Exploring and sharing youth work practice

Exploring the Values and Principles of Youth Work " Youth work, enables, helps, encourages and celebrates young people's achievements and efforts. It walks beside a young person on their journey to transition to the adult world. It does not judge but rather provides an open ended support at times and in places where no other service can. " Professor Ted Milburn, CBE President YMCA Scotland Youth work is a process of engaging and building relationships with young people and providing a safe, secure and funenvironmentwhere young people feel supported and valued.

Young people are central to the planning and delivery of youth work as it responds to youth issues. This offers a range of opportunities and programmes that reflect the many different requirements such as age difference, gender, special needs and race enabling young people to fulfil their potential. The purpose of youth work is well defined in the Youth Work Manifesto 2011, and is as follows: • build self-esteem and self-confidence • develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships • create learning and develop new skills encourage positive group atmospheres • build the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control of their lives • develop a ' world view' which widens horizons and invites social commitment • build the capacity of young people to influence local and national decision makers The values and principles that underpin youth work are: Young people choose to participate The young person takes part voluntarily. She/he chooses to be involved, not least because they want to relax, meet friends and have fun.

The young person decides whether to engage or to walk away. The work must build from where young people are Youth Work operates on young

people's own personal and recreational territory – within both their geographic and interest communities. The young person's life experience is respected and forms the basis for shaping the agenda in negotiation with peers and youth workers. Youth Work recognises the young person as a partner in a learning process It complements formaleducation, promoting young people access to learning opportunities which enable them to fulfil their potential.

Youth Work safeguards thewelfare of young peopleIt provides young people with a safe environment in which to explore their values, beliefs, ideas and issues. Youth Work treats young people withrespectIt values each individual and their differences, and promoting the acceptance and understanding of others, whilst challenging oppressive behaviour and ideas. Youth Work is concerned with facilitating and empowering the voice of young people It encourages and enables young people to influence the environment in which they live.

Youth Work respects and values individual differences It supports and strengthens young people's belief in themselves, and their capacity to grow and to change through a supportive group environment. Youth Work is underpinned by the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence EffectiveCommunicationin Youth Work " We all use language to communicate, to express ourselves, to get our ideas across, and to connect with the person to whom we are speaking. When a relationship is working, the act of communicating seems to flow relatively effortlessly.

When a relationship is deteriorating, the act of communicating can be as frustrating as climbing a hill of sand. " Chip Rose, attorney and mediator The

act of communicating involves verbal and nonverbal components. The verbal component refers to the content of our message, the choice and arrangement of our words. The nonverbal component refers to the message we send through our body language. Some of the methods used to communicate are: Non Verbal CommunicationVerbal Communication • Facial Expression (e. g. frown)• Dialogue • Body Posture• Presentation Hand Gestures• Tone of voice • Pictorial representations• Written word • Appearance (e. g. untidiness)• Pacing and volume of voice Exchanging ideas and thoughts verbally with others is the most common form of communication. However, there can be barriers with this, especially within a youth work setting. Some of these barriers are: Language It is important not to use overly-formal language and jargon, which young people might not understand. Also be aware of the language young people might use, i. e. slang. Stereotypes and generalizations

Youth workers must be sensitive to the complexities of certain situations and should be open to different opinions and views and not see the world as black and white. Jumping to conclusions Youth workers should not assume to know the reasons behind events. It is important to have all the information. Dysfunctional responses Ignoring or not responding to a comment or question quickly undermines effective communication with a young person. Also, responding with an irrelevant comment or interrupting others while they are speaking also creates a poor environment.

Lacking Confidence Whether it is the youth worker or young person, lacking confidence can be a major barrier to effective communication. Shyness, difficulty being assertive, or lack of self-worth can hinder your ability to make

your needs and opinions known to others Nonverbal Cues Nonverbal cues can block verbal communication. The wrong facial expressions or body language from a youth worker might put off a young person from opening up or continuing a conversation. Not Listening

Not listening constitutes a major barrier in verbal communication. If a young person thinks that you are not listening then they will not speak with you. Inconsistency Inconsistency can also blocks verbal communication. If you say one thing and then later change your stance, it might confuse or frustrate a young person. Verbal communication barriers can put a serious strain on relationships that ultimately need to be collaborative in order to most effectively meet the needs of our young people.

Use of these " communication errors" results in increased emotional distancing between youth worker and young person and can result in conflict and a negative environment for everyone involved. Albert Mehrabian, a US Educational Psychologist, has developed a famous formula for how verbal communication works. The formula is: 7% of meaning is in the words that are spoken. 38% of meaning is in the way that the words are said. 55% of meaning is in facial expression and body language. The key message here is simple - It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it. Nonverbal Communication table

Gesture | Common Interpretation | Hair Twirling | Flirting, nervous, uncertainty, incompetence| Placing your hand in front of your mouth | Insecurity, uncertainty| Rubbing your arm or leg | Nervous, uncertainty| Slumped posture | Can't be bothered, low self-esteem, boredom, alienation| Open palms | Open, honest| Palms down | Serious, domination| Clenched fist

| Angry, frustrated, aggression| Holding hands behind back | Hiding something, defensive| Wringing hands | Nervousness, anxious| Arms folded over chest | Annoyed, bored, uninterested, low self-esteem| Too little eye contact | Shy, dishonest, nervous, no confidence|

Gesture | Common Interpretation | When exaggerated| Forward Lean | Interested, concern, affection| Troubled| Direct eye contact | Interested | Aggressive| Unique dress/hairstyle | Confident, creative | Attention seeking, confused| Upright posture | Confident | Feeling uneasy| Handshake | Friendly | Intrusive, eccentric, aggressive

An assertive person has the ability to express the needs, wants and emotions in a controlled manner without violating the rights of others or being aggressive. Characteristics of an assertive person might include: • Knowledge of their own rights • Ability to initiate and sustain comfortable relationships with a variety of people • Willingness to compromise • Ability to discuss things in a controlled manner The difference between an assertive person and an aggressive person are as follows: Assertive =" Win, win" • Expresses feelings and thoughts honestly and appropriately • Shows respect for themselves and others • Considers the rights and needs of others Can effectively influence, listen and negotiate so others co-operate willingly Aggressive = " winner, loser" • Expresses feelings and thoughts in a way which violates the rights of others • Shows disrespect for themselves and others • Puts own needs above others and denies people choice • Can negatively influence, not listen and not negotiate and make others do what they don't want to do • Puts own needs above others and denies people choice Interpersonal skills are the skills used when interacting with other

people. In a challenging situation, effective interpersonal skills are essential. In a youth work setting, some of the skills a worker should have are: An ability to ' read' other people and build rapport • Being able to ask useful questions • You can more easily influence people • You can handle conflict and challenging situations in constructive ways • Show understanding With good interpersonal skills communication and relationships between young people and workers are enhanced. Building Relationships in Youth Work " The flexibility and skills of youth work staff enable them to get trust from young people… in many instances for the first time that a young person has been able to trust an adult. I never cease to be amazed at how the youth work process can transform some of our most vulnerable young people and change their view of self and society in such a positive fashion. "

Alex Linkston, CBE, Prince's Trust Volunteer, retired CEO West Lothian Council and Chair of YouthLink Scotland. It is important to promote positive relationships with young people in youth work to: • Provide learning and encourage success • Ensure everyone is given a voice and feels heard • Empower those with conflict to resolve it for themselves • Preserve a sense of belonging and create positivity • Develop and maintain mutual respect • Build and repair relationships • Develop world view and broaden horizons • Build social skills and provide Life Skills Five qualities, which constitute a positive personal relationship, are: • Trust • Mutual respect • Communication • Understanding • Familiarity/Common ground

Five qualities, which constitute positive youth work relationships, are: • Trust • Approachable • Non judgemental • Good listener/empowering • Respect So what are the differences between a personal relationship and a youth work

relationship? – Even though the words used above to describe the two different types of relationships tend to be different they are quite similar in that they involve helpfulness and working together. In a professional relationship you often motivated by a task/goal (i. e. the young person's learning, etc.) that you are working together to complete and achieve. In a personal relationship the ultimate goal ishappinessand building true trust.

There are two main themes that emerge with some regularity when reading about relationships in youth work. These themes detail why positive relationships in youth work are important and are stated below: Education for relationship The ability to develop good and satisfying interpersonal relationships is seen as the main, or a major reason for fostering learning. This has been one of the main themes lying behind many informal educators concern with social education. Education through relationship Our relationships are a fundamental source of learning. By paying attention to the nature of the relationship between educators and learners, it is argues, we can make a significant difference.

In particular, the quality of the relationship deeply influences the hopefulness required to remain curious and open to new experiences, and the capacity to see connections and discover meanings (Salzberger-Whittenberg et al. 1983: ix). Introduction to Planning and Evaluating Youth Work Plan (Needs & Aims) • Describe why the youth work group/programme is needed by the young person and/or the community • State who has identified the need for the group. (I. e. young person/Social work/ groups/partner organisations) • Describe what the project is about in " broad terms". State what the group is aiming to achieve. The need for a group can

be identified through: • Discussions • Formal consultation • Social Network surveys • Partnership meetings • Community lead steering groups • Statistics • Government Policies Outline (Objectives/Implementations) List the objectives (specific aims) of the group and make a series of actions that will be put in place to ensure each of the stated objectives is achieved • Describe how the objectives will be carried out/delivered How many beneficiaries/Age group/gender • List who will benefit from the group (i. e. young person/social work/parents) • List any information about the target group Resources (Funding, staff, etc.) • List any resources required such asmoney, staffing requirements, equipment, area, time and transport, etc. Partners Involved • List any other agencies/partners that may be involved with the group/project such as police/SW/school/NHS Intended Experiences & Outcomes Describe how the group relates to the CfE capacities (Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens, Successful Learners and Effective Contributors) • Highlight the importance of the quality and nature of the participant's experiences • Describe the outcome of the group (i. e. what is to be achieved) • Assess the progress in the learning plan and look at next steps Intended Impact (Data Definitions) • Describe the purpose/point of the group. • Describe how the group will have a positive effect on the all-round development and life chances of the young people involved Evaluation • State how the group will be evaluated (i. e. participant feedback)