

# CODE OF ETHICS FOR YOUTH WORKERS IN WA

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Western Australia and recognise their continuing cultural connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures, and to Elders both past and present. We acknowledge that culture and connection to land and community is a right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and that all young people have a right to cultural safety.

## National Definition of Youth Work

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

YOUTH WORKERS ARE COMMITTED TO ETHICAL PRACTICE IN THEIR WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. THIS ETHICAL PRACTICE IS DEFINED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

### 1. Primary Consideration

The primary consideration and key responsibility of the Youth Worker is the young person with whom they engage. Youth Workers are clear that the interests of the young people they work with always come first.

### 2. Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Youth Workers recognise that they live and work on the traditional lands and waters of the Aboriginal people of Western Australia. Youth Workers are respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, recognising that culture and connection to land is a right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

### 3. Context

Youth Workers work alongside young people in their social context. There is a wide range of contexts which impact young people's lives such as, culture and spirituality, family, age, peer groups, community, ability, society, access to resources, geographical location, sex and sexuality, gender identity, technology, and various subcultures.

### 4. Advocate for Social Justice

Youth Workers advocate for equality and equity for all young people and strive for social justice. Youth Workers recognise that not all young people are the same, they have unique needs and contexts which require different approaches and resources, aiming for equity in outcomes.

### 5. Empowerment

Youth Workers recognise that young people are experts in their own lives and take a strengths-based approach to complement the young person's existing capabilities, supporting them in pursuit of their goals, skills and interests. Youth Workers will aim to walk alongside the young person.

### 6. Duty of Care

Youth Workers apply a harm minimisation, strengths-based and trauma-informed approach to supporting young people. When a Youth Worker is concerned there is a risk of harm, they have a duty to act on this information to prevent or minimise this harm.

### 7. Transparency

Youth Workers are open, respectful and transparent with young people.

### 8. Confidentiality

Youth Workers respect young people's rights to privacy and confidentiality.

### 9. Cooperation and Collaboration

Youth Workers build relationships and networks with other stakeholders that facilitate the best possible outcomes with and for young people.

### 10. Knowledge and Development

Youth Workers seek to continuously develop themselves in Youth Work practice, so their knowledge and skills remain relevant and up to date.

### 11. Boundaries

Youth Workers recognise that the relationship with the young person is a professional relationship and therefore must have limits and boundaries.

### 12. Youth Worker Wellbeing

Ethical Youth Work practice preserves the health and wellbeing of Youth Workers, which is the responsibility of the Youth Worker and the organisation in which they work.

### 13. Integrity

Youth Workers demonstrate and promote the integrity of Youth Work as an ethical profession and act to prevent corruption.

