

Ethical Youth Work



The following statements provide the foundation for ethical youth work practice in the ACT



Acknowledgement, Recognition and Respect of First Nations People

Youth workers respect the strength and culture of First Nations people, and recognise that connection to culture, land, and community is a right of First Nations young people. Youth workers have a responsibility to develop and uphold cultural safety in their individual practice, and within all programs and services.



Primary Client

The primary client of the youth worker is the young person with whom they engage. This means that a youth worker's key responsibility is to the young person they are working with, while maintaining consideration of the people and systems that the young person is also engaging with.



Conditions of Existence

Youth workers recognise the impact of social, cultural and structural factors that affect young people. Their work is not limited to facilitating change within the individual young person, but extends to the context in which the young person lives.



Fair and Inclusive

All young people have the right to be treated in a fair and appropriate manner. Youth workers will respond in a manner that acknowledges and respects individuals' identity, culture, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and customs.



Capability Approach & Empowerment

Youth workers recognise that young people need opportunities that enable them to thrive, in order to increase their capability for social, economic and political participation and facilitate their agency. Youth workers presume that young people have knowledge to assess their circumstances, and provide access to resources and opportunities that enable them to make decisions that are in their best interests.



Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk

Youth workers avoid exposing young people, colleagues, the community, and themselves to the likelihood of further harm or injury. However, youth workers respect the right that young people have to make choices and take risks in order to learn and grow.



Integrity, Accountability and Transparency

Youth workers hold themselves accountable to the values and ethics of Youth Work, and will not bring the practice and professionalism of youth work into disrepute. Youth workers will be open, honest, and clear about what young people can expect from them and their services.



Confidentiality & Consent

Information provided by young people will not be used against them, nor will it be shared with others who may use it against them. Young people should be made aware of the limits to confidentiality, and that informed, ongoing consent or assent can be withdrawn at any time.



Professional Competence

Youth workers have a responsibility to keep up to date with the information, resources, knowledge, connections and practices needed to meet their obligations to young people. They are committed to continual learning, reflective practice, and the ongoing professional development of their knowledge and skills.



Self-awareness

Youth Workers are committed to ongoing reflection of their own values, traits, personal history, behaviours and feelings, and how they impact young people, their employment, their own lives, and the profession of youth work.



Boundaries

The youth work relationship is a professional relationship, intentionally defined with clear boundaries to protect the young person and youth worker. The relationship between a young person and youth worker is an important source of support for that young person. Youth workers are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the professional boundaries within that relationship.



Self Care

Ethical youth work practice is consistent with preserving the physical and mental health of youth workers. Self-care is the responsibility of both youth workers and employers, and should be embedded into professional practice.

The full ACT Youth Work Code of Ethical Practice and supporting resources are available at youthcoalition.net

