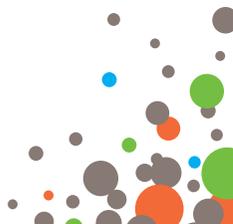
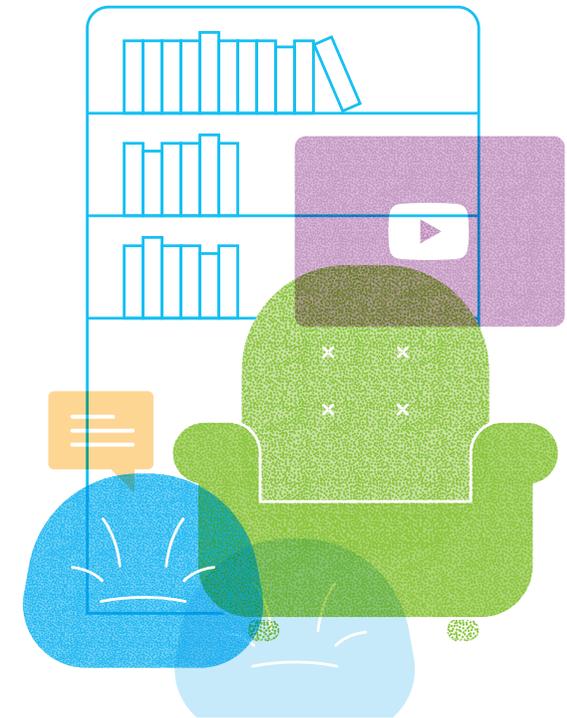


Tips for providing a youth-friendly reception service

Recruitment, training and ongoing professional development of reception staff is fundamental to building a positive culture for a youth friendly service

The environment

- ✓ Ask young people from your Youth Advisory Group (or equivalent) what they think of your Reception area and phone messages, and how they could be improved
- ✓ Regularly step back and view your reception area as if you were seeking help as a young person
- ✓ Provide comfortable seating options e.g. a mix of colourful chairs and beanbags, individual chairs and couches
- ✓ Display welcome signs in different languages
- ✓ Play an ever-changing selection of interesting YouTube clips on the Reception television (mental health related and fun clips)
- ✓ Acknowledge the traditional owners of the land with a prominent sign
- ✓ Provide teen-focussed magazines and books and update them regularly
- ✓ Cater for the whole family e.g. provide colouring pages, toys for younger siblings etc.
- ✓ Show that your service is inclusive by displaying posters, images and/or information for diverse young people (including young people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, as LGBTIQ, have disabilities and come from culturally diverse backgrounds)
- ✓ Create interesting displays e.g. a pet wall, a library of youth-friendly literature to borrow and/or swap
- ✓ Ensure the Reception area and toilets are accessible for people with disabilities and respect gender diversity
- ✓ Consider all the senses – sight (visual displays and colour), sound (background music), smell (flowers or electric oil burners), touch (displays, toys etc.)
- ✓ Ask for feedback on the reception environment from the young people who visit



The service

- ✔ Review your core values with the team and plan together to continually improve your service
- ✔ Encourage staff to be genuine, empathetic, reliable and accountable – and to seek feedback on the way they come across
- ✔ Show that you respect gender diversity by asking all young people their preferred names and pronouns
- ✔ Ask young people their preferred communication method for any appointment changes e.g. Is it OK to leave a phone message?
- ✔ Ensure staff know how to access interpreters if required
- ✔ Provide cultural awareness training for staff
- ✔ Have agreed strategies for managing a distressed young person, parent or family member
- ✔ Provide information on how to get to your service by both car and public transport
- ✔ Provide written information on youth mental health issues in relevant languages and for various reading levels, including low literacy
- ✔ Where possible, provide convenient appointment times for young people who are at school or working (e.g. lunch, evening and weekend appointments)
- ✔ Provide free or affordable services

Staff support

- ✔ Practice dealing with challenging situations and phone calls and provide constructive feedback to each other
- ✔ Make sure staff take some time out after a challenging call or situation
- ✔ Recognise that the reception role requires advanced people skills and recruit accordingly
- ✔ Debrief regularly and provide support for staff in various ways

