



TEXAS
YOUTH
COMMISSION

BREAK the silence

Break the Silence asks you to report everything you know about any sexual assault that occurred at TYC. It doesn't matter whether the assault involved staff or another youth. You'll see these hotline posters around TYC for the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act.

ZERO TOLERANCE.

The Texas Legislature has adopted a zero-tolerance policy regarding the sexual abuse, including consensual sexual contact, of a child in the custody of the Texas Youth Commission. Any such violation must be reported. You'll see these posters around campus for Senate Bill 103, 80th Texas Legislative Session.

You can 'Break the Silence' or help enforce 'Zero Tolerance' by calling the TYC hotline or mailing information to TYC in Austin. Use this hotline for any emergency or serious complaints needing immediate attention.

TYC HOTLINE

866-477-8354

TEXAS YOUTH COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 4260

AUSTIN, TX 78765

This brochure is designed as a quick reference guide only. You (Youth) have access to the full TYC policies which will explain in detail how to make complaints or report abuse. These policies should be posted on your dorm.

ADM # 070

Published: March 2008

It's your **RIGHT**



to
report
what's **WRONG!**

Youth Complaint & Grievance Guide
Texas Youth Commission



We want you to have a good experience at TYC. So, we'll start with this promise –

to keep you safe and to treat you with respect.

Your Basic Rights

1. Right to Equal Treatment

You have the right to be free from discrimination.

2. Right of Free Speech & Expression

You have the right to self-expression, so long as you do not disrupt program safety and order.

3. Right of Religious Freedom

You have the right to participate, or not participate, in religious activities of your choice.

4. Right to Personal Possessions

You have the right to keep and use personal possessions that do not endanger the safety, disrupt programs, or encourage bad behavior.

5. Right to Receive Visitors

You have the right to receive visitors, including private in-person communication with parents.

6. Right of Access to Mail & Telephone

You have the right to correspond freely through the mail except when it presents a security risk. You will be provided access to telephones to the extent possible.

7. Right to Earnings & Monetary Gifts

You have the right to your money. TYC may limit the amount in your possession, but can't take it from a trust fund without your consent.

8. Right to Protection from Physical & Psychological Harm

You have the right to be protected from harm. You have the right to adequate and nutritious food, clothing and shelter.

9. Right to Medical & Dental Care

You have the right to basic and necessary medical and dental care, both routine and emergency.

10. Right of Access to Attorneys

You have the right to confer privately with your attorneys at appropriate times and places.

11. Right to be Informed

You have the right to be informed of all policies, procedures, and rules affecting you at TYC.

12. Right to Accuracy & Fairness

You have the right to accuracy and fairness in all decisions concerning you.

13. Right to Confidentiality of Records

You have the right to confidentiality of your records. They will not be released except to those authorized by law.

14. Right to File Grievances & Appeal Decisions

You have the right to have access to a prompt and fair method of resolving complaints.

? How do I report abuse or make a complaint?



Tell:

a case manager, JCO, campus administrator, teacher, nurse, youth rights specialist, youth care investigator, inspector general, the ombudsman, a volunteer, your parents, any trusted adult



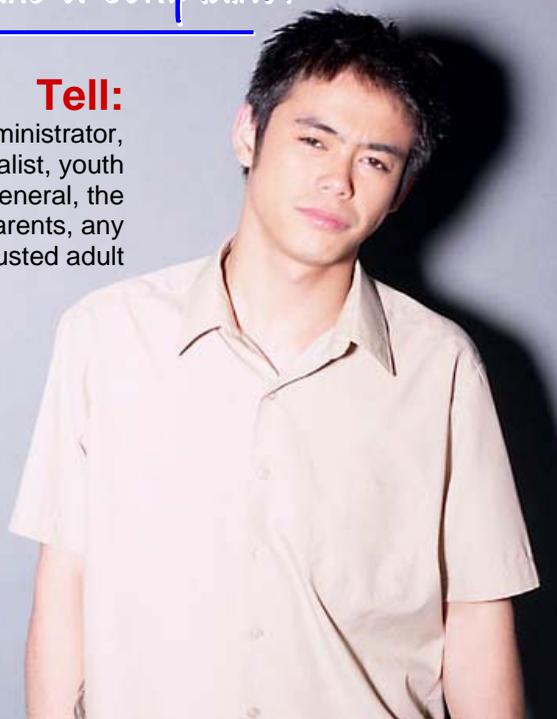
Call:

the TYC Hotline at 866-477-8354
the CPS Hotline at 800-252-5400



Write:

a grievance (complaint) or a letter to a TYC official including the inspector general or ombudsman



? What if someone threatens me about making a complaint?

It takes courage to report abuse or wrongdoing, especially if you are embarrassed or afraid you'll make things worse on yourself. Remember, there are people who care about you and who will not tolerate you being abused or treated unfairly. If someone is causing you harm because you have reported a problem - that is called retaliation. Anyone who retaliates against you, even TYC staff, will be in serious trouble. Be sure to report retaliation just like you would anything else. If you experience retaliation, remember you can always report your problem to someone who doesn't work at your facility by calling the TYC hotline.

? Can I help another youth, or get help, making a complaint?

Yes. You most certainly can get help from wherever and whomever you feel most comfortable, including from your peers. Some of your peers may be better at understanding TYC rules and policies and others may be better at helping you put your complaint into writing. If you are good at these things, help your peers. And, look out for each other. If you see someone getting abused or mistreated by a TYC staff member or another youth, you can make a complaint for them. Don't think of it as ratting or snitching. Instead, imagine how you would feel if you were in trouble and no one wanted to help.

? Who do I tell?

The most important thing is to tell a trusted adult about any problems you are having, especially if you are being abused by another youth or TYC staff. Don't worry if you are not sure who to tell. Any TYC staff member, volunteer, or investigator can get your complaint to the right person.

Youth Rights Specialists

These TYC employees are in charge of the youth grievance system. They make sure your grievances are answered. This brochure explains how to write a grievance.



Youth Care Investigators

These TYC employees investigate non-criminal allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or policy violations against youth within TYC.



Office of Inspector General

These law enforcement officers investigate criminal acts committed by TYC staff or youth and can file criminal charges against either.



Office of the Independent Ombudsman

These independent monitors focus on problems that affect the whole TYC system in hopes of improving the standard of care for all youth and making sure youth rights are respected.



Child Protective Services

The investigators look into claims of child abuse, neglect or exploitation.



Advocacy Groups

They help individual youth with problems and speak to lawmakers to make wide-ranging changes in the whole juvenile justice system.



? How do I write a grievance?

Hopefully, while you are in TYC, most of your problems will not be serious and can get solved right away by using the grievance system. Each dorm has a youth who serves as the grievance clerk.

1. First, you need to ask the grievance clerk for a grievance form. Almost anybody can tell you who this is.

2. Next, write down what's wrong and how you want TYC to fix it.

3. Tear off the yellow page and keep it. That's your copy.

4. Fold up the white page and drop it in a locked grievance box located on your campus. You don't have to explain or show your grievance to anyone before you put it in the box.

5. TYC will tell you in writing within about two weeks if we can fix the problem the way you want, or in another way.

6. If you don't like the answer you get to your grievance, you can ask us to get someone else to look at it again. That's called an appeal, and you have a right to appeal a decision.

A grievance is best for general complaints and is a good way to have most problems solved. But, if someone is abusing you, you should report it in person so TYC can stop it right away!

One more thing...

Never lie! Don't make up something to get someone in trouble. Making false reports of crimes or lying to investigators are crimes themselves. It's just not worth it. Plus, tracking down false reports takes time away from fixing real problems.