

# SAFE & SEEN



TREEHOUSE



## *Creating mental health friendly youth ministries*

The culture we foster in our ministry determines the level of safety for teens struggling with mental health.

This five-part video series will help your ministry team create a safe environment for any teen, including those struggling with mental health.

### DISCUSSION GUIDE **SESSION 4** COMMUNITY RULES



## About TreeHouse

TreeHouse exists to **unleash hope** in teens by empowering Christ-centered leaders to provide grace-based teen mental health support.

Our vision is to turn the tide of teen mental health by empowering the Church to bring living hope to teens in their community.

To learn more about how TreeHouse can help position your ministry as a community leader by offering non-clinical mental health support, visit [TreeHouseHope.org/partner](https://TreeHouseHope.org/partner).

## Let's Connect

TreeHouseHope.org

 @treehousehope

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# SESSION 4 DISCUSSION: COMMUNITY RULES

## Review group rules and their purpose:

**Confidentiality:** What's shared in this group stays in this group.

**Respect:** Listen without interrupting or judging.

**Assume positive intent:** Approach others' contributions with grace.

**Speak for yourself:** Use "I" statements to share your thoughts and experiences.

**Practice empathy:** Seek to understand others' experiences.

**No dumping:** Identify ministry growth areas without dwelling on past mistakes.

## WATCH VIDEO 4: COMMUNITY RULES

### 1. The Impact of Unspoken Rules (10 minutes)

Unspoken rules can create uncertainty and fear for teens, especially those with mental health challenges. Discuss how to identify and address these invisible expectations in ministry.

- ☆ How do unspoken rules affect teens' ability to feel safe and authentic in ministry spaces?
- ☆ What invisible expectations might exist in your ministry that could need to be clarified?

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## 2. Crafting Group Rules Together (10 minutes)

Involving teens in creating group rules fosters ownership and sets the tone for a safe, collaborative culture. Reflect on how to make this process engaging and meaningful.

- ☆ How can involving teens in setting rules increase their sense of ownership and commitment to the group's culture?
- ☆ What specific components would you include in your group's rules to create a safe and respectful environment?

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## 3. Communicating and Reinforcing Expectations (10 minutes)

Clear communication and consistent reinforcement of rules help teens feel secure. Discuss strategies to keep group expectations visible and relevant.

- ☆ Joel recommended posting and regularly referring to group rules. How can you keep your teens engaged with these expectations long-term?
- ☆ What challenges might arise in introducing and maintaining new rules, and how can you address them?

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## 4. Addressing Rule Infractions (10 minutes)

Lovingly enforcing rules with predetermined consequences maintains group safety and trust. Explore how to handle broken rules with gentleness and fairness.

### Discussion Question:

- ☆ What does it look like to “lovingly enforce high expectations” when a teen breaks a rule?

### Reflection Question:

- ☆ How can you ensure that consequences are clear, fair, and empower teens to make better choices in the future?

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## 5. Partnering with Parents (5 minutes)

Working with parents helps create consistency and understanding around group rules. Reflect on how to build relationships and bring parents alongside your ministry vision.

- ☆ Joel emphasized building trust with parents. How can you engage parents in supporting group rules without creating shame or conflict?
- ☆ How can you show parents that your rules are designed with their teen’s well-being in mind?

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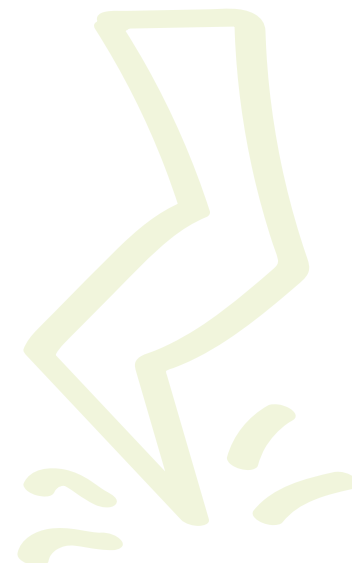
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## Possible Action Steps

Discuss these action steps and try to reach consensus on what step you will take next in your ministry.

- ☆ Bring together a group of trusted teens and work to identify your group's unspoken rules.
- ☆ Partner with your student leadership team to brainstorm your community rules and consequences.
- ☆ Identify your procedures for rule infractions and ensure all staff and volunteers are equipped to follow the procedures.
- ☆ Meet with church leadership to explain your rules and the ministry culture you're working to create.
- ☆ Once group rules are established (or updated), hold a parent meeting to share your vision for how rules create safety. Then review the rules and consequences.



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## Closing Reflection & Prayer (5 minutes)

**Takeaway:**

- ☆ What is one step you will take to clarify expectations and create a safer environment for teens in your ministry?

**Prayer:**

- ☆ Pray for wisdom, patience, and creativity in establishing a culture where every teen feels safe and valued.



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### DISCLAIMER

The Safe & Seen series is designed for educational purposes only. It is intended to provide tools and strategies for fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive ministry environment for teens.

This course does not qualify or license any individual or organization, including the church, to practice mental health care, provide clinical counseling, or diagnose mental health conditions. We expect participants will observe the parameters of their respective roles and educational limits, referring individuals with significant mental health concerns to licensed mental health practitioners.

Mental health concerns or crises? Please reach out to a local mental health professional or seek immediate professional help for yourself or anyone in your ministry.

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Session five references The Relate study (2024). View the full study at [relate.younglife.org](https://relate.younglife.org).