

## **Program Description**

### ***Boys Council***

#### **Introduction:**

Boys Council is a structured program for boys that aim to promote boys' natural strengths and to increase their options about being male in today's world. Boys and young men are given the opportunity in a safe environment to address masculine definitions and behaviors.

**When boys have an opportunity to express ideas, identify and normalize a full range of emotions, and make decisions in a safe, nonjudgmental community, their resiliency is strengthened.**

#### **Background:**

Boys Council is the counterpart to Girls Circle founded by Beth Hossfeld and Giovanna Taormina. They were motivated to develop Girls Circle programs due to the severe national epidemics of depression, body image problems, dating violence, self-harming behaviors, relational aggression, etc. among female youth.

In 2006, they partnered with experienced male and female facilitators to develop the Boys Council model, in recognition of the need for healthy male role models. According to research, boys need a gender-specific group program to have a safe, protected, and focused place to address an array of harsh realities and to create healthy options for growing up male today. Findings of recent studies tell us that boys are not faring well in areas of education, mental health, health care access, bullying, violence, or substance abuse in this new millennia. The structured group model recognizes and builds upon inherent strengths and interests of boys and young men, challenges unhealthy masculinities, and connects youth in solidarity and community.

Boys Council programs has been successfully implemented in the Western Region and supported through the provision of community grants such as the Community Addictions Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Fund. The program has been delivered by community agencies and within schools. Feedback from these programs is positive.

#### **Purpose:**

To purpose of this program is to promote boys' and young men's safe and healthy passage through pre-teen and adolescent years.

#### **Objectives:**

The goal of this program is fulfilled by exploring:

- Relationships
- Education
- Leadership
- Diversity
- Media messages

- Personal values
- Integrity
- Future goals

**Target Audience:**

The target audience for this program includes boys ages 13-18 years.

**Description of Activities:**

Each week, a group of six to ten boys of similar age and development meet with one or two facilitators for 1.5 to 2 hours. These meetings are held for ten weeks or more, depending on the capacity of the setting.

The group format includes warm up activities, a “council” type check in opportunity, experiential activities that address relevant topics, and a reflection and group dialogue component. The focused activities may include group challenges, games, skits or role plays, arts, and so on. Topics may address:

- competition
- the male “box”
- bullying
- valuing diversity
- safe expression of emotions
- defining power from multiple perspectives
- influences of mentors and role models
- rejecting violence
- becoming allies with girls and women
- mentoring and making a difference with others
- making safe and healthy decisions for themselves
- finding and living with value in difficult times

Boys are free to participate at their own pace. Participants can express a range of ideas and emotions with peers and can expect respect and high regard from one another.

**Budget:**

Delivering the program within budgetary constraints is possible due to the in-kind contribution of other agencies that may also support these clients. The budget includes resource material from the One Circle Set (Boys’ Council), activity supplies, space rental, snacks, transportation, program incentives, and childcare.

*Past Sample Budget*

Item	Estimated Cost
Small honoraria for volunteers (\$50 x 2)	\$100
Transportation (offered after school based on 18 taxi trips x \$10)	\$180

Materials (Bristol board, markers, mural paper, cards, pens, crayons, flip sheet paper, etc.)	\$100
Snacks	\$100
Program Incentives	\$100
Equipment & space rental	In-Kind
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$580</b>

**Requirements to support staff:**

The human resource component consists of staff time for preparation and the delivery of this program. The Mental Health Promotion Consultant and the Addiction Prevention Consultant are also available for consultation and support throughout planning and running the program.

**Evaluation:**

Results from two studies found significant increases in boys’ school engagement, positive impact on boys’ masculinity beliefs and high rates of satisfaction. <https://onecirclefoundation.org/research-TC.aspx>

**Indicators:**

This program is evaluated using the Council Evaluation Packet. The packet includes instructions, forms and public domain scales as wells as author-permitted scales for the The Council program evaluation.

**Sample Timeline/Action Plan:**

- Step One: Order materials
- Step Two: Recruitment of participants including parental consent
- Step Three: Review facilitator manuals
- Step Four: Purchase program materials and supplies
- Step Five: Program delivery
- Step Six: Evaluation

***Sample of Activity Plan – Standing Together: A Journey into Respect***

<b>Week</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Required Materials</b>
1	<i>Creating Our Council</i>	Develop Opening and Closing Ritual	Items to be used in ritual like a drum or chime. Council format handouts, flip chart, and markers
2	<i>Similar and Different</i>	Are We More Alike or Different? & If I were	Masking tape or rope, soft Nerf type

		a.....	balls, or bean bags- one per each pair of boys
3	<i>Put Downs – Part 1</i>	Dude! A Quick Drama and Team Building Game: Put Down & Build Up Role-Plays	White board or flip chart, pens, and paper
4	<i>Put Downs – Part II</i>	Keeping Each Other Afloat & Balloon Bash	Lots of deflated balloons, markers, and poster board,
5	<i>Space Invaders</i>	Physical Boundaries	Large unobstructed space for activity
6	<i>Boys’ Rights</i>	My Boundaries & Charter to Protect and Respect Boundaries	A backpack with items typical to the age group, ie. Wallet with \$1, ear phones, a folded note, bag of chips or snack
7	<i>E-motions – Part I</i>	Who’s Feeling is that Anyway? & My Most Common Emotions	Pens or pencils, white board or flip chart, markers, drawing paper and art supplies
8	<i>E-motions – Part II</i>	Storytelling and Role- Playing Feelings	“Contrasting Feelings” cutout, paper, pens, pencils, “Feeling Situations” Handout, and “Feeling Words” Handout
9	<i>Boys &amp; Power</i>	Aces and Deuces	A deck of playing cards
10	<i>Community Recognition</i>	Group acknowledgment	½ sheets of paper, pens, colored markers, and program feedback forms