Positive Youth Development V: Youth Work Ethics

ACT for Youth

June 22, 2021
Zoom keeping

Experiencing delays?
Try closing out the other programs running on your computer

Questions?
Use chat function. Post to Everyone.

Audio.
You control the volume. Please mute yourself during the presentation.
Agenda

- Recap – What is Positive Youth Development?
- Youth work – a profession?
- Competencies and professional development
- Youth work ethics
- Resources and questions
Recap: Positive Youth Development

A philosophy or approach that guides communities in the way they organize programs, supports and opportunities so that young people can develop to their full potential.

- Focus on building positive outcomes
- Youth voice and engagement
- Long-term involvement/Developmentally appropriate
- Universal/Inclusive
- Community-based/Collaborative
Youth Work – An Unchartered Profession
Youth Work Field is Fragmented

No clear definition & professional degree
No clear professional development curriculum & infrastructure for development
Range of core competencies
Range of settings (youth ages 5-25 in OST)

Pozzoboni & Kirshner. 2016
Malone & Donahue (eds). 2018
What is a Youth Worker?

Youth workers are “individuals who work with or on behalf of youth to facilitate their personal, social and education development and enable them to gain a voice, influence and place in society as they make the transition from dependence to independence” (Stone, Garza & Borden, 2004)
What does it take to be a youth worker?

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<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strong emotional intelligence!</td>
<td>Enthusiastic!</td>
<td>Open minded!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observant!</td>
<td>Trusting!</td>
<td>Empathy!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively Attentive!</td>
<td>Insightful!</td>
<td>Reflective!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust your skin!</td>
<td>Fun!</td>
<td>Encouraging!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think!</td>
<td>Professional!</td>
<td>Good “raz”!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give!</td>
<td>Boundary!</td>
<td>Never give up!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No red!</td>
<td>Reliable!</td>
<td>Good “raz”!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good “raz”!</td>
<td>Outgoing!</td>
<td>Approachable!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good “raz”!</td>
<td>Patience!</td>
<td>Consistent!</td>
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Frameworks of Core Competencies

Competencies: Content Areas

- Curriculum
- Professionalism
- Connecting with Families
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Child & Adolescent Development
- Cross-cultural Competence
- Guidance
- Professional Development
- Program Management
- Connecting with Communities
- Environment

To be added:
- Digital learning
- Trauma-informed youth work
Ongoing Professional Development

NYS Networks
PASE  https://pasesetter.org/
NYS Network for Youth Success  https://networkforyouthsuccess.org/
Association of NYS Youth Bureaus  https://anysyb.net/
NYS 4-H  https://nys4-h.org/

Where do you go?
◦ In-house?
◦ In the community?
◦ Online?
Remember – Adolescents Increasingly Diverse


Diversity Wheel as used at Johns Hopkins University
“Homo Categoricus”

Our mind thinks with the aid of categories

Stereotypes are a consequence or by-product of category making

Group stereotypes are usually not favorable

Stereotypes affect our behavior/decisions

Ways it can impact our work

- Microagressions

How else can our biases surface?

Attitude Check

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/
**Arab-Muslim** ('Arab Muslim - Other People' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish names that are likely to belong to Arab-Muslims versus people of other nationalities or religions.

**Disability** ('Disabled - Abled' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize symbols representing abled and disabled individuals.

**Gender - Science.** This IAT often reveals a relative link between liberal arts and females and between science and males.

**Weapons** ('Weapons - Harmless Objects' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Black faces, and images of weapons or harmless objects.

**Gender - Career.** This IAT often reveals a relative link between family and females and between career and males.

**Sexuality** ('Gay - Straight' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish words and symbols representing gay and straight people. It often reveals an automatic preference for straight relative to gay people.
Asian American ('Asian - European American' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Asian-American faces, and images of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

Skin-tone ('Light Skin - Dark Skin' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize light and dark-skinned faces. It often reveals an automatic preference for light-skin relative to dark-skin.

Age ('Young - Old' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish old from young faces. This test often indicates that Americans have automatic preference for young over old.

Presidents ('Presidential Popularity' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize photos of Donald Trump and one or more previous presidents.

Religion ('Religions' IAT). This IAT requires some familiarity with religious terms from various world religions.

Native American ('Native - White American' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Native American faces in either classic or modern dress, and the names of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

Race ('Black - White' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of European and African origin. It indicates that most Americans have an automatic preference for white over black.

Weight ('Fat - Thin' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of people who are obese and people who are thin. It often reveals an automatic preference for thin people relative to fat people.

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Hidden Biases are Robust but also Malleable

Trends

- Sexuality IAT: 37% decrease (automatic preference for straight)
- Race IAT: 13% decrease (automatic preference for white)
- Slight decrease: gender and science IAT (automatic preference for men in science)
- Increase: body weight IAT (automatic preference for thin people)
What can we do as youth work professionals?

- Become aware – do the test
- Question your decisions/assumptions/first impressions
- Be mindful how you engage with young people
- Create a sense of belonging in program groups
- Build in empathy activities
- Assess your program environment/create inclusive environments
Why talk about youth work ethics?
Defining Ethics

Principles, norms, and standards of behavior people use to determine what is good or bad, right or wrong in their interactions with other people

Practice ethics – application of ethical standards to problem solving and decision making

Joyce A. Walker et al. 2006. Shaping Ethics: Youth Workers Matter
Poll: Boundaries

1. Sam asks you to borrow $10. He’ll pay you back in a few days.
2. Jenny is asking you to go with her to the prom.
3. Shaun invites you to his birthday party.
4. Trevor asks you for a ride home.
5. Sara is calling you late at night to talk about problems with her boyfriend.
6. Nicole wants to befriend you on your personal Facebook account.
Research: Dilemmas of Practice

The Youth Development Experience

113 youth – 661 interviews
25 program leaders – 125 interviews
167 site observations

Resulting in 250 dilemmas

Reed Larson, University of Illinois

www.youthdev.illinois.edu/
Categories of Dilemma

1. Supporting Youth’s Work in Program Activities
2. Cultivating Norms and Enforcing Rules
3. Youth’s Personalities and Relationships
4. Reconciling the Organizational System with Youth Development
5. Interfacing with External Worlds (ethical, social-cultural)
Experienced Program Leader Responses

1. Youth-Centered
   Engaged with youth
   Turned dilemmas into opportunities for youth’s development
   Incorporated youth into the solution
   Advocated for youth

2. Balancing Multiple Considerations
   Addressing, accommodating, negotiating, reconciling, integrating

Larson et al. 2009
Building Expertise through Deliberate Practice

Core competencies are important, but are they sufficient? Do they provide youth workers -- in particular professionals who are just starting out -- the knowledge, skills, and good judgment needed to handle challenging situations and dilemmas?

Reed Larson has shown that youth workers experience a multitude of challenges or dilemmas every day [1]. Dilemmas are created by tensions between youth participants, staff, program structures, agency policies, cultural norms, and the realities of the complex world young people live in. Consider the examples below:

**Pushing personal or professional boundaries:**
- Sean asks you for a ride home.
- Nicole asks you to go with her to the prom.

**In conflict with program/agency rules:**
- Will brings a knife to the program in case he has to defend himself on the way to the center.

**Crossing cultural norms and expectations:**
- Naima wants to participate in the leadership training, but her parents do not approve because they do not see this as appropriate behavior for a girl.

How do youth workers learn to respond to challenges like these without harming or penalizing young people?

Walker and Walker suggest that professional development alone is not sufficient; youth workers need to be able to reflect and work through difficult situations, and also to learn from feedback and suggestions offered by experienced professionals. They recommend *deliberate practice*, defined as "taking on tasks that are appropriately challenging and chosen with the goal of improving a particular skill" [2]. Deliberate practice is best accomplished with regular, authentic feedback during staff meetings or in community round tables with other youth work professionals.
Self-reflection (reflect on your own values)

Review agency policies on confidentiality, liability, transportation, etc

Discuss scenarios of common dilemmas in staff meetings (& supervision)

Create opportunities to dialogue with colleagues in the community

Moving Forward
Any questions, comments or takeaways?
Resources

http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/
Resources

Youth Today: OST Hub: Professional Development, Training and Staffing
https://youthtoday.org/hub/program-quality/professional-development-training-and-staffing/

University of Minnesota Extension: Center for Youth Development
https://extension.umn.edu/working-youth/about-extension-center-youth-development

ACT for Youth: Supervisor’s PYD Toolkit
http://www.actforyouth.net/youth_development/professionals/supervisors/

Weikart Center Youth Program Quality http://www.cypq.org/

National Institute on Out-Of-School Time https://www.niost.org/
Resources: Digital Learning

- National Afterschool Association: Tech Toolkit
  https://naaweb.org/afterschooltechtoolkit

- Common Sense: Education
  https://www.commonsense.org/education/

- Wide Open School:
  https://wideopenschool.org/
Resources: Trauma-Informed Approach

- CDC: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
  https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html

- ACT for Youth: Using a trauma-informed approach
  http://www.actforyouth.net/sexual_health/community/capp/trauma.cfm

- Transforming Education: Trauma informed SEL
  https://www.transformingeducation.org/trauma-informed-sel-toolkit/
References


