



Video Transcript: Ask Me Anything: Ensuring Equitable, Safe, and Supportive Environments (Rena)

Rena (00:00): The young people are a riot. They are hilarious. They always have fun, they have new ideas, they want to be involved in this work and want to give their opinions, so I just really enjoy hearing directly from the youth.

Ask Me Anything: Equitable, Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Environments. Hi, I'm Rena from Fact Forward, and today, I'm going to let RHNTC ask me anything about equitable, safe, supportive, and inclusive environments.

Rena (00:28): What is the best part of working on your project? The best part about working on this project is we get to interface with so many different people from our communities across South Carolina.

Rena (00:39): What is the special something that your project offers youth that they might not get from other programs or services? I think the fact that we actually talk about sexual and reproductive health is an asset to our project. In South Carolina, oftentimes people don't want to talk about sex and reproductive health, and so this is a real benefit to our project.

Rena (00:58): What are three things you do to create safe and supportive spaces for youth? First, we always ask youth what they want to see, how they want to be treated, and what they would like in their program. Next, we train adults based on the responses from youth on what they would like to see. Third, we also look at best practices from across the field, and that enables us to get new ideas of innovative things that youth are doing. Tell me about the first time you felt like you created an inclusive environment for youth. So in South Carolina, we have worked to create teen-friendly health center spaces, and this is a place where young people can come and feel relaxed in a clinical setting. And it was very empowering to see young people excited about the space that was created especially for them, where they could kind of hang out, relax, and get information prior to their healthcare appointment.

Rena (01:50): What was one moment in the last year that you are most proud of related to fostering optimal environments for the youth you serve? One moment was our Influence for Good youth conference. This one brought 200 young people from across South Carolina together and this really allowed them to be themselves in a safe space over the summer, where normally they are kind of wandering the streets or not having much to do, so this is a fun event that was youth-focused and gave them lots of information, education, but also some entertainment as well.

Rena (02:26): What is the most challenging part for you when you're creating equitable, safe, supportive and inclusive environments for youth? I think the most challenging part is having adults not understand that young people got this, that they are okay and that they have a voice and deserve to be heard. Really having to work with adults to see that young people deserve equitable and safe environments is probably the most challenging part of what we do.

Rena (02:54): What tips do you have for other projects looking to incorporate trauma-informed approaches into their activities? I think listening to young people, our lived experiences are not the same as a young person's lived experience. So understanding that trauma-informed can look very different in today's time than it did when we were growing up is an important thing to consider.

Rena (03:16): If you could design your ideal environment for working with youth, what would it look like? I would have lots of money, but then I will also have technology. Young people love technology. I would have a teen center or a space where young people could go and congregate, and I also would have access to celebrities because young people love hearing from their favorite celebrities, And how could we infuse that into the work we do? This video was created by the Reproductive Health National Training Center, RHNTC.