



# **Making Health Referrals in the Health Resource Room**

**A Step-by-Step Guide for CAP-Trained Staff**



# Making Health Referrals in the Health Resource Room

## Why this matters:

All New York City students need access to teen-friendly, trusted sexual health service providers and services. Linking students to the services they need has been elevated as a national priority by Healthy People 2020, the federal government's ten-year agenda for improving the nation's health. Research shows a direct link between adolescent sexual health and educational achievement. Helping students access the services they need to establish and maintain healthy behaviors is critical to reduce sexual health disparities and support positive academic outcomes. For more information on the links between access to sexual health services and academic achievement, review [Advocates for Youth's Rationale for Sexual Health Education and Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services](#). **Healthy students. Ready learners.**

## Your role:

As part of the mandated New York City DOE HIV/AIDS Prevention Program, high schools are required to provide Health Resource Rooms where free condoms, health information, and health referrals are made available to students in grades 9-12 by trained staff.

As a member of your school's CAP team, you have stepped forward as a trusted and reliable advocate for students' health, well-being, and success, positioning you to increase student access to quality, low-cost, or free teen-friendly sexual health services. We recommend that you work closely with the health education teacher, guidance counselors, school wellness councils, and other key school staff in supporting students.

## Goals:

This step-by-step guide and checklist aims to help you:

- Identify, track and build relationships with organizations in and around your school community;
- Promote sexual health services available to students in your school;
- Make student referrals to sexual health services.

Please work through this guide and fill out the information to the best of your ability, and share this information with other key staff.



# Step 1: Familiarize Yourself with Minors' Rights

All students, including students who are on the opt-out list for the Condom Availability Program, can be referred to sexual health services outside of the school.

Many students will have questions about their rights, and what “confidentiality” even means for accessing sexual health services. To begin, you want to be sure you are familiar with what teens’ rights are so that you can better walk them through this information. Pregnant or parenting students may have specific questions about their rights. Familiarize yourself with these rights, as well.

## Download or order:

The following New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) Youth Rights Guides are available:

- “Your Rights to Sexual Health Services” (English, Spanish, Chinese & Korean) (2006)
- “Your Rights As a Pregnant or Parenting Teen” (2007)

## Learn about NYCLU's Teen Activist Project:

The Teen Activist Project is a peer-to-peer education program. NYC high school students can come speak to youth in your school about their reproductive rights. For more information, click [here](#) or search for NYCLU Teen Activist Project.

## Visibly post:

Visibly post information about minors' rights and confidentiality in the Health Resource Room(s). For a sample poster, email [CAP2@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CAP2@schools.nyc.gov).

### A note about confidentiality and the Condom Availability Program:

**It is important to know and tell students, including students on the opt-out list, that information or resources shared in the Health Resource Room, including referrals you make, are confidential. Remind students that if there is suspicion of abuse, self-harm, or harm to others, you and other providers are mandated to report directly to the State Central Register.**



Sample Poster



# Step 2: Identify Resources Available At School & Build Relationships

## Note if your school has access to:

- CATCH (Connecting Adolescents to Comprehensive Healthcare) Services
- School-Based Health Center (SBHC)
- Not applicable; move to Step 3

## Get background information:

Connect with members of your school team to see if anyone already has a relationship with CATCH or SBHC staff. Ask them how they have worked with this staff in the past. Take notes below:



**NOTES:**

## Call or visit:

Below is a sample script you can use when reaching out to CATCH/SBHC staff. Note that although CATCH and SBHC staff also make condoms available, it is important that CAP still provides these services so students have multiple access points. On the following pages, there are templates to record what you learn from your discussion or meeting.

*“Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am part of the Condom Availability Program team here at \_\_\_\_\_. In this role, I provide students with confidential access to free condoms, health information and referrals. I wanted to reach out to you see what services you provide so that we can determine how we might be able to work together and what I can refer students to your program/center for.”*





# Step 2: Resources at School (continued)

## Ask and record:

- Name of staff person you spoke with/have a relationship with: \_\_\_\_\_
- Role of staff person listed above: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of initial conversation regarding your role in CAP: \_\_\_\_\_
- Check all services provided by SBHC/CATCH:
  - Emergency contraception
  - Birth control pills
  - Depo-Provera (the shot)
  - Ortho Evra (the patch)
  - IUD insertion
  - Birth control implant
  - Dental dams
  - Polyurethane condoms
  - Pregnancy testing
  - STI testing
  - STI treatment
  - HIV testing methods: \_\_\_\_\_
  - HIV treatment
  - Referrals for healthcare
  - Referrals for mental health counseling
  - LGBTQ-inclusive services
  - Peer educators
  - Health educators
    - Are health educators available for class presentations, class workshops, or after-school workshops with students/parents?



### NOTES:



# Step 2: Resources at School (next steps)

## Post-conversation:

- Create or obtain and display signs promoting CATCH services or the SBHC in your Health Resource Room
- Share CAP posters and schedules with CATCH or SBHC staff to display in their offices.

## Action planning for collaboration:

### Collaboration Implementation Plan

Timeframe	What needs to happen?	Who needs to be involved or consulted?	Who is responsible for the task's completion?



# Step 3: Identify Resources in the Community & Build Relationships

**TIP:** The *NYC Resources for LGBTQ Teens* guide and *Teens in NYC* booklet referenced below provide information on teen-friendly, trusted resources in the community. In many cases, teen "secret shoppers" visited the clinics. For more information on what constitutes a teen-friendly reproductive health visit, review [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "A Teen-Friendly Reproductive Health Visit" infographic](#).

## Familiarize yourself with resource guides and resources:

- Order copies of the *NYC Resources for LGBTQ Teens* guide from the Condom Availability Program Online Ordering System (email [CAP2@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CAP2@schools.nyc.gov) for link).
- Download the *Teens in NYC* mobile application. Visit your smartphone's app store and search "Teens in NYC".
- Bookmark the [Teens in NYC clinic locator web page](#) on your computer.
- Review the videos available on the [NYC Teen website](#). Consider how they can act as conversation-starters with students.
- Review Cicatelli Associates Inc.'s [Keep it Simple video](#) to talk about dual protection and birth control accessible through the clinic.
- Review the keys at the beginning of all guides to understand how clinic or resource information is presented in the guides.

## Locate and call clinic(s) near your school:

Here is a sample script you can use when reaching out to clinic staff: On the following pages, you will find tools to record what you learn from your discussion or meeting.

***"Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am part of the Condom Availability Program team here at \_\_\_\_\_. In this role, I provide students with confidential access to free condoms, health information and referrals. I wanted to reach out to you see what services you provide so that we can determine how we might be able to work together and what I can refer students to your program/center for. Is there a health educator or other staff member I can speak with?"***

*Hello!*

*Looking forward to working together.*



# Step 3: Community Resources (continued)

## Ask and record:

- Name of staff person you spoke with/have a relationship with: \_\_\_\_\_
- Role of staff person listed above: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of initial conversation regarding your role in CAP: \_\_\_\_\_
- Hours of operation: \_\_\_\_\_
- Walk-in policy: \_\_\_\_\_
- Languages spoken at clinic: \_\_\_\_\_
- Are any services free? Is yes, which services? \_\_\_\_\_
- If no, what fees are associated with various services? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are there sliding scale services? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do they accept Medicaid or enroll students in the Family Planning Benefits Program? \_\_\_\_\_

- Check all services provided:
  - Emergency contraception
  - Birth control pills
  - Depo-Provera (the shot)
  - Ortha Evra (the patch)
  - IUD insertion
  - Birth control implant
  - Dental dams
  - Polyurethane condoms
  - Pregnancy testing
  - Options counseling
  - Prenatal care
  - Abortion services or referrals (circle one)
  - STI testing
  - STI treatment
  - HIV testing methods: \_\_\_\_\_
  - HIV treatment
  - LGBTQ-inclusive services
  - Hormone replacement therapy
  - HPV vaccine
  - Support groups for: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Peer educators
  - Health educators
  - Are health educators available for class presentations, class workshops, or after-school workshops with students/parents?  
\_\_\_\_\_





# Step 3: Community Resources Notes Page



**NOTES:**

A large, empty rectangular box with a pink border, intended for writing notes.



# Step 3: Community Resources (next steps)

## Post-conversation:

- Visit the clinic, if you haven't already.
- Create and display signs promoting the clinic in your Health Resource Room. *Consider working with students to create signs.*
- Obtain MetroCards to provide when making referrals.
- Share what you learned with the health education teacher, School Wellness Council, and other key staff at your school. Remind staff that you are available to make sexual health services referrals to students.

## Action planning for collaboration:

Collaboration Implementation Plan			
Timeframe	What needs to happen?	Who needs to be involved or consulted?	Who is responsible for the task's completion?



# Step 4: Make & Count the Referral

## Learn how others make referrals to other services:

To begin, you may want to identify if your school has a process for making referrals to other social services, such as housing or counseling. Ask your school’s principal, guidance counselors, or social workers to share their referral policies with you. Write notes about this process here (it may help you develop a more formal policy for providing sexual health service referrals):

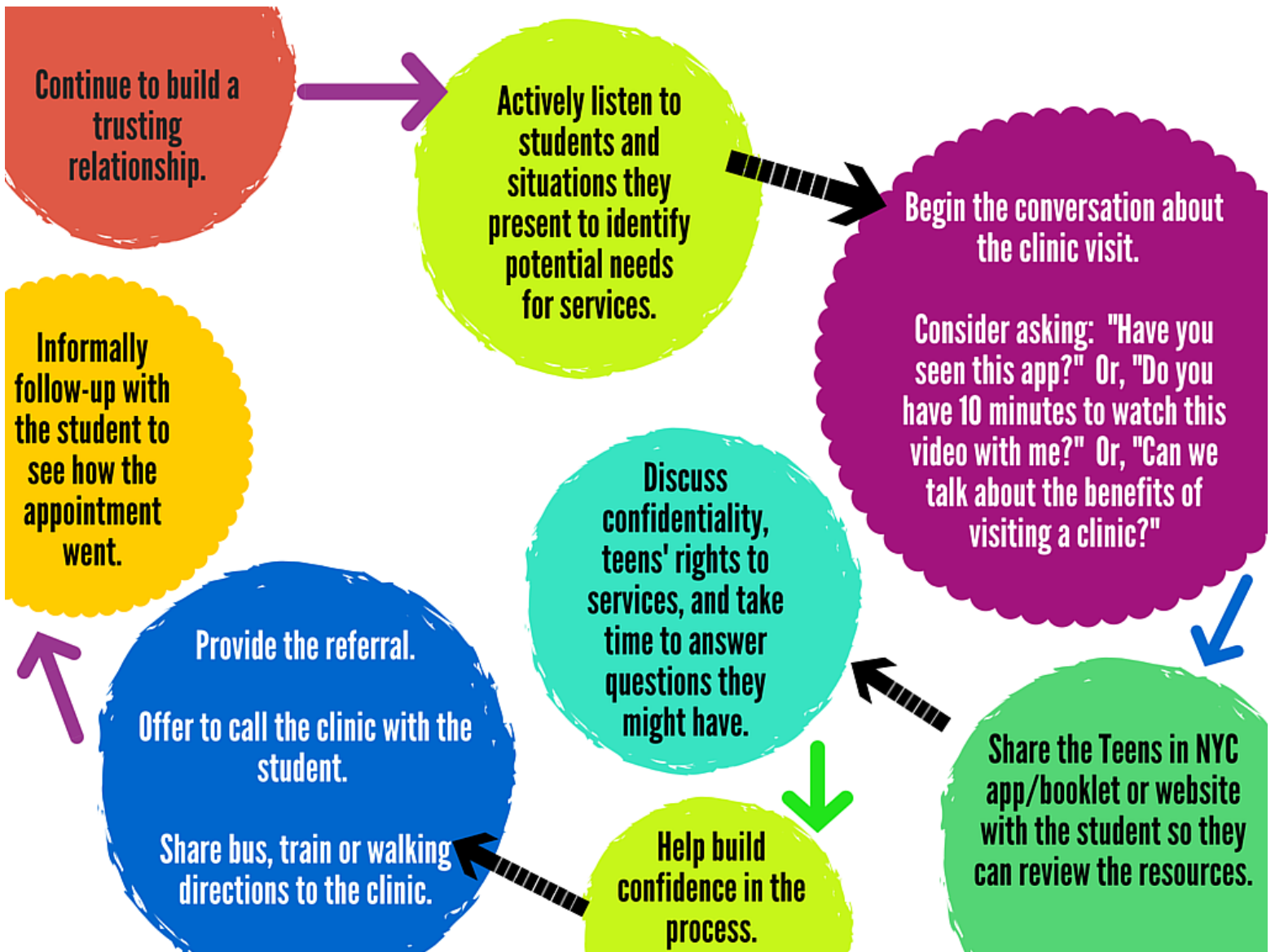


**NOTES:**



# Step 4: Make & Count the Referral

Consider the following road map:



## Tips for identifying student needs:

If a student openly shares that they are having sex, you can use this as an opportunity to remind the student of the importance of dual protection (condoms plus another form of birth control) and testing for STIs – as well as clinics that provide these services.

If a student expresses that they are questioning their sexuality, you may want to refer them to a clinic that is LGBTQ-inclusive and supportive.



# Step 4: Make & Count the Referral - A Checklist

## Did you follow the road map?

- Built trust:** I demonstrated empathy and created a space where the student felt comfortable.
- Actively listened:** I took the time to listen and understand what the student was telling me. I was proactive in identifying potential needs for services.
- Started the conversation and shared what to expect:** I took the time to walk the student through the NYC Teen website to review the Teens in NYC videos, or watched the "Keep it Simple Video," and/or found other ways to walk him/her through what to expect from a clinic visit.
- Shared information about locating clinics:** I walked the student through and/or provided the student with the *Teens in NYC* booklets or the clinic locator on the NYC Teen webpage.
- Defined confidentiality and student rights:** I informed the student of his/her rights to sexual health services and discussed the meaning of confidentiality.
- Built confidence** Throughout the conversation, I normalized the clinic visit for the student and reiterated that the student was making healthy, smart choices by looking into visiting a clinic.
- Provided the referral:** I offered to call the clinic with the student to set up the appointment.
- Shared bus, train or walking directions:** I provided MetroCards for the student (and a friend, if the student felt more comfortable going with someone).
- Followed Up:** I followed up with the student to check that the appointment was kept and what the experience was like.

**Tip: Following up with students post-referral is key. It is important to note any positive or negative experiences, or any barriers the student faced in keeping the appointment, to better inform your referral processes.**



# Step 4: Count the Referral

Counting referrals is important because it shows how we are achieving our goals in connecting students to the services that they need. Please be sure to track the number of referrals made and how the referrals were made. Please keep a count log only - and do not document any names. After you have taken the webinar, you will receive a monthly survey collecting this information.



Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Direct referral made to SBHC:	Direct referral made to CATCH:	Direct referral made to clinic identified in Step 3:	Direct referral made to other clinic than clinic from Step 3*:	Student self-referred; shared guides
		Name of clinic identified in Step 3:		

\*For clinics other than the clinic you identified in Step 3, list the name of the clinic you referred the student to. If you refer another student to a clinic you've already listed, either repeat the name of the clinic or tally next to the clinic name.



## Step 5: Update Other Staff

### Have a CAP-trained staff meeting:

Be sure to check in with other CAP-trained staff to share what you learned from the Making Health Referrals webinar, including the accompanying guide. Each member of your CAP team should be engaged in the process of making health referrals.

If you have already called the clinic, be sure to share the information about the clinic with the other CAP-trained staff and, when possible, extend direct introductions between your contact at the clinic and your fellow CAP-trained staff. If you haven't already called the clinic, you might want to make the introduction together.

When sharing how many referrals you have made through the Health Resource Room, be sure to count the referrals the other CAP-trained staff at your school have made. Develop a plan for maintaining communication about this process.

### Share information with your School Wellness Council:

A [School Wellness Council \(SWC\)](#) is an advisory group concerned with the health and well-being of students, staff, and the school community. A wellness council functions best when there is representation from across the school community, including students, teachers, school nurses, administrators, school food staff, custodians, mental health providers, and community based organizations.

If you have a SWC, bring the members together to share the information you learned when meeting with CATCH, SBHC, and clinic providers. Remind them that providing health referrals is a responsibility of the Condom Availability Program. Brainstorm with them on ways that you can promote health services to students.

For more information about what a School Wellness Council (or School Health Council) is and how to start one, email [wellness@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:wellness@schools.nyc.gov).

### Always keep your Principal looped in:

After you have taken the webinar, plan some time to share what you learned and your next steps with your Principal. It is important that your Principal knows and understands your school's plans for building new relationships or leveraging existing relationships with clinics. Keep the Principal posted as your work progresses.