



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF AMERICA**

## **FAQs: Using Your New Program Resources**

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### **1. What is the best way to utilize the program materials we've received in the mail from BGCA?**

If in your organization, you have someone who oversees programming at the organizational level, supervises Club site directors, and/or provides training for staff, give them the responsibility of disseminating the materials to site-level employees and setting some direction for their implementation. If this senior manager or managers have established priorities for improving certain aspects of Club programming or staff's youth development practices, they should review the materials to see how they can help address those priorities. These senior managers should meet with Club site directors and site-level program directors (if your organization has them), to introduce them to the materials and communicate expectations for their use. Site directors and site-level program directors in turn should orient their youth development staff in the same manner. ([back to top](#))

### **2. We offer a weekly meeting with site leadership. How can I best use these during these meetings?**

Many organizations have regular meetings for their Club site directors, especially if they expect them to provide training to site-level, part-time staff or have set organizational goals for improving program quality and consistency across sites. Some organizations also organize such recurring meetings for site-level staff who all have the same role, for example, all education, arts or athletic directors.

If you don't have such regular meetings, consider hosting a staff meeting to review key program content with core Club staff, including Club directors/site leads and program staff.

One key purpose of these meetings is to reserve time for learning and best practice sharing, so that site-level leaders are enabled to cascade down what they learn to staff and program volunteers at their sites. Reserve time in the agendas of your site leader meetings to introduce them to new program materials and work with them to determine whether and how they will implement them in their sites. ([back to top](#))

### **3. We do a monthly professional development full day of training. How can I use these materials in those events?**

You can engage staff in actively learning how to use these materials in a variety of ways and settings, such as during organizational training days or by reserving time for training in regular site-level staff meetings. Here are some suggestions for a three-step learning process of **Explore, Model and Support**:

#### **EXPLORE**

Use training time to have staff review program materials and plan for how they will deliver them. To hasten staff adoption of new programs and encourage continuous program quality improvement, assign sections of a program guide to small groups of staff members to review together, then have the small groups report out to the larger group to share their findings. In this way everyone ends the meeting with a solid understanding of the goals, structure and sessions for that program.

#### **MODEL**

Give your staff the opportunity to participate in a high-quality session themselves by having one of your most dynamic youth development professionals facilitate a session from one of the new targeted programs for them. Not only will your staff strengthen their own youth development practices, they will experience what it's like to participate in a program from young people's point of view. This approach can help develop empathy, which is important to their own support of youth within the program.

#### **SUPPORT**

If you're a site-level supervisor of staff, use time in your one-on-one meetings to coach individual staff in learning how to facilitate new programs. Give staff at least two hours of paid introductory planning and preparation time before they facilitate the first session. Observe one or more of their sessions as needed and provide feedback for improvement.

If you need more help on how to train your staff to implement specific new programs, use BGCA's [Who2Call directory](#) to identify and contact the right BGCA staff member. The [Youth Development Resource Catalog](#) is useful for understanding which national programs align with each of our five Core Program Areas, who they are for and what skills they develop. ([back to top](#))

#### **4. Some of the books are really large. Where do we even start?**

Some targeted program guides from BGCA are lengthy because they contain a series of sequential sessions for multiple age groups, or because the programs are designed to comprehensively cover a certain subject matter area. Take the Triple Play Healthy Habits facilitator's guide, for example. It contains all the content needed to implement the program with three different age groups: 6 to 9, 10 to 12, and 13 to 18. For each age group, there are 14 sequential sessions.

Staff won't use all of the material all at once. Rather, program staff should select the materials meant for the age group with which they are working. Also, if time and resources won't allow for implementation of the full set of sessions, Club site directors or site-level program directors can help staff review the information in the program guide's Introduction to prioritize the knowledge and skills they want youth to develop. Together you can select the sessions they will implement; however, please note we do recommend preserving the original sequence of sessions, as they're designed to build on each other. For example, if you can't facilitate all 14 sessions of Healthy Habits in sequential order with your 10- to 12-year-olds because of scheduling conflicts, perhaps at least you can complete the first eight or 10 sessions in the intended order. ([back to top](#))

#### **5. What do we need to know about BGCA's standardized way of organizing and formatting new targeted program guides?**

BGCA has begun standardizing targeted program guides so that no matter their subject matter or target age groups, they have a uniform format and common features in their instructional design and content. This is to make the materials easier to use, help Club professionals build their facilitation and youth development skills and practices, and promote programming consistency and quality. As BGCA develops new programs or updates existing ones, they will all be standardized in this manner.

Teach your staff to use the standardized format and content features of BGCA program guides. By becoming familiar with these features, staff will be better able to shift from program to program and make their planning and delivery more consistent and efficient.

##### **FORMAT**

Guide covers are now color-coded by our five Core Program Areas. For example, the standard colors for Health and Wellness programs are green and yellow. The program's age range and number of sessions are located in the bottom left corner of the front cover. The Core Program Area in which the program belongs is featured in the bottom right corner of the back cover. Sessions are all formatted the same way, starting with an advanced preparation checklist that lists materials and supplies needed, additional resource links, and skills developed. Graphic icons show session duration, group size and whether there are handouts. Session activities are clearly presented in the order in which they should be delivered, with the step-by-step process for facilitating each activity listed underneath.

## CONTENT FEATURES

Each program guide includes an Introduction that is required reading. The Introduction explains how the guide is organized and provides practical tips on how to use it. To promote intentional skill development, the Introduction also describes which program content develops which social-emotional and subject-specific skills in youth. At the end of each guide, there is a section documenting the research basis that guided how the program was designed. Each session, no matter who it's for or what it's about, features the Elements of a High-Quality Session codified in BGCA's [Program Basics BLUEprint](#), Section 4, pp. 70-73 and 88: Warm Welcome, Community Builder, Group Agreements, Main Activity, Reflection, Recognition, and Closing and Transition. By ensuring the consistent use of the Elements of a High-Quality Session, you enable your staff to *apply* essential principles of high-quality youth development in every program session they facilitate. ([back to top](#))

### 6. We have mostly part-time staff who get little time to prepare for programming. How can these be useful to this type of staff?

As explained in the [Program Basics BLUEprint](#), planning and preparation are essential for delivering quality programming. Consider seriously how your organization can make it possible for your site-level youth development staff to have more paid planning time. Some Club organizations invest in site-level program directors to guide youth development staff and assist them with program planning and preparation. The targeted program guide standardization features ([see the response to question 5](#)) are designed to assist staff with limited preparation time. If they know what to expect in each program guide and work on facilitating their sessions more consistently, they should be able to use their limited planning time more effectively. ([back to top](#))

### 7. For new hires what is the best way to use these books?

All of your Club program staff members will benefit from a thorough orientation to new and updated BGCA targeted program guides.

New hires should take part in an orientation and onboarding process *before* they are placed in the Club to work with youth. The [Program Basics BLUEprint](#) Introduction provides recommendations for how to use some of its features and content in such an onboarding process. Their onboarding should include opportunities to shadow seasoned staff so they can observe how they interact with youth and facilitate program sessions. They need careful, intensive supervision as they begin to work with youth and practice facilitating sessions or activities. Their onboarding also should include an orientation to the standardization of BGCA targeted program guides ([see the response to question 5](#)) so they know how to use these materials. BGCA offers a [management practices best practices bulletin on hiring and onboarding](#) with more tips and tools, including a sample onboarding checklist.

In spring 2020, BGCA will add a new Program Basics foundational learning pathway to Spillett Leadership University's (SLU) [School of Youth Development](#). The pathway consists of

a series of 12 learning opportunities that support competency development during a youth development professional's first year on the job. These sessions can be facilitated by any BGCA-certified [Tier 1 National Trainer](#). We encourage all Club organizations to designate staff members to become certified SLU [Learning Coaches](#) and Tier 1 National Trainers so they can provide essential training for line-level program staff as needed. ([back to top](#))

**8. We have seasoned staff who struggle to learn new things. How can I use these books with them?**

All of your Club program staff members will benefit from a thorough orientation to new and updated BGCA targeted program guides.

For seasoned staff, make sure they understand the *why* behind any changes you ask them to make. Explain that the aim is to strengthen programming and increase your positive impact on youth, by focusing on sound youth development practice and intentional skill development for youth. Challenge them to adopt a “personal CQI” mindset, to take a clear-eyed look at their own practice and identify where they need to improve. Allow them to choose one or two aspects of youth development practice or program delivery they will work on at one time. For example, maybe they need to find and try new community builders, or learn how to help youth make group agreements, or be more consistent about incorporating a reflection activity at the end of each session (refer to the [Program Basics BLUEprint](#), Section 4, pp. 70-73 and 88, or Quick Tools in the YDToolbox mobile app). Observe their session facilitation and use your one-on-one supervision meetings to give them feedback, help them set their own improvement goals, and provide individualized guidance and coaching. ([back to top](#))

**9. What is the best way to use these materials as we work on our CQI plan to improve the Club Experience in specified areas at each of our sites?**

For starters, refer to the responses for questions 1 and 2. But much will depend on what your CQI assessment process has revealed as areas for improvement in each of your sites. There are two distinct but essential components of program quality: quality of instruction and quality of content. Your site leaders and staff can consider which BGCA program materials to use and how to use them to support achievement of specific improvement goals they have set. BGCA's targeted programs, with their standardized format and features, and updated, relevant content, will best support the quality content component of your CQI efforts and help build young people's engagement in your programs.

Visit BGCA's online CQI Toolkit, [cqitoolkit.org](http://cqitoolkit.org), for more guidance, tips and resources for implementing an ongoing CQI process in your organization and sites. ([back to top](#))

**10. We struggle with young staff who are not good at supporting members with behavior issues. How can these materials help with that?**

As part of BGCA's efforts to enhance targeted programs and standardize their format and content features, we are using [inclusive design and universal design principles](#) to start building adaptation options into all programs. The key principle is that everyone gets to participate, but everyone may not participate in the same way. BGCA is also developing a behavior support strategy for Club staff to be incorporated in new and revised programs. BGCA also offers resources for Club staff working with certain specific groups of youth, such as those with [disabilities](#), those who are [grieving](#), and those who identify as [LGBTQ](#), as well as resources that provide guidance on [current issues or trends](#) affecting young people's well-being.

All Club staff need to have a strong foundational knowledge of youth development principles and the domains and milestones of child development to keep members physically and emotionally safe, create a positive environment, and have supportive interactions with them (refer to the [Program Basics BLUEprint](#), Sections 1, 2 and 3). These are training essentials that cannot be neglected if you want your staff to become strong youth development practitioners who can work with youth in a holistic, strength-based manner.

Once that foundation is in place, you can build on it by offering additional training on informal guidance and positive discipline, classroom management, and working with youth with specific special needs. The SLU School of Youth Development Program Basics learning pathway ([see the response to question 7](#)) includes instructor-led training sessions on these topics that new staff can complete over the course of their first year of Club employment. If you don't yet have certified Tier 1 National Trainers in your organization who can facilitate these sessions, there are also SLU School of Youth Development distance learning courses on many of these topics that your program staff can take online. ([back to top](#))