Mental health is one of the most common challenges that students face today. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 5 children between the ages of 13 and 18 have or will have a serious mental illness, and currently, suicide is the second leading cause of death in youth between 10 and 24 years old (NAMI, 2017). The issue of mental health translates directly to the world of FIRST® Robotics Competition as students are subject to long hours of work, stressful tasks, and a fast-paced environment throughout the build and competition season. As stated by the Constitution of the World Health Organization, health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2016).

A Quiet Room provides students, mentors, and volunteers with a safe place during the competition to get away from common competition stressors. The volume of the room should be quiet, and there should be stress-relieving activities, such as coloring sheets or stress balls. This safe place can lead to increased happiness and decreased levels of stress. In turn, this room can help individuals to enjoy FIRST® Robotics Competition more during events.

The Quiet Room is part of the FIRST Robotics Competition event space, and therefore all persons using the Quiet Room must follow the behavior expected in other areas of the competition. The behavior of those in the Quiet Room reflects on your team, sponsors, and schools, and it is the responsibility of everyone using the Quiet Room to ensure a positive experience for all community members. Teams are responsible for the behavior of their members; the success of each Quiet Room depends on everyone’s participation. All Quiet Room users are expected to follow the event manual rules, linked here.

Quiet Rooms were first successfully implemented during the 2018 competition season, with the implementation of Quiet Rooms at 12 events throughout the United States. This number grew to over 53 different events during the 2019 season, including Quiet Rooms at FIRST Championship Houston and FIRST Championship Detroit. “As an alumni with a disability, it’s about time”- FIRST Alumni via Facebook
This guide is a reference for how to set up and run a Hear For You Quiet Room at your event. Hear For You is a collaborative mental health platform. With the help of the FIRST community, we have sourced information about our community's needs, existing resources, and best practices. This guide has been developed from community feedback and experience running Quiet Rooms at events.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please email us at thefirstcompassalliance@gmail.com
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The Compass Alliance Pathways: Quiet Room Expanded Guide

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Quiet Room Overview

The purpose of the Quiet Room is to provide a space where our participants can relax, regroup, and prepare for the stress and commotion of the competition.

This room is staffed by volunteers who are NOT trained mental health professionals. If you or anyone you know needs professional help or is experiencing an emergency, please find the EMT on site or otherwise contact emergency services.

What the Quiet Room is Not

Quiet Rooms are aimed to help relieve stress and create a welcoming environment at FIRST competitions. There are some rules and regulations that MUST be followed. There will be no professional counselors in the room. Quiet Rooms are not a place to seek professional assistance.

Furthermore, the Quiet Room is not a place for:

- Scouting
- Team meetings
- Talking
- Loud noises
- Leaving children unattended
- Playing video games
- Destroying materials/room
- Disrespectful language

It does not provide trained professionals or emergency services.

Expectations of participants using the Quiet Room:

- Respect the space
- Respect others
  - Confidentiality - Giving others space
- Keep noise level down
- Clean up after yourself
  - Don’t leave materials you used behind
Before The Event

The Planning Committee will need to create a specific environment and to supply certain items to have a functional Quiet Room at events. These are the minimum standards suggested to host a successful Quiet Room at each event:

**Space**

There are some considerations to take into play regarding where a Quiet Room should be set up at the competition.

- Comparable size to the judges’ meeting room which is 500-750 square feet. The space should allow individuals using the room to spread out.
- Should be located within easy walking distance of the field and pits
- Should have chairs for people to sit on and desks or tables for people to rest their head on or work independently on the materials that the room offers.
  - Other seating options would be valuable, if they are available (bean bags, etc.)

Competition venues that lack a space that fit these parameters are still capable of running Quiet Rooms.

To set up an FIRST LEGO® League Quiet Room click [here](#).

**Alternative spaces**

When an event does not have the space to hold a Quiet Room you can still provide a quiet space for the attendees using the following tips:

- Should have a table that can fit supplies on it
- Should have 1-2 separate tables for the attendees to use supplies
- Should have 5 chairs at a table
- Can be in a public space such as cafeteria, library, etc.

Need help planning your event’s Quiet Room or alternative space?
Email us: thefirstcompassalliance@gmail.com
Volunteers:
Quiet Room Attendants (2)

The Quiet Room Attendants are one of the event volunteers recruited by the Volunteer Coordinator (VC). You can find the description of the volunteer role and responsibilities online here: Quiet Room Attendants and the downloadable Quiet Room Attendant Should and Should Not list here.

Two Quiet Room Attendants are required at all times throughout the event.

If you have any questions related to the role, please contact Volunteer Resources at Volunteer@firstinspires.org

In Case of an Emergency:

The Quiet Room Attendant is responsible for the Quiet Room in the event of a medical, safety, or other emergency.

Before the event, the VC should establish a clear line of communication between Event Management and the Quiet Room Attendants, ensuring contact is possible throughout the event. This communication can be established either via the use of Walkie-talkies or cell phone communication between the Committee Chair or VC and the Quiet Room Attendant(s).

In the event of an emergency, the Quiet Room Attendant should immediately contact Event Management via the pre-arranged communication channels, and should then clear the room of all users. Never try to restrain or give medical attention to a person in crisis.
Promoting the Quiet Room

The Committee Chair should include information about the Quiet Room in the welcome email or a follow up email before the event. Other ways to promote the Quiet Room at your event are hanging signs directing individuals to the room, placing FIRST provided signs in visible places, and providing information so the MC can announce the Quiet Room at events.

Some feedback about Quiet Rooms:

“As an alumni with a disability, it’s about time.” - FIRST Alumni via Facebook

“Helps with my anxiety”- Student at 2019 FIRST Championship

“Extremely serene, just what I needed”- Student at 2019 FIRST Championship

“Absolutely love this idea, as a past team member mom of someone with Autism and current coach with two members on our team with sensory issues this should be amazing!” - Team Coach via ChiefDelphi

“As an alumni with a disability, it’s about time.” - FIRST Alumni via Facebook

“I was able to de-stress” - Student at 2019 FIRST Championship

“Helps with my anxiety” - Student at 2019 FIRST Championship

“Everyone deserves a chance to be a part of FRC, however competition is a sensory overload for all let alone sensory sensitive teammates.” - Team Coach via Facebook
Emails to Send to Teams

- General Email
- Email Reply to Teams Helping with Supplies
Supplies

Required Supplies

Signs

- Print and hang **signs** to direct participants to the Quiet Room and explain what the Quiet Room expectations:

![Quiet Room Sign](image)

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<thead>
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<th>NOT A PLACE FOR ....</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Scouting</td>
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Interactive Supplies

- **Coloring sheets, weekly planners**, informational sheets, crossword puzzles, etc. provided by The Compass Alliance’s Hear For You team
  
  *Find more on the [Hear For You Pinterest page](#)*

- Colored pencils, crayons, markers, or any other writing medium
  - These materials may be donated by other teams

According to the Cleveland Clinic, coloring has been found to help decrease stress and increase mood, and the supplies themselves are both affordable and easily obtainable.
Optional Supplies

- Stress balls ([4imprint](#) is where these are from) - ask for event sponsors to donate

- Reading material
  - Magazines, crossword puzzles, etc.
- Post It Notes to leave notes of encouragement
- Yoga mats, along with yoga and mindfulness exercises
- Sensory balls or other sensory items

If you have any additional questions about supplies, please let us know.
During the Event

Use of Signage

Signs directing individuals to the Quiet Room should be located throughout the event venue so that the room is accessible to everyone. Regional events will have FIRST-provided signs available for use.
Additional Information

For more information about Hear For You check out The Compass Alliance website: https://www.thecompassalliance.org/hear-for-you.

Additionally, to see some mental health resources in your area, please look at the Hear For You Pinterest page here.

If you have any additional questions, please reach out to us at thefirstcompassalliance@gmail.com with the email title “HFY Quiet Room at INSERT EVENT NAME.”

Connect with us on our social media platforms

- Instagram: @FRCHearForYou / @TheCompassAlliance
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/FRCHearForYou / https://www.facebook.com/TheCompassAlliance/
- Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/452664458481931/?ref=pages_profile_groups_tab&source_id=935272636620918
References

https://health.clevelandclinic.org/3-reasons-adult-coloring-can-actually-relax-brain/

https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers


Revision History

This guide will continue to be updated with more information.

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