

# Personal conversations & Sensitive Issues

Adult youth mentors invited to be their true selves with students, but are encouraged to be careful about how much they self-disclose, or share of their personal lives with the students. This means that they may be honest with the young people in their parish, but if personal questions are asked (especially about their sexuality or any drug or alcohol use or mental health issues) they are to redirect those questions. (An example of redirecting might be, "it sounds like you're curious about me, but that's a very personal question that I'm not comfortable answering.").



If students begin talking about these issues with each other, it is appropriate for the adult mentor to stop these conversations. (An example of redirecting this conversation might be, "people come into this community with different backgrounds & that's alright.") and redirect (think of a different activity).

Before adults share personal conversations with young people, they are to think about what effect it would have on the students. Ask yourself questions such as "Could this open up wounds that I might not be aware of?" or "Am I telling the young people this because I need to share it with someone?". If you ever have a question or have a topic of conversation that might be "heavy" for the students, make sure you discuss it with your supervisor first. It is the job of adult mentors to youth to encourage & invite them into a closer relationship with God, not to force them into something they may not be ready for.

Sensitive Issues are those social issues that may evoke a variety of strong feelings from different people. Sensitive issues may include, but are not limited, to: smoking, drugs, tattoos, body piercing, sexuality, dating, divorce, ghost or horror stories, and the personal lives of staff or other camp employees. Adults are encouraged not to discuss sensitive issues with children and youth.

**Ask yourself, why am I sharing this information?**