.

9. Monitoring and Review of the Policy

The policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Health Promotion Team on an annual basis or when deemed necessary. Tools for which we may measure the effectiveness of the policy may be through the Logic Model, through practice case studies and through reflection on the impact it has on young people using our service.