

Glossary

Asset-based youth work – Youth work that engages young people on the basis that they are assets to society, and are autonomous, and that they have the capability to transform themselves and their environments. The Commonwealth promotes these forms of youth work.

Code of conduct – A code of conduct is typically issued by an organisation but it can be put forward by a professional association. It outlines specific behaviours that are required or prohibited as a condition of ongoing employment/acceptance in the profession. A code of conduct might forbid forms of harassment and intimidation, or viewing inappropriate or unauthorised content on computers. Codes of conduct, to mean anything, are rigorous standards that are usually tightly enforced (sanctions that have teeth). They are put in place largely to avoid scandal, and protect reputation. They also include aspects that can protect colleagues and young people who receive services.

Code of ethics – Generic guidelines that provide direction about values, principles, judgements and choices to influence decision-making and consequent actions. For example, a code of ethics might stipulate that we are committed to anti-oppressive practices. The expectation is that an individual worker, when faced with the option, will make a judgement that will avoid oppressing/harassing/coercing others. In the professional sphere, it is practitioners (and/or those they choose to represent them, i.e. professional associations) who establish and review codes of ethics.

Education and training, youth work – Accredited and non-accredited forms of formal and non-formal education that enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of youth workers.

Instrumentalist youth work – Youth work that is geared towards specific pragmatic ends such as ensuring employment and economic empowerment of young people, or sees young people as ‘vehicles’ of national development. These forms of youth work may or may not include other forms of social and political empowerment and youth engagement strategies.

Intersectionality in youth work – Intersectionality refers to diverse identities/status and how they inform experiences and outcomes. In the youth work profession, this would involve analysing a. the experiences and challenges of **youth workers themselves, in all their diversity**, i.e. by virtue of being youth workers who are women, or those coming from ethnic, religious or sexual minorities, youth workers with disability and so on, and b. the experiences and challenges of **diverse groups of young people that youth work caters for**, such as young women, young people living with physical and intellectual disabilities and young people from religious, ethnic or sexual minorities, high-risk youth groups, and so on.

Just-in-time training – Where the knowledge and skills built meet the immediate needs of professionals. Usually intended for immediate application.

Professionalisation, youth work – Ensuring the recognition of youth work practice, and ensuring that youth workers have the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to deliver quality youth work services.

Professional association – A professional organisation that exists to safeguard the quality and integrity of the profession.

Professional care, youth work – Relies on an associative and detached, rather than personal, relationship between the practitioner and young person in the delivery of youth work in caring and secure contexts.

Professional judgement, youth work – Making sound, evidence-based and non-partisan judgements in the delivery of youth work services to young people.

Practice regulation, youth work – Mechanisms and processes in place such as codes of conduct, supervision processes, guidelines for implementation etc. that ensure that practice is regulated and of a high standard.

Professional validation (youth work education and training) – Connects qualifications to the field and helps keep education and training up to date. This ensures that education and training is responsive to changes in contexts and practice and is responsive to young people's ever-changing needs and rights.

Psycho-social care in youth work – Psycho-social models of youth work can refer to youth work that engages with at-risk groups, as in some parts of the Commonwealth. But psycho-social models in asset-based contexts are based on the assumption that young people exist in a psycho-social context and that the development of the human being requires a clear understanding of the self in relation to the social.

Rights-based youth work – Youth work that is based on human rights frameworks and advances young people's autonomy and agency. Rights-based youth work supports the realisation of young people's social, political and economic rights as set out in international conventions ratified by governments, and Constitutional rights set down by specific member states.

Supervision, youth work – The exploration and development of reflective practice, and developing the ability to learn from such examination. Support to fellow practitioners in a profession.

Youth empowerment – Enhancing the status of young people, helping them empower themselves to build their competencies and capabilities for life. This involves social, political, cultural and economic empowerment. It will enable them to contribute to, and benefit from, a politically stable, economically viable and legally supportive environment, ensuring their full participation as active citizens.

Youth engagement – Where young people develop sustained connections in their lives. This can occur within themselves, in the immediate world around them, in society and the world. These sustained connections may be emotional, psychological or cognitive, and can be personal or social. Youth engagement is often **reductively**

referred to as young people's involvement in social action (civic action/service, youth-led research etc.). This is not the only form of youth engagement.¹

Youth for development – This approach sees young people as 'instruments' for broader national development and often fails to perceive the centrality of a young person's own personal and interpersonal needs for self-realisation, empowerment and building social connectedness (the focus of youth work).

Youth participation in youth work – Youth participation in youth work involves young people exercising their agency in defining the nature and quality of youth work services for them, and also in participating in the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of services provided to them. Young people also participate in youth work as peer youth workers (as professionals themselves).

Youth sector – The youth sector comprises the multiple players that focus on social equality for youth and empowerment as their main institutional focus. Generally, youth sector stakeholders include the Government ministry/department for youth at the national and local levels, government youth service implementing bodies, youth-led organisations, youth movements, including students' unions, youth studies and youth work studies delivery departments in universities, colleges and training bodies, youth research institutes, youth workers' associations and other professional bodies in the youth sector.

Youth work – The Commonwealth's working definition describes it as all forms of rights-based youth engagement approaches that build personal awareness and support the social, political and economic empowerment of young people, delivered through non-formal learning within a matrix of care.

Youth work legislation – Legislation that commits to supporting what might be understood as/agreed to be 'best practice' in a profession. Sometimes includes sanctions against unprofessional practice. This may make it probable that the realisation of commitments is justiciable, so that inaction around commitments can be challenged in a country's legal system, but this is often not likely. Legislation may also seek to outline the limits of professional practice and the desired role of practitioners, or control the profession.

Youth work mechanisms and processes – Mechanisms and processes that facilitate the delivery of youth work. These could be the likes of youth clubs, youth engagement spaces, or in detached contexts such as in the street, where processes are based on dialogue, listening and social empowerment. Youth work also occurs in many other contexts such as schools, hospitals and so on.

Youth work policy – Policies that commit to the advancement of youth work as a profession, including commitments to the education and training of youth workers, and the establishment of mechanisms and processes for the delivery of youth work.

Note

1 This definition of youth engagement is derived and adapted from material available in Fletcher, 2013.