Recovery Position

Goal:

- Demonstrate how to put someone in the recovery position and when to call 911.

Instructions:

- Ask youth, **when and why would the recovery position be used?** When someone is passed out after drinking alcohol (or other substances) and they can’t wake up.
- **How do you tell if someone is passed out or just sleeping?** Try to wake them up by calling their name, talking in their ear or nudging them but be aware they may wake up startled. If they don’t wake up they are likely unconscious. We are going to demonstrate the recover position.
- Ask if there is a volunteer who is willing to lie down on the floor and let the facilitator place them in the recovery position. If there are no volunteers, or if the facilitator prefers not to use a youth volunteer, use a teacher or co-facilitator.
- Make sure the demo is happening in a visible location.
- Get consent from youth before putting them into the recovery position.

Explain the steps of the recovery position:

- Tilt head backwards to open airways.
- Bend one arm out at their side.
- Place other arm across chest with hand against cheek.
- Bring far leg up to a 90° angle. This will help you roll them over no matter your strength or their size.
- Roll them over.

The bent leg and arm give stability while the hand under the head keeps their airways open so they don’t choke on their puke.
Debrief:

- Ask youth, **what do you do after the person is in the recovery position?** If the person is passed out, it means they may have alcohol poisoning or may be overdosing. Encourage youth to call for help or get the person to a hospital or nursing station if they think the other person may be in danger, suspect alcohol has been mixed with other drugs, or there are severe risk signs. Signs can include being non-responsive, irregular breathing, clammy/pale skin or blood in their vomit. Check for these signs and ask if anyone knows how much or what they have taken, then call 911.

- If someone at a party is passed out and does not have any of the severe risk signs, still keep them in the recovery position in a safe place and check on or stay with them throughout the night. This is important because as a person is passed out, their blood alcohol level can still be rising. This means that they can go from a safe level to unsafe very quickly.

- When in doubt it is much safer to call 911. For the most part, paramedics just want to make sure people are safe, they don’t care about what else is going on.

(FYI: When 911 is called, an ambulance is sent out and a paramedic stays on the phone with the person who called to assist them in helping the person who is hurt. An ambulance fee in Winnipeg is $512. It is charged to the person who is transported. If they are under 18 a parent/guardian is contacted from the hospital. The bill is sent to the guardian. Ambulance fees are covered by several different insurance plans as well as Child and Family Services and Social Assistance.)

Now that you know what the recovery position looks like, it’s a good idea to try practicing it yourself, just in case you ever need to use it.

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Additional Activities:

Ideally, this activity can be followed by the:

- “Refusal Skills” brainstorm & flipchart
- “Abstinence Activities” brainstorm & flipchart
- “Reflection Activity”
1. Tilt head backwards to open airways.
   Bend one arm out at their side.

2. Place other arm across chest with hand against cheek.

3. Bring far leg up to a 90° angle.
   This will help you roll them over no matter your strength or their size.

4. Roll them over.
   The bent leg and arm give stability while the hand under the head keeps their airways open and they don’t choke on their puke.

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