




Adventist Risk Management, Inc.



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3 Skills Every Youth Leader Should Master

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When I was in high school I took my first CPR training class as part of the scheduled afternoon activity for a ministry at my local church. The entire experience took just a couple of hours, and I remember thinking what a great idea it was to be CPR trained—just in case I needed to help restart someone's heart.

Thankfully I've never had to use my training but, as I got older, and became a youth leader and coach, I realized how important it is to be trained in some emergency skills. While we all hope that we never need to call emergency services, the truth is accidents happen every day and everywhere. You never know when a specific skill could save a life.

If you work with youth groups or athletic groups, it is important to be prepared in the event of an injury. The actions you take directly following an accident can either help or harm your athlete. Here are three skills every youth leader should master.

CPR Training

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the world's leading cause of death, including heart attacks and strokes. Here are some numbers to consider from WHO:

- CVDs are the number one cause of death globally.
- More people die annually from CVDs than from any other cause.
- 17.5 million people die each year from CVDs, an estimated 31 percent of all deaths worldwide.
- 80 percent of all CVD deaths are due to heart attacks and strokes.

Why is CPR training important?

The good news is that you can help cut down these numbers and double or triple a person's chance of survival. How? By receiving training in CPR and learning how to properly use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). According to the [American Heart Association](#), "when a person has a cardiac arrest, survival depends on immediately getting CPR from someone nearby. CPR, especially if performed in the first few minutes of cardiac arrest, can double or triple a person's chance of survival."

The American Red Cross states that, "for every minute without defibrillation, a sudden cardiac arrest victim's chance of surviving drops. It is critical for as many people as possible to be trained to perform CPR and know how to use an AED until advance help arrives."

Many local community health organizations provide training and free resources to youth groups and leaders. Training does not take long. Your investment in learning CPR could be the determining factor between life or death. Reach out to your local health organizations and learn how you and your fellow youth leaders can be trained.

Concussions & Head Injuries

A fall during a horse riding excursion or a bump on the head after a slip and fall can have traumatic effects. Head injuries can happen in a split second and a youth leader trained to recognize the symptoms can prevent further damage from taking place.

The Mayo Clinic describes a concussion as a traumatic brain injury that affects brain function. A concussion is usually caused by a blow to the head or violently shaking the head and upper body.

Why is recognizing head injury symptoms important?

According to the CDC, symptoms of a concussion can last for days, weeks, or longer. Additionally, while most people with a concussion are able to recover, those who have experienced a concussion in the past are also at risk of having another one. Signs and symptoms of a concussion affect the victim physically, emotionally and mentally.

Look for a program from an official organization, such as the CDC, that offers information on how to respond to a concussion as well as creating an action plan. Watch this video from the CDC:

VIDEO: Heads Up Program on Responding to a Concussion.



Basic First Aid

Every ministry—church, school, camp—should have a first aid kit that is inventoried regularly to make sure it is up to date. Additionally, every ministry should make sure that leaders and staff are educated on how to administer first aid. Here are a few facts to consider from the Livestrong Foundation:

- It takes the brain six minutes to die once oxygen is cut off.
- It can take a person as little as five minutes to bleed to death.
- Bones that are not set properly following a break may never hold weight.
- Cuts that are not cleaned can become infected.

Why is knowing basic first aid important?

Just as it is with CPR training, your first aid training can mean the difference between life and death in an emergency. Knowing basic first aid is helpful when professional medical attention is not instantly available. Make sure more than one person trained in first aid attends every camping trip, volunteer project, church event or school game.

Take the Challenge: Train Your Youth Leaders

If you are like me, you have never needed to provide first aid or CPR. Perhaps you have never needed to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or another brain injury, but it is better to be proactive and prepared for these situations than be caught in an emergency and not know what to do to help those around you. Be a proactive risk manager and take the challenge to train your youth leaders in these three life-saving skills.

Learn more about keeping your ministry safe on [ARM's Safety Resources page](#).

References

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⁶<https://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/symptoms.html>

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