

Youth workers are committed to ethical practice in their work with young people.

This ethical practice is defined by the following principles:

"Youth work is a practice that places young people and their interest first.

Youth work is a relational practice, where the youth worker operates alongside the young person in their context.

Youth work is an empowering practice that advocates for and facilitates a young person's independence, participation in society, connectedness and realisation of their rights." ⁽¹⁾

AYAC National Definition of Youth Work, 2013

1. Primary Client

Youth workers are clear that the interests of the young people they work with always come first. Where conflict exists between obligations to more than one young person, the youth worker should always try to find solutions that minimise harm, and continue to support the young people involved.

2. Context

Youth workers work alongside young people in their social context. A wide range of contexts impact on young people's lives, including culture, family, peer group, community and society. Youth work is not limited to facilitating change within the individual young person, but extends to the context in which the young person lives.

5. Duty of Care

The youth worker avoids exposing young people to the likelihood of further harm or injury, and is aware of the safety of others.

6. Preventing Corruption

Youth workers and youth work agencies will not advance themselves and their interests at the expense of young people, and will act to prevent corruption.

7. A Transparent Relationship

The role and expectations established between the youth worker and the young person, and the resulting relationship, will be respectful, open and truthful. The interests of other stakeholders will not be hidden from the young person.

3. Promotes Equality

Youth workers' practice promotes equality for all young people, regardless of factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, disability, location or socio-economic status.

4. Empowerment

Youth workers presume that young people are competent in assessing and acting on their interests. The youth worker advocates for and empowers young people by making power relations open and clear; by holding accountable those in a position of power over the young person; by avoiding dependency; and by supporting the young person in the pursuit of their legitimate goals, interests and rights.

8. Confidentiality

Information provided by young people will not be used against them, nor will it be shared with others without their permission. Young people should be made aware of the limits to confidentiality, and their permission sought for disclosure. Until this happens, the presumption of confidentiality must apply.

9. Cooperation

Youth workers will seek to cooperate with others in order to secure the best possible outcomes with and for young people. Youth workers will respect the strengths and diversity of roles other than youth work.

11. Self-awareness

Youth workers are conscious of their own values and interests, and approach difference in those with whom they work with humility and respect.

13. Self-care

Ethical youth work practice is consistent with preserving the health and well being of youth workers.

10. Knowledge

Youth workers have a responsibility to keep up to date with the information, resources, knowledges and practices needed to meet their obligations to young people.

12. Boundaries

The youth work relationship is a professional relationship, intentionally limited to protect the young person. Youth workers will maintain the integrity of the limitations of their role in the young person's life.

14. Integrity

Youth workers are loyal to the practice of youth work, not bringing it into disrepute.



Code of Ethics for Youth Workers in WA