Safe Space/Chill

Presented by: Amy Hill, LMSW - Director of Teen Services, BGCLK and Kendra Noll, Director of Operations - Social - Emotional Learning & Support
What to expect today!

- Our background info
- Population we serve
- What is the Chill Zone
  - How it’s utilized
- What it looks like at the Elementary level
- De-Escalation skills
- Threats to Harm
- How to create a safe space
- Resources
our backgrounds
What is the “chill zone”
How we utilize our chill zone

- Teens can self select and ask to go to the Chill zone

- Teens can also be sent to the chill zone by staff.

- If teens are making threats to harm (self or others) (more on this later!)
The ins and outs

- Staffed by one of our Social Work interns every day

- Social Work interns keep notes on every teen who comes in.

- If sent by staff: 15 minutes and form completed
“Calming spaces”

And the Zones of Regulation

(For Afterschool time and at Home)
In’s and out’s of calming spaces

Where are they located?

- Front office with front desk staff
- In the Boys & Girls Club office
- In our BGC spaces

What’s in our calming spaces?

- Zones of regulation and smiley face charts to identify feelings and learn new coping strategies
- Bean bags, pillows, cozy items to sit on
- Calming boxes--sensory objects
- Therapy clay, drawing materials, etc.
How we utilize “calming spaces”

When utilizing a calming space, members can speak with any caring staff member (SEL Americorps, group leaders, supervisors, etc!)

- Members can self select and choose to ask for a break when needed
- BGC leaders may ask member to take a break
- Some members have scheduled, built in breaks or special plans for Club time.
  - In these cases we often meet with parents to work together as a team
- Time limits - often range from 10-20 min.
Zones of regulation
Zones of regulation

What are the Zones of Regulation:

- A conceptual framework used to teach kids self-control and emotional regulation
- Many of the schools in USD497 also use the zones of regulation
- The Zones of regulation is a great tool to use both at Club and at home!
Zones of regulation

**Red Zone** describes extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.

**Yellow Zone** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions, however one has more control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.

**Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

**Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.
Zones continued

- With each zone color, there are suggestions for how to get back to a calm (green). Examples:
  - Deep breathing
  - Get a drink of water
  - Write in your journal
  - Talk to a mentor
  - Exercise
  - Take a break

- If we are able to learn and recognize when we are starting to become less regulated, we can do something about it and get back to a healthier place.

- For more info: [https://www.zonesofregulation.com/learn-more-about-the-zones.html](https://www.zonesofregulation.com/learn-more-about-the-zones.html)
How to create calming spaces

Identify a safe space where members can be supervised and a supportive adult is close by

What to include:

○ Zones materials, coping strategy charts, feelings chart
○ Bean bag, bean bag chair, pillow to sit or lay on
○ Sensory objects such as therapy clay, squishy toys, weighted blanket, etc.
○ Signs with breathing and calm down techniques
○ Coloring sheets
○ Pad of paper and pencils or pens to draw or journal
Calming space and practices at home

- Very similar to how we create them at Club!
- Create a calming, welcoming environment where kids can go to regulate emotions
- Involve your kids in the process!
- Fill the space with supporting materials such as calming objects and reflection tools
- Resources for the Zones on Pinterest, Teachers Pay Teachers, or the official zones of regulation website.
Sensory objects

Where to find cozy items and sensory objects:

- “Calming boxes” on amazon.com
- Wal-Mart or Target
- The Dollar General

Getting Creative at home:

Look up any of these items online or on pinterest.com

- Create a DIY Mindfulness Jar
- Create a homemade stress ball out of balloons
- Calm down water bottle with glitter
- Homemade play-doh or putty
- Build your own calming box with art supplies, sensory items, etc
De-escalation tips (for all ages)

**Verbal**

- Maintaining a calm voice
  - No yelling/raised voice
- No verbal threats
- Acknowledge their feelings, without judgement

**Non-Verbal**

- An awareness of self
- Body stance
- Eye contact
- Personal Safety
- Active Listening
- Empathy
What to do when a kid makes threats

First - make sure to know your organization’s policy and follow that!

How we handle threats to harm self or others:

- Talk with the child/teen
- Contact Supervisor
- Contact parent/guardian
- Determine if police need to be called (immediate danger)
Best Practices with virtual programming

- **Multiple people on virtual programming**
- **If doing virtual check ins - have 2 adults on the call to maintain safety**
- **Mandated reporting**
  - Still making reports if we are seeing or hearing things during virtual programming that is reportable.
  - Following the same protocol if a kid reports virtually to you that they want to hurt themselves or others. It’s important to still tell parents/guardians/supervisors. You don’t want to be the last person to know and not say something!
Taking care of ourselves and our families

Self-Care: Deliberate action to take care of our mental, physical, and emotional health.

- Life has changed so fast!
- Important to check in with yourselves and how you are feeling just as we do with our kids
- Find time for yourselves to relax or find enjoyment
- It’s ok if you or your family feel tired, worried, etc.

Self Care Activities:

- Exercise
- Meditate
- Drink a cup of tea or coffee
- Try to get good sleep
- Read for fun
- Cook a meal
- Practice deep breathing
- Listen to music
- Get outside to explore a park or trail
Resources

Supporting our staff and families during COVID-19

- Weekly parent emails: SEL Newsletter
- SEL Virtual Check-in’s
- Check-in’s with our staff
- Resources to families
  - Articles on “how to talk to youth about COVID-19”
  - Coping with stress and anxiety during COVID-19
  - Local mental health resources
- In person program for essential workers: Check-in’s with staff
Questions

Contact Information:

Amy Hill, LMSW:

ahill@bgclk.org
785-550-4878

Kendra Noll:

KNoll@bgclk.org
785-218-1513