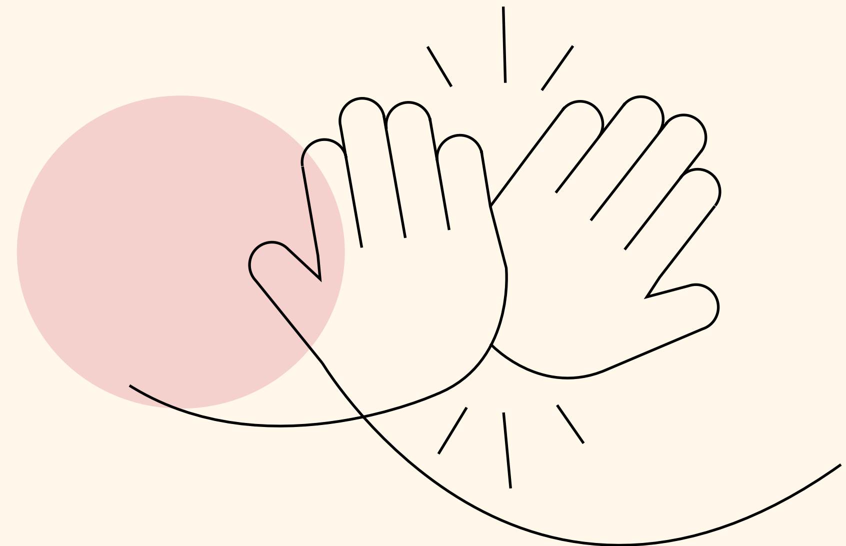
Youth Work Codes of Ethics in Estonia, Australia and Iceland: Their use in reflective practice



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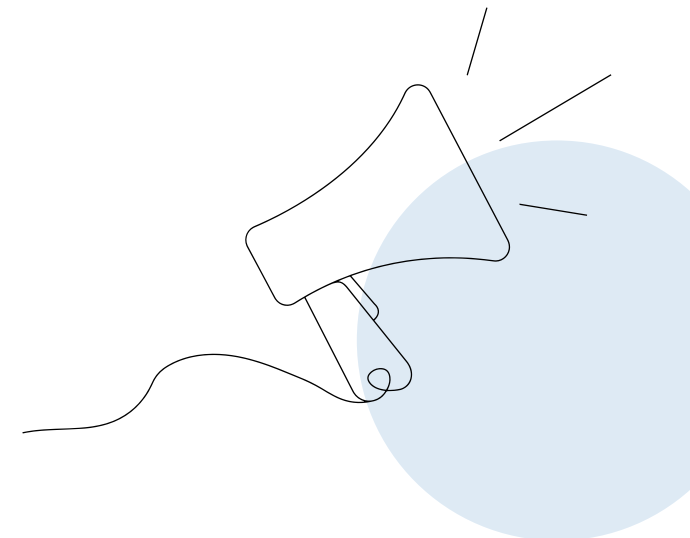

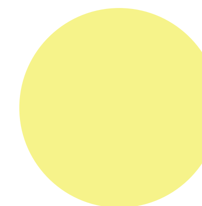

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YWA YOUTH WORKERS' ASSOCIATION

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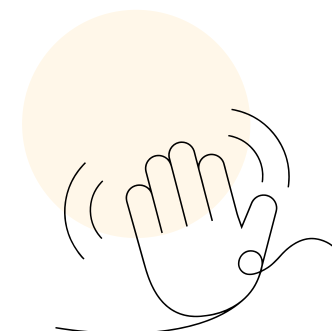
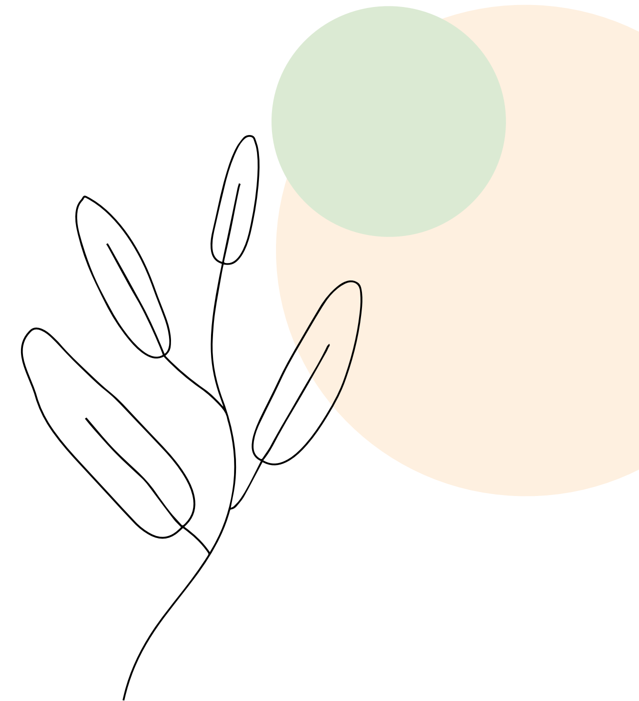


Introduction



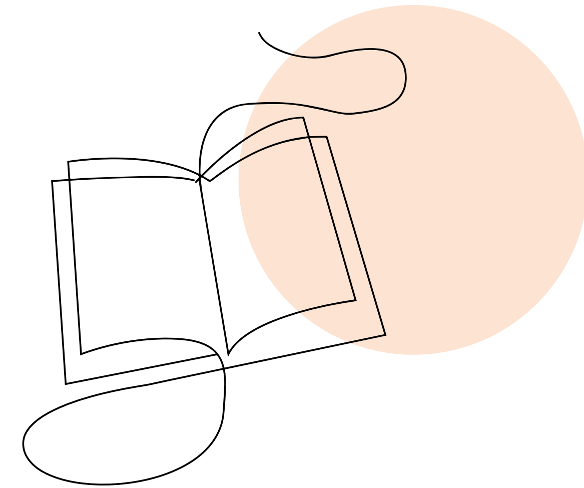
The impetus for Research report (IO3) comes from a need, expressed through the research undertaken in IO1 and IO2, for a resource to assist and enable the application and use of codes of ethics and practice (CEP). The rationale is based on the research participants' responses that a resource or guide will assist youth workers and youth organisations in using their CEP in everyday practice. The supposition being that regular use and 'reflection' on the CEP will increase awareness and knowledge of the CEP's principles, inform youth work (YW) practice and ultimately improve outcomes for young people (YP).

This IO3 resource aims to:

- aid 'reflective practice' as an important youth work practice concept
- enable codes of ethics/practice to be used as a tool in 'reflective practice' processes
- assist the application of codes to be applied to everyday decision-making concerning youth work practice (for individual youth workers, youth leaders and teams and managers of youth services).

The resource will provide background and comparisons on the three countries' CEPs, introduce the concept of reflective practice and provide a rationale for its use with CEPs in youth work. Additionally, the resource will provide practical tools to assist with applying CEPs and present two case studies from each of the three countries. These case studies will be based on applying the CEPs to youth workers faced with particular issues in a particular context with particular groups of young people. One of the case studies from each of the three countries will have a human rights focus. The participant actors in these case studies will grapple with the human rights issues from the young person's perspective (as this is central to youth work) and ensure that youth workers are working in the 'best interests' of all young people.

Background to codes of ethics



Youth work practice and professionalisation

As part of the professionalisation process, CEPs are becoming increasingly significant for youth work. The Australian Professional Standards Council defines a profession as 'a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards' (2021, p. 6). Currently, in many parts of the world, governments and non-government agencies are encouraging the professionalisation of youth work and the development of CEPs. A recent report of the European Discussion on Youth Work 2015–2020 focuses on professionalisation, and the Commonwealth Youth Program of the 54 Countries of the Commonwealth of Nations have agreed on an agenda to professionalise youth work, including supporting the creation of professional associations, degree-level training programs, development of occupational standards and codes of practice.

The way terms such as 'professionalisation' and 'professionalism' are defined can be useful in understanding the place and role of codes of ethics or conduct in professional practice. According to Horn (2016), professionalisation is the dual process of an occupation becoming a profession and an individual practitioner becoming a professional. These trained practitioners submit themselves to collective regulation via codes of ethics and practice to ensure consistency and quality of service to beneficiaries (Horn 2016). This is often undertaken through professional development, professional supervision, membership in a professional association and practising under the rubric of a professional code of ethics/practice/conduct (Horn 2016).

The encouragement of youth work professionalisation and the use of CEPs are important to governments and funding providers for the following reasons:

- ensuring the safety of young people and workers
- ensuring the quality of youth work practice, services and programs
- increasing the efficiency and productivity of youth work, the outcomes delivered more effectively, the value for the money provided
- controlling professions – once identified and established, they are easier to regulate
- managing risk, as government/NGO services have been exposed in judicial enquiries.

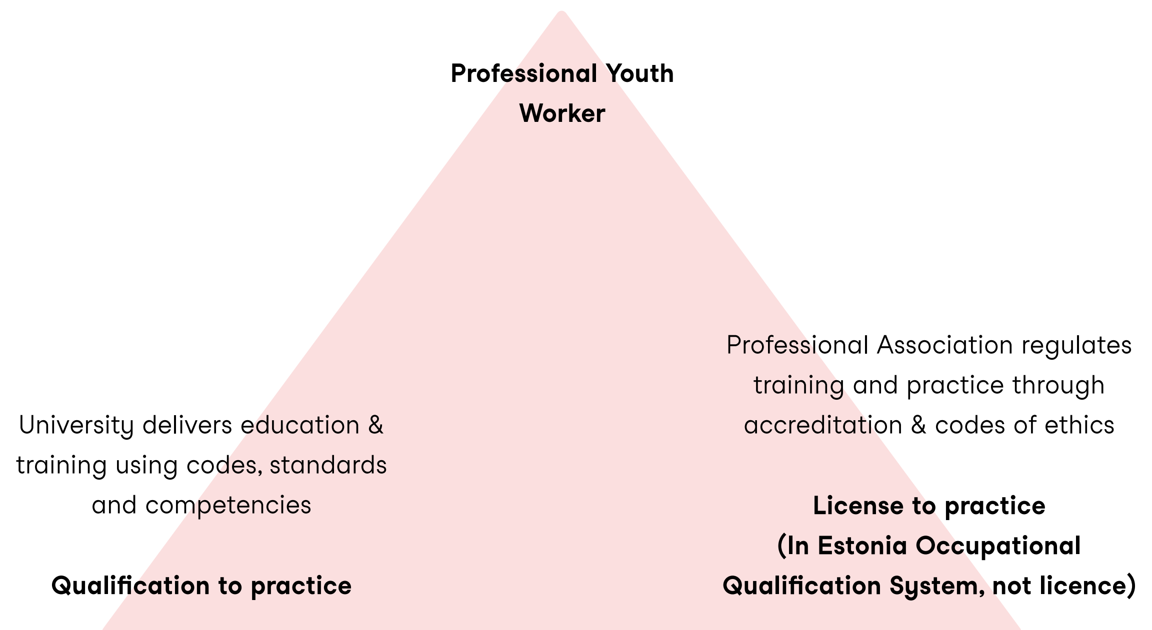
Youth workers may share some of the professionalisation motivations of government and funders, such as the safety of young people and workers and ensuring quality of practice and services for young people. However, the motivations for using CEPs for many youth workers differ from those of funders. Youth workers may use codes to:

- create a shared identity and purpose
- produce vocational association and solidarity
- recognise and protect the unique value of a particular occupation
- establish and enable a particular occupation's raison d'être
- increase the stock of professional knowledge and skill (i.e., professional development)
- regulate and control practice
- discipline practitioners.

The Professional Standards Council (2021) suggest that a profession is a specific body of organised and identifiable practitioners who adhere to specific ethical standards based on a distinct and recognised body of knowledge. These standards are strengthened by a documented history, research discipline, peer-reviewed publications and professorial chairs in universities and further reinforced by a set of identified and underpinning values incorporated in definitional statements and recognised practices that promote a social benefit or 'good'. These codes are taught and understood through the provision of recognised tertiary education and training that is accredited and endorsed by an acknowledged professional body and/or government. This training, which leads to an official qualification, includes learning that integrates knowledge of the codes of ethics with practical application and preservice preparation for professional practice. The professional body's codes of ethics, practice and conduct are developed by the members of the profession themselves and are endorsed by the professional body, industry and government. These codes define the boundaries of professional practice, regulate and discipline members, and ensure the quality and standard of practice, regardless of the level of remuneration – paid or unpaid; employed or volunteer.

The diagram below provides a visual representation of the relationship between professional youth work, education and training for professional practice and regulation of professional practice by professional associations relating to codes of ethics and practice.

CEPs can provide reassurance to the profession's membership, enabling shared identity, history and solidarity. A code motivates ongoing education and development on the use and application of codes. It can be used to regulate practice by providing boundaries, identifying unethical practice and enabling discipline; it also gives confidence



to service users about the quality of practice and allows employers to hire youth workers in good faith. Additionally, governments and NGOs can fund youth work programs with trust in outcomes based on codified practice; codes assist in the standardisation of both practice and professional education and training, increasing trust, ensuring quality, competence of workers and safety of young people.

What is a code of ethical practice?

Many professions develop CEPs to provide an agreed standard or framework for professional practice based on the core values and principles of that profession. Typically developed by a body of practitioners, a CEP contains philosophical principles that are developed by the profession to define that profession's ethical standards and guide workers in their implementation (Barwick 2006; Outten 1991, p. 8). The people within the profession agree to follow these principles because they are based on commonly held values and beliefs at the core of the profession itself (Outten 1991, p. 8). The code gives workers a framework to help them address potential ethical dilemmas in common practice situations. Thus, a CEP can be used as a tool by professionals to develop their awareness of ethical issues and increase their understanding of how to implement ethical and safe practice in practical contexts. Ideally, this practice should ensure the safety of both workers and young people.

In the UK, the National Youth Agency (NYA) has produced a Statement of Principles that aims to guide the practice of youth workers and also 'serve as a focus for debate and discussion about ethical practice issues' (NYA 2004, p. 2). The Statement of Principles is not designed to be a rulebook where youth workers are monitored and 'told what to do', nor is it designed to provide a set of standards that must be rigidly adhered to. Rather, it provides a 'starting point for outlining the broad principles of ethical conduct' (NYA 2004, p. 2) and aims to assist in the development of 'ethical awareness and encourage reflection as the basis for ethical conduct' (NYA 2004, p. 2).

In professions other than youth work, a CEP can range from a one-page document of dot-point principles outlining ethical behaviour, thoughts and values (Surrey County Council 2006), to a manual with professional standards that must be adhered to (Barwick 2006). Some professions will offer a CEP as a voluntary, self-regulated set of standards, while others enforce a CEP through industry imperatives or by government regulations (Child Safety Commissioner 2006; Barwick 2006).

Codes and the safety of young people

Young people are the core focus of youth work, and ensuring their safety and wellbeing is one of the sector's primary objectives. This includes not only keeping young people safe within the methods and activities of youth work but also striving to create an environment where young people can be a part of (and participate in) their own community (NYA 2004). In Australia, The Victorian State Parliament's *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (p. 6) demands that all those who care for children (up to 18years) make the child's 'safety, health, development, education and wellbeing' their 'highest priority'. A code of ethical practice offers the profession of youth work an active way to ensure the safety of young people.

In youth work, young people are protected by a code of ethical practice, as it provides standards that define 'professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships' (Child Safety Commissioner 2006, p. 11). These are made clear and are required to be at the forefront of any decisions made relating to young people (Child Safety Commissioner 2006, p. 11). Creativity and individualisation in methods of youth work are encouraged with the implementation of a CEP, as it provides youth workers with a framework to develop innovative methods that are centred on ethical decisions and the best interests of the young person.

Transparency is an important factor in keeping young people safe in youth work. A code of ethics contributes to this by creating an environment where workers are held to behavioural and ethical standards. Youth workers can use these standards to inform their everyday practice and enable the

safety and wellbeing of young people. Where necessary, the sector can use these standards to hold workers accountable for their actions.

Creating clear professional boundaries is a way of ensuring the safety of young people in youth work. Specifically, the relationship between the young person and the youth worker must always be professional. Youth workers are in a position of power and can use their power to advocate for the needs of young people. This power is exercised through communities, organisations and government and can create unequal relationships. A CEP is encouraged to be utilised by youth workers to manage power imbalances in ways that avoid disempowering or marginalising young people (Sercombe 2004; Child Safety Commissioner 2006). As Sercombe (2004, p. 3) states, 'power corrupts, and youth workers are by no means immune'. Thus, the youth worker must ensure that the young person is not exploited and benefits from the professional relationship (Sercombe 2004; YAPA 2005).

Codes and the safety & protection of youth workers

A code of ethics can help to protect youth workers' safety by outlining clear standards regarding the behaviour of workers. A strong set of guiding principles regarding areas like ethical behaviour, boundaries and acceptable relationships ensures that all those involved in the sector provide a consistently safe environment for young people and themselves. A CEP also enables regulation of bad practice, as there are clear standards on which to base allegations of poor practice and gives the sector, peers and employers a framework to question such performance or behaviour that is in contrast to these standards. Further, a CEP provides a recognised set of principles to inform and enable the education and training of youth workers to an agreed standard (Barwick 2006; Child Safety Commissioner 2006).

A code of ethical practice can also provide principles by which to make ethical decisions in a context where an ethical solution is difficult. Not all decisions can be made at leisure, and decisions in youth work are often required to be made quickly and in situations of considerable stress (YAPA 2005). This can put both the young person and the worker at risk. A set of guiding principles can help youth workers to more clearly determine ethical decisions that protect both the young person and the youth workers themselves. Overall, a CEP can contribute to the worker's safety by setting clear guidelines of what is acceptable behaviour, work practice and relationships (Child Safety Commissioner 2006).

Codes as professional consensus

Many youth work agencies have found that government funding requires them to become active agents of the government, funding arrangements change from grants to contracts for services. As youth work agencies increasingly rely on government and other funding bodies for their survival, the power of the government to impose outcomes on youth workers via funding agreements is also increasing (Sercombe 2004; Barwick 2006). An important aspect of developing a CEP is that it can allow a group of qualified practitioners to develop and define their own professional standards, rather than having governments or funding bodies determine this for them. A CEP can also provide a valuable foundation from which to argue against imposed obligations and expectations from government and funding bodies (Sercombe 2004).

While not dismissing the necessity of a range of approaches within youth work, the presence of a CEP allows the youth work sector to have a unified and professional voice. A professional status gives any profession greater power to advocate for the needs of those they serve. Youth workers' lack of professional status can often result in their knowledge and expertise being ignored by other professionals; this can have a detrimental effect on outcomes for young people as youth workers' capability to act as an advocate is inhibited (Sercombe 2004; 2010). The power of youth workers to advocate collectively as a sector for young people can also be diminished through the presence of diverse practices and a lack of collective professional status (Grogan 2004; Barwick 2006). A solid ethical foundation helps the youth work sector to not only more effectively advocate for young people but also to influence and facilitate

change in the community and government policy (Barwick 2006).

Therefore, it benefits youth work that there is an agreed set of guidelines, principles and core values and that all youth workers are provided with the necessary training to develop and implement ethical practice (Grogan 2004). Education programs and professional development can be guided by a CEP, as it offers an agreed standard and framework. By outlining core values and principles, a CEP provides a springboard to ensure the youth work sector maintains quality standards in training and education. The values, knowledge and skills encompassed in the CEP can be used to develop successful training programs (Bessant 2004; Grogan 2004). The framework learned in this education and training will flow through to the entire profession, as it will underpin youth workers' professional practice and inform policy developments made by the sector.

Codes and professional values

youth work is value-based (Corney 2004a&b); its history not only documents these shared values and motivations for practice but also informs the shape that youth work takes into the future. Sapin (2013) concurs with Maunders (1990) that youth work as a profession is based on values and that its distinguishing characteristics and principles of practice located in CEPs are value driven. Roberts (2009, p. 3) suggests that what makes youth work a 'profession' is that workers make autonomous value judgements in ambiguous circumstances or complex situations and where choices are not clear cut. Research on the tertiary education and training of youth workers (Corney 2004a&b) found values inherent in the education process, curriculum and pedagogy. Research on the career motivations of youth workers (Corney 2010; Sutcliffe 2021) has found values as integral to youth work. Maunders (1990) found that youth workers act from a value-based position regardless of the outcome, which was consistent with Webbers' 'value rational action'. Metz (2017, p. 3) argues that values are a key defining feature of youth work, encompassed in its 'emancipatory objective'. In many countries, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC] 1989) underpins the ethical decision-making of youth workers. Particularly the 'best interest' principle and the right of young people to participate in decision-making (Corney et. al 2022). The Youth Workers Australia CEP is based on Human Rights (Corney & Hoiles 2007; 2021).

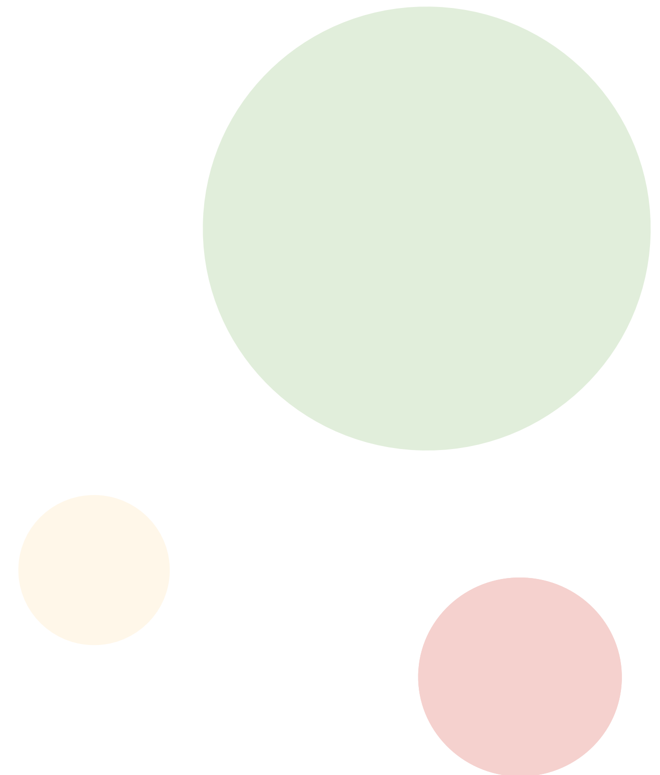
Codes and human rights

The CEP for the Australian state of Victoria was strongly influenced by a global push from the Commonwealth of Nations to establish human rights-based codes of conduct across the youth worker sector. The Commonwealth's Plan of Action on Youth Empowerment 2007–2015 [PAYE] was established as part of this push to bring the youth sector closer to both the UN Millennium Development Goals and the Global Human Rights Agenda (Commonwealth of Nations 2007). The PAYE responds to these concerns by calling for the youth work sector to 'draft codes of professional ethics with express linkages to human rights' (Commonwealth of Nations 2007, p. 12). It further provides crucial elements that must be present for youth work to be considered human rights-based. These include 'express linkage to human rights, accountability to all stakeholders, empowerment, participation, non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups' (Commonwealth of Nations 2007, p. 12). The PAYE also suggests that developing these codes is critical for the development of youth work as an occupation, as developing more formal methods of monitoring and regulation will help to guide the sector and allow them to better serve the young people they work with (Commonwealth of Nations 2007, p. 12).

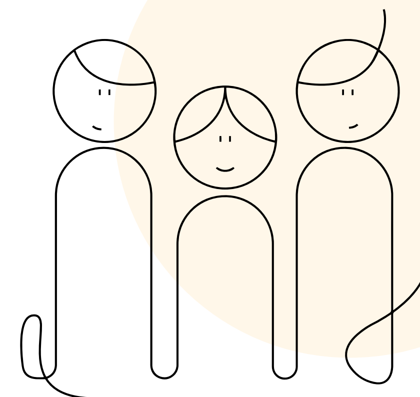
Creating codes of ethical practice that align with the UNCRC and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights ([UNDHR] 1948) will help youth work to develop higher and more consistent standards of practice. The main beneficiaries of youth work (young people) will also profit from these raised standards as they will result in better practice outcomes and increase the human rights of young people. This pathway ties into the Commonwealth Youth Program's (CYP) existing foundation in human rights agendas and is also strongly connected with youth work policy goals in Europe (Rannala, Stojanovic & Kovacic, 2021).

Thus, developing codes of ethical conduct can be considered an obvious extension of their philosophy. In the Australian state of Victoria, a series of important events provided the legislative rationale (i.e., the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, the *Working with Children Act 2005* and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*) for the youth sector to look specifically at the creation of a code of ethical practice for youth work based in human rights (Corney & Hoiles 2006, 2007).

Rights-based practice in human service occupations is not new (Kenny 1994; Ife 2012). However, recognising and claiming young people's rights (in line with the UDHR 1948 and UNCRC 1989) as current rather than as future citizens and the enshrining of rights-based frameworks in youth work codes of practice is a particularly recent perspective (Commonwealth of Nations 2006; Seebach 2008). Although young people may not always experience their full range of human rights, youth workers believe in their full humanity, and the potential they offer their community. Young people should be empowered to reach this potential by claiming their human rights and participating as full citizens in shaping their communities and lives, and not be relegated to citizens in waiting (CROC 1989; Seebach 2008; Wood 2009). This means that the practice of youth work is the advocacy of young people and their human rights, acting alongside young people as they claim and exercise their rights and citizenship. Codes of ethical practice based on human rights enable the formalising of rights-based practice in day-to-day youth work, ensuring that the empowerment of young people is at the forefront of youth work.



Code of ethics – A comparison across three countries



The following section compares the similarities and differences across the three country specific codes of ethics: Estonia, Iceland and Victoria, Australia Victoria.

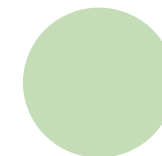
	VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA	ESTONIA	ICELAND
Ethical Foundation	Based on human rights framework	Based on humanitarian values	Based on human values and respect for individual's capacity to guide their development
Applies to	All qualified youth workers and those working with young people without a youth work qualification	Youth workers and those with a partial professional qualification: camp counsellors/ directors etc.	Youth workers (YW's)/leisure workers
Setup of Code	Contains youth work (YW) Principles – what YW achieves, and YW Practice Responsibilities – what youth workers do when guided by YW principles	Contains Main Ethical Thesis Concerning YP and Main Ethical Thesis Concerning the environment of YW	Contains goals of FFF (professional association) and ten primary duties of YW's

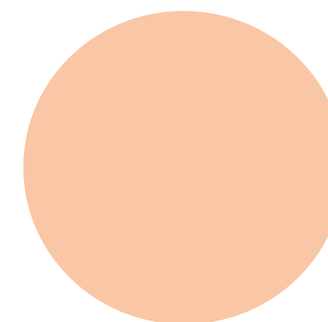
	VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA	ESTONIA	ICELAND
Flexibility of practice	Allowing diversity of practice is important – many ways of working with YP are compatible with principles and practice responsibilities of the code	Environment must be based around individual young person and their needs – supports non-formal learning	YW's should take initiative in developing professional work that follows objectives of FFF
Youth centredness	YW Principles include empowerment of YP and YP's participation	Principles of equal partnership – YP involved in decision-making, encourages youth entrepreneurship	YW's aim to create a platform for YP to have a say on matters that concern them – emphasis also on good cooperation w guardians of minors where appropriate
Confidentiality / privacy	YW's must respect YP's right to privacy and confidentiality; however, there are legal obligations on YW's to report some types of information – YP should be made aware of these conditions and give informed consent to collection of data	Treats YP's opinion/positions as confidential – only ignored if there is a clear danger to them, others, or society.	Confidentiality must be taken in handling and storing personal data – exceptions only out of urgent necessity and in accordance with the law
Duty of care	Always act in best interests of YP, always uphold principle of 'do no harm' (don't expose to psych, physical, emotional harm)	Duty to explain and report actions to YP as well as to their guardians, employers, general public	YW's should familiarise themselves with laws and regulations that apply to their work
Ongoing knowledge	YW's should be up to date with youth work skills and knowledge. Includes seeking training when needed and self-care.	YW's are up to date about policies, problems and practice in European and international youth work. Seeks feedback and constantly updates knowledge and skills- understands when additional training is required	YW's should maintain their knowledge by closely monitoring innovations in the field
Collaboration/ cooperation	YW's should seek to collaborate/cooperate with colleagues/professionals from other sectors to secure best outcome for YP – need to be particularly conscious of work with indigenous services	Only participates in responsibilities for which they have the right to/appropriate knowledge/skills for – actively looks for cooperation activities with colleagues/ professionals in other fields	YW's should use their expertise to advise others and respect/trust the expertise of other professionals where appropriate

	VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA	ESTONIA	ICELAND
Social context	YW's recognise the impact of social/ structural forces on YP and adapt their practice to be responsive to barriers that restrict their opportunities – YW's should also where possible look to facilitate social change within the YP's environment	YW's should base their practice on YP's situation – spend time getting to understand them	YW's are honest and show respect for the views, life, and rights of the individual
Social equity	YW's ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted – work to overcome inequities caused by unequal access	YW's should consider developing and applying principles of social equity. Treats YP equally	YW's help individuals enjoy equal opportunities for meaningful leisure time
Promote lifelong learning	–	YW's should apply principles of lifelong learning and a sense of perspective, becoming more knowledgeable/skilful	YW's should emphasis healthy living and prevention
Communal responsibility	YW's will value and respect differences in others' approaches	YW's should pay attention to the activities and policies of colleagues or the organisation and proposes changes if they go against the established theses	YW's should report colleagues' serious violations of code or give support/guidance for less serious violations
Upholding reputation of profession/group	YW's and organisations should adhere to the principles and practice responsibilities of YW and not bring it into disrepute – ensure YP are always put first	Considers it important that organisations and colleagues are up to date and guided by ethical theses	YW's should aim to build public confidence in leisure work and do nothing that disrupts the reputation of the profession/group
Anti-discrimination	YW's practice will be anti-discriminatory and work with young people to challenge all forms of discriminatory oppression	YW's have a tolerant attitude towards the opinions and views of YP and do not discriminate regardless of personal beliefs	YW's do not consider themselves discriminatory

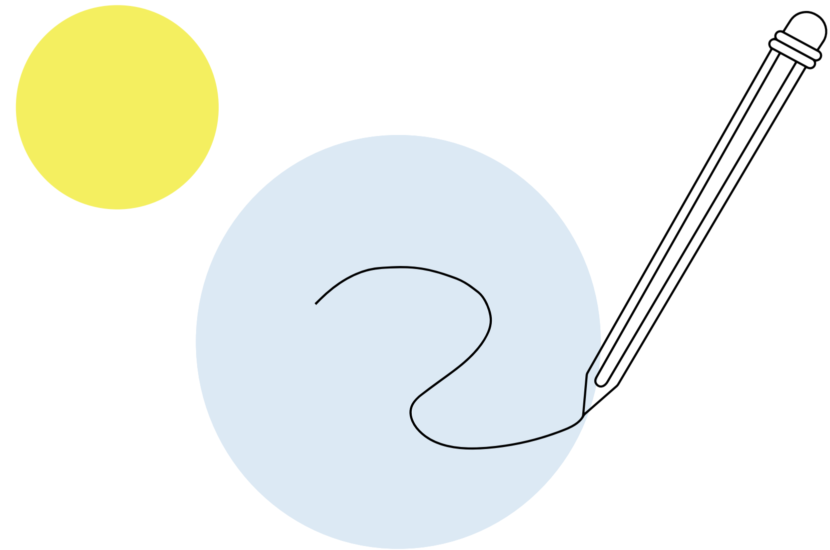
Similarities and differences summary table

Similarities	Differences
• Based on humanitarian values • Youth centred • Equal opportunity • Confidentiality/privacy • Honesty/openness • Ongoing training/knowledge • Duty to uphold reputation of profession • Flexibility/diversity of practice • Collaboration/Cooperation • Social Equity • Awareness of social context • Non-discriminatory • Personal responsibility to uphold code	• Victoria: indigenous recognition • Victoria: self-care • Victoria: creating professional/personal boundaries • Iceland: prevention • Estonia + Iceland: communal responsibility to ensure others are upholding the code • Estonia: non-formal, self-directed learning focus • Iceland: ensure public confidence/community focus • Set up of all three codes are different





Summaries



The Icelandic youth work code of ethics

the Icelandic Code of Ethics was created by the FFF (Professional Association of Leisure Workers) in 2009 and is based on human rights and equal opportunity – the right for everyone to fully develop their skills and competencies. The Icelandic Code comprises ten primary duties for Youth Workers to develop ethical practice. The Icelandic Code frequently refers to leisure work, and the term 'leisure worker' seems to be interchangeable with 'youth worker'. This is due to the youth work profession in Iceland originating from leisure work. Although the ten primary duties are not explained in detail, some primary elements of the code clearly emerge.

Youth centred

The code places youth centredness as a key focus and requires youth workers to aim to create a platform for young people to have a say in decisions that concern and matter to them. Youth workers should ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity to access and enjoy leisure time. Prevention and healthy living are positioned as central elements of Icelandic youth work.

Collaboration

Youth workers should trust and respect the expertise of other professional groups when needed but obey their convictions and expertise to develop their professional work and advise others. Collaboration is also required when dealing with the custodians of minors – in these situations, youth workers should focus on good cooperation and seek their approval when appropriate.

Confidentiality

It is the youth worker's responsibility to be familiar with the laws and regulations that apply to their work. The code requires that confidentiality and care are taken when handling and storing personal data. Exceptions to this can only be made in accordance with the law and out of urgent necessity.

Personal accountability

The code has several elements that concern personal standards youth workers must uphold. Youth workers are required to do nothing that disrupts the reputation of the profession or the group, remain professional, work with professional vision and

maintain their knowledge by monitoring innovations in the sector. The code also expects youth workers to be honest and not discriminatory.

Communal accountability

The code strongly focuses on upholding the reputation of the profession and ensuring that the public has confidence in both youth workers and leisure services. To maintain this, workers must monitor any violations from their colleagues and either offer guidance for more minor violations or report serious violations to the authorities and Board of Directors (there is no elaboration on what constitutes a serious violation). Thus, the focus on compliance with this ethical code goes beyond the individual to the group.

Estonian occupational ethics in youth work

the Ministry of Education and Research initiated the Estonian Code of Ethics (Main Ethical Theses) but received wider collaboration from within the youth field (See IO1 report). It was part of the longer process of creating professional standards for youth workers. The process began in 2002, and the final Professional Standards, together with the Code of Ethics, were approved 1 March 2006 by the Estonian Qualifications Authority.

The code is split into the Main Ethical Theses Concerning Young People and the Main Ethical Theses Concerning the Environment of Youth Work. These two theses reflect the two main focuses of the code in that they show youth workers the standards that are expected of them regarding how they interact and form relationships with young people and the conditions with which they conduct their practice to make it as ethical as possible.

Honesty/openness

The ethical standards surrounding honesty require youth workers to be transparent about their actions, chosen activities, objectives and methods. This transparency extends to the young people they work with, their parents/guardians, employers, donors and the public. Young people must also be given all relevant information that enables them to make informed, conscious choices involving their lives and activities. Youth workers should also be open to feedback.

Social equity and equal opportunity

The code highlights that youth workers must be tolerant and respectful of all viewpoints and opinions and not discriminate based on any personal trait or circumstance. Young people themselves should also be guided to be respectful and tolerant of others. Additionally, youth workers should be mindful of young people who have fewer opportunities to engage in certain activities because of their personal circumstances (e.g., location, financial status, nationality, health).

Youth centred

Ensuring that young people are active participants and equal partners in their youth work journey is a major theme in this code. Young people should be involved in decision-making and allowed to make independent choices. Similarly, youth workers should ensure that they base their practice around each young person's circumstances and wishes. Youth workers should take the time to get to know the young person and their situation – including their personal, family and community situation. Work methods and objectives should be shaped around this information and the young person's interests and needs.

Encouraging self-directed personal development

The code includes a focus on personal/positive development and states that a key part of youth work is creating new (added) value. There is an emphasis on helping young people to gain lifelong knowledge and skills through non-formal learning. Youth workers are guided to pay attention to and acknowledge activities initiated by young people, which may lead to new knowledge, skills or learning experiences. Youth entrepreneurship is also singled out as an activity to be encouraged, especially among those with less opportunities or resources.

Confidentiality

Youth workers must keep young peoples' opinions and situations confidential and only use with others the information disclosed at the initial exchange of information. Confidentiality should only be ignored when there is a clear danger to the young person, others or society. Young people should be made aware of this policy for them to make conscious choices about participating in youth work.

Personal accountability

The code lays out personal standards for youth workers to ensure that they continue to practice ethically and to a high standard. The youth worker will therefore seek feedback from colleagues and those under their care and ensure they are up to date with current knowledge and skills in the sector. They will also recognise where they need to seek training for additional knowledge and skills and only engage in activities where they have the right and appropriate knowledge/skills to participate.

Youth workers will also look for cooperation with colleagues and other professionals when needed. Some elements apply to youth workers' personal beliefs and situations, including that they do not have any legal restrictions working with young people, they are not active in prohibited/extremist groups so they are neutral when communicating with young people.

Communal accountability

Elements of communal accountability can be found where youth workers are expected to not only be up to date on the Main Ethical Theses themselves but to ensure that colleagues and organisations are also following these theses. Youth workers should monitor their colleagues' and organisations' activities and policies and propose changes if they go against these standards.

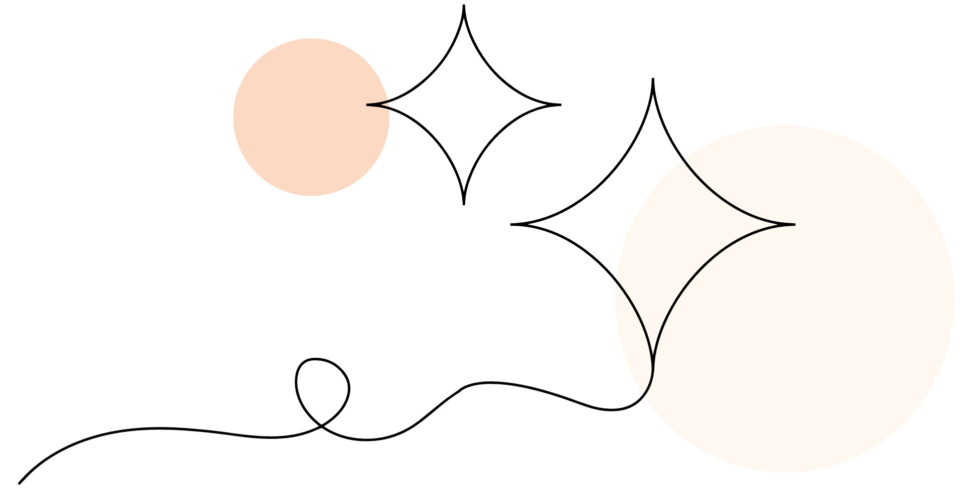
Victoria, Australia – Code of ethical practice

The Victorian Code of Ethics was adopted by the youth sector in the Australian state of Victoria in 2007 after extensive consultation with youth workers. It has been adopted by the Australian national professional association Youth Workers Australia and aims to guide and shape professional practice to ensure that it is ethical and safe for both staff and young people. The code is voluntary and is intended for qualified youth workers and all those who work with young people without formal qualifications. Based on a human rights framework, the code clearly focuses on the rights of young people, no matter their background or circumstance. This document contains the Youth Work Principles: what youth work aims to achieve, and the ten Youth Work Practice Responsibilities: what youth workers do in practice when guided by the Youth Work Principles. These principles and practice responsibilities were selected through collaboration between the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) and other members of the Victorian Youth Sector and, thus, reflect values inherent to the youth work profession.

The Youth Work Principles are the basis of the code and emphasis the core elements and values that youth workers strive to ensure in their practice. Importantly, every principle concerns young people and the responsibility of workers to ensure their: "safety, empowerment, participation, respect and dignity, social justice, connection to family/community and positive transitions and healthy development" (p.3) – it illustrates that the young person is the 'primary consideration' of the youth worker. This focus on youth centredness shows that the relationship between the young person and the worker is at the core of developing ethical practice for the Victorian Youth Sector.

The Youth Work Practice Responsibilities support youth workers in making ethical decisions by offering a clear example and standard of ethical behaviour and practice. Many of the responsibilities concern the young person's rights: their right to cultural safety and identity, their right to privacy and confidentiality, their right to be the primary consideration of youth work, and their right to safety – emotional, psychological and physical. Other responsibilities are more focused on the youth workers themselves and the standards they must maintain to ensure safety and ethical practice: their responsibility to create and maintain professional boundaries, to be honest and transparent with young people, to be anti-oppressive, and to recognise the impact of each individual's social context and adapt their practice accordingly. Two responsibilities are concerned with youth workers knowing their limits and not allowing them to impact their work: to cooperate and collaborate with others when needed to achieve the best outcome for the young person, and to keep up to date with new information and training that may be required (in addition to self-care) to continue to provide services to young people.

Comparison of codes



Similarities

There are many similarities in the themes, values and elements deemed essential for ethical practice in each of the three codes. Perhaps the clearest theme linking the three codes is 'youth centred' that the young person is at the centre of youth work, that the young person as the 'primary consideration' of youth work. In the Victorian code, this theme receives its own practice responsibility, while the Icelandic and Estonian codes make this focus clear throughout the entirety of their duties and responsibilities. Due to this focus, each of the codes lay out numerous similar rights that young people should expect as recipients of service provision. These include equal opportunity, social equity, inclusion, the right to have a say in decisions that affect them and confidentiality of information they disclose. Other key responsibilities in these codes refer more directly to the personal conduct and duties expected of youth workers. These include honesty/openness, professionalism, ongoing training/knowledge, and diversity of practice, duty to uphold the profession's reputation, legal responsibilities for disclosed information, collaboration/cooperation and a personal responsibility to uphold the code.

Differences

Indigenous recognition

Although all three codes clearly focus on anti-discrimination through their standards and responsibilities, the Victorian code dedicates one of its ten practice responsibilities to the Recognition of Indigenous Peoples. The primary focus of this responsibility is to respect the culture of young people, ensure their cultural safety and acknowledge their right to Indigenous services – involve culture as much as possible in methods of youth work. Highlighting this so clearly for youth workers reveals Victoria's social context and may indicate historical failings in the sector. In contrast, the Estonian code demands that youth workers do not discriminate based on age, gender, nationality, religion, abilities, personal traits or circumstance, while the Icelandic code requires youth workers not to consider themselves discriminatory. Neither directly mentions indigenous recognition.

Self-care

One of the Victorian practice responsibilities includes a section on self-care, justifying that ethical practice requires the preservation of the health of youth workers. This requires workers to look after themselves to prevent career burnout and ensure that young people receive the highest quality service provision. However, there is no mention of elements of self-care in the Estonian and Icelandic codes; beyond that they maintain levels of competence through up-to-date knowledge and skills.

Boundaries

Related to the idea of self-care is the inclusion of the responsibility to create and maintain boundaries in the Victorian code. Keeping the relationship between the youth worker and young person strictly professional protects both parties. Maintaining professional boundaries ensures that youth workers keep to legal restrictions involving sexual and exploitative conduct. A specific reference to professional boundaries cannot be found in the Estonian code, while the Icelandic code does require youth workers to do their job with professionalism, which could be interpreted to refer to these professional boundaries.

Non-formal, self-directed learning focus

The Estonian code includes a focus on innovative, non-formal personal development that is not found as overtly in the other two codes. There is an emphasis on helping young people to gain lifelong knowledge and skills. Youth workers are guided to pay attention to and acknowledge activities that are initiated by young people, which may lead to new knowledge, skills or learning experiences. Additionally, youth entrepreneurship is singled out as an activity to be encouraged, especially among those who with less opportunities or resources. This indicates a strong focus on preparing and developing young people into a positive and productive life beyond the time they spend with youth workers and helping them to develop into independent thinkers by giving them the tools to become confidently self-sufficient. Although this is a key aspect of youth work in all countries, the Estonian code very clearly makes it a focus for youth workers.

The Icelandic code does have a duty that emphasises healthy living and prevention. Like the Estonian focus on lifelong learning skills, this addition may indicate a similar focus on preparing young people to make healthy, positive living choices for the rest of their life. The Icelandic code is the only one to mention an element of prevention. Although it is not further explained, its presence suggests that it is an important element of the Icelandic youth work model.

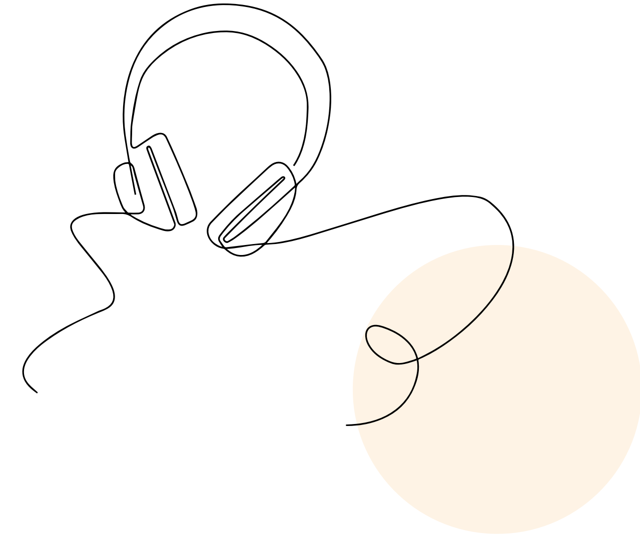
Communal accountability

Although all three codes refer to personal accountability, the Icelandic and Estonian codes additionally directly reference a sort of communal responsibility. Estonian youth workers are required to pay attention to the activities of colleagues and organisations, ensure that they are guided by the ethical theses and offer guidance if they go against them. Similarly, Icelandic youth workers are also expected to monitor colleagues for conduct violations and either give guidance or report serious violations to the relevant authorities. The Australian code does not include this element but states that youth workers should respect and value the differences in the work of their colleagues. This communal responsibility indicates a need to publicly (as well as internally) maintain strict standards, which could be linked to the status of youth work as an emerging profession in these countries. It could also indicate a different culture in the youth work sector between the three countries.

Community focus

As one of its ten duties, The Icelandic code has a responsibility to build public confidence in leisure work. This element is not present in the other two codes and indicates a strong focus on the community. This may be linked to Icelandic youth work's strong connection with leisure activities, as the youth work sector emerged from leisure work. This can still be observed in the current code, where the term 'leisure work' is frequently found.

Reflective practice in youth work



Introduction

Socrates is credited with saying that ‘the unexamined life is not worth living’ (Plato’s Apology). As such, the ideal of the examined life is a noble one, as it encourages the use of critical faculties to reflect on and develop the quality of life and relationships, and – in the case of youth work – to increase understanding and application of professional practice.

Reflecting on practice, in a considered and deliberate way, as an individual practitioner and in groups of peers, is helpful for professional youth work (Banks 2010). Reflective practice as a professional discipline can assist youth workers over time to develop and refine their practice. Banks (2010) suggests that when used with ethical principles found in professional codes of ethics, *Reflective Practice,* can assist in analysing complex situations, resolving ethical dilemmas and informing action. In this sense, reflective practice enables learning by and from doing and adds to the development of youth work theory. When used with critical dialogue in peer-based reflection groups or ‘circles’, it can provide answers or solutions to problems, enable personal and professional growth and collective and organisational development and transformation. In short, it enhances the practices of youth workers and outcomes for young people.

While reflective practice is recognised as an enabler of good youth work, the literature on its use and application is limited (Herman 2012; Emslie 2009). Emslie (2009) argues that reflective practice is fundamental to good youth work. However, he suggests that ‘it is surprising [that] the development of youth workers’ ability to critically reflect has received so little formal attention’ (Emslie 2009, p. 417). Herman (2012) concurs on the importance of reflective practice to the outcomes of youth work. He suggests that youth workers (and those who manage youth services) who incorporate critical approaches to reflective practice into the monitoring and supervision of practice, can ‘deepen the impact of their work’ (Herman 2012, p. 119).

Trelfa (2005) also states that ‘reflecting on and after practice’ is important for youth workers. However, she states that it should be seen as more than just a technical professional development instrument and be incorporated into youth workers’ everyday

practices as 'a way of being in the world' (Trelfa 2005, p. 206). Van Dyk (2004 p. 4) concurs, stating that reflective practice 'cannot be divorced from one's deepest commitments, beliefs and feelings' and; therefore, should be consistent with the underpinning values of the practitioner. Rolfe, Freshwater and Jasper (2001, p. 21) go further, suggesting that reflective practice has been regarded as a 'radical critique of technical rationality' and claim that 'knowledge generated by practitioners reflecting on their own experiences is of equal value to knowledge derived…from empirical research'.

What is reflective practice?

Rolfe, Freshwater and Jasper (2001, p. 22) trace the origins of reflective learning to the experiential education of Dewey (1938), which he describes as learning by doing, 'reflecting on what was done and what happened'. Freire's (1972) critical praxis-based pedagogy also deeply influences reflective learning (Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper 2002). In particular, the freeing of the learner from the 'banking' approaches of institutionalised education systems and teacher-centred approaches and to the transformative and emancipatory implications for participants and their communities.

Schön (1987), building on Dewey and Freire, suggests that learning is contextual. He contrasted the lack of context in the 'high hard ground' of classrooms and lecture theatres with the 'swampy lowlands' found in the everyday veracities of working life. He posits that textbook 'theory' often needs to be reconsidered in the light of 'practice' realities (Schön 1987, p. 5)

Yip (2006, p. 777) defines reflective practice as 'a process of becoming aware of the influence of societal and ideological assumptions, especially ethical and moral beliefs, that sit behind professional practice.' Reflection is, therefore, a practice of self-involvement and self-reflection, the level of which is determined by the individual or group (Yip 2006). However, Glassburn, McGuire and Lay (2019) argue that reflection without reflexivity (understanding the context, power, values and culture that may underpin or inform practices or positions) may only confirm biases and/or dominant and oppressive discourses and actions.

Pockett, Napier and Giles (2011) similarly contend that professionals must go beyond being contemplative to critically and analytically reflective to consciously evaluate themselves and their colleagues holistically as professionals and continually improve practice. In this sense, a facilitated process of peer-based or 'supervised' reflection using a professionally endorsed code of ethics or practice may enable 'critical reflection'.

Reflective practice and experiential learning

Workplace reflective practice can be described as a 'non-formal' learning process that, while not constrained by the classroom environment, involves the deliberate setting aside of time to reflect and review one's workplace experiences. This is done to determine the factors – context and actions – that contributed to an outcome to learn from the experience (Mishna & Bogo 2007; Dennison 2010).

Reflecting on workplace experiences can be helpful for workers in training and established professionals in providing emotional support, an understanding of theoretical models, ethical professional practice, self-awareness and developing solutions to emotional and intellectual dilemmas (McNamara, Lawley & Towler 2008). It is also a way of improving professional practice by reducing the disparity between what the theory says professionals do and the realities of what actually takes place in practice (Fook 2007). The process of reflective practice requires an examination of lived experiences to engage in purposeful learning – learning that comes primarily from life and work and not from textbooks or formal education systems (Amulya 2004). The purpose of reflection is, therefore, to be open to the possibility of learning from both positive and negative experiences concerning internal and external contexts (Amulya 2004).

Amulya (2004) identifies influential experiences (such as struggles and breakthroughs) as particularly strong opportunities for reflective practice because they produce powerful insight into values and approaches to practice and those circumstances that provoke emotional reactions. Understanding subjective positions and the underlying assumptions on which decisions are based can

lead to professionals making a change in practice (Pockett, Napier & Giles 2011). Reflective practice also recognises the importance of the knowledge embedded in practitioners' work experiences that may not be found in textbooks or traditional learning methods (Amulya 2004). As a lifelong learning process, reflective practice is integral to students but equally important to professional development in practitioners at all levels of experience (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall 2009).

Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall (2009, p. 15) describe experiential learning as 'based on the notion that understanding is not a fixed or unchangeable element of thought and that experience can contribute to its forming and re-forming.' Thus, learning is a process where knowledge is gained through the transformation of experience (Fry Ketteridge & Marshall 2009). Kolb (1983) created a model of experiential learning from four elements represented in the experiential learning circle: (1) concrete experience, (2) observation and reflection, (3) the formation of abstract concepts, and (4) testing in new situations. In Kolb's model, learning is a cyclical process that is most effective when all four elements are completed. Reflection is a key aspect of experiential learning because to learn from experience, we must analyse the experience through reflection, as not every experience leads to learning in and of itself (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall 2009). Thus, reflective practice can be conceptualised as a space where learning through experience can occur (Calvert, Crowe & Grenyer 2016).

However, reflection and thinking are not always linear and do not always align well with stages and steps or simplistic cyclical learning models that separate experience and reflection (Dennison 2010). For example, Ruch (2000, p. 100) presents a simple linear process – 'reflection draws on past experiences, reflects on it in the present and uses it to inform future practice.' In contrast, Schon's (1983) model of reflective practice is more complex and discusses two forms of reflective learning. Reflection-in-action occurs simultaneously with the experience; as professionals engage in a situation, they creatively apply learning from past experiences to figure out best practice (Schon 1983). Reflection-on-action occurs after the event as professionals look back on experiences to derive new meaning and learning (Schon 1983; Mishna & Bogo 2007; Glassburn, McGuire & Lay 2019).

What is reflective practice in the context of human service work?

Within human service work, reflective practice can be considered a preventative measure to deal with the demands and stresses of such professions, as well as maintaining staff morale and retaining staff (Priddis & Rogers 2017). Helping professions can be characterised by requiring expertise that combines formal knowledge with experience and successful practice immediately when entering the profession (McNamara, Lawley & Towler 2008). Career 'burnout' can be high in helping professions due to factors including practitioners being overworked, time-pressured, regularly exposed to conflict and disregarding their own needs in favour of their service users (Priddis & Rogers 2017). Reflection facilitated through 'supervision' not only gives practitioners a forum to work through issues in the workplace and with their individual practice, but it can also be a source of positivity, praise and empathy (Kavanagh et al. 2003).

Calvert, Crowe and Grenyer (2016) identify relational competency as a vital focus of reflective practice in human service professions. Relational competence is the capacity to relate effectively and meaningfully to individuals and groups, tolerate ambiguity in relationships and see relationship dynamics with service users (Calvert, Crowe & Grenyer 2016). Reflective practice is essential to developing relational competency because it helps practitioners examine their own actions, reactions, behaviours and biases while being attuned to the situation unfolding (Calvert, Crowe & Grenyer 2016).

Tummons (2011) suggests that in human service and helping professions, such as youth work, reflective practice is a professional attribute or characteristic required to enable initial qualification and maintain professional registration through professional development. Consequently, reflective practice is a key professional development process (and, in some professions, a mandated process) that workers will engage in throughout their careers (Tummons 2011). Additionally, Munro (2010) points to the complication in human service work, such as the frequency

of complex decision-making and the need for safe and ethical practice, as reasons why an emphasis on reflection is crucial.

Considering human service organisations as adaptive systems invites the development of reflection practices for both professional and organisational learning (Munro 2010). Organisational development can occur through reflecting on rules and processes but also through managers acknowledging that front-line workers may have more knowledge than the managers themselves concerning the systems and communities they work in daily (Munro 2010).

How is reflective practice used in youth work?

Yip (2006) determines that reflective practice in human service work can be used as a process of self-reflection through examining 'personal factors' in response to external factors or influences. These personal (internal) factors can include experience, background, beliefs and personality, while external factors can include service users and social and cultural environments (Yip 2006, p. 780). For workers, a deep understanding of how these internal and external factors interact can enable consistency in a worker's practice and role (Yip 2006). Glassburn, McGuire and Lay (2019) go further, regarding reflective practice as an opportunity for workers to critically evaluate the power dynamics of a given context, warning that reflection alone, without critical analysis, may foster blaming biases and labelling. Jenkinson (2010, p. 160) reasons that 'the youth worker's main tool is his or herself'; this level of personal output can only be sustainable through employers and workers prioritising some form of supported reflection and critical evaluation of practice.

Reflective practice can also help resolve ethical dilemmas faced by youth workers (Banks 2010). Youth workers are committed to following ethical principles when working with a young person. For Banks (2010), an ethical dilemma occurs when a particular course of action seemingly breaches an ethical principle, leading to the potential occurrence of harm. In these cases, reflective practice can occur intuitively during the situation (reflection-in-action) or after the action (reflection-on-action) (Banks 2010). Therefore, reflection can help the youth worker to make an informed ethical decision either by reflecting on potential ramifications before a decision is made or by reflecting on the consequences and outcomes of an action after a decision is made (Banks 2010).

Supervised reflective practice

supervision in reflective practice allows youth workers to receive guided support from an experienced reflective practice facilitator. This process is often described as 'supervision' and the facilitator a 'supervisor'. Guided supervision can give the worker a space to explore their reflections and reactions to their work, enabling a critical awareness of their practice (Shea 2019). Supervision can also be used as an opportunity for workers to consider their own values by critically reflecting on the professional values contained in CEPs and, by so doing, strengthen the ethical foundation of their practice (McNamara, Lawley & Towler 2008).

Shea (2019) suggests that reflective practice is particularly effective in human service professions, such as youth work because it mirrors the support that workers provide to their service users. As youth work is reliant on experience as a form of knowledge, reflective processes, such as supervision, are a way to ensure that experiences are acknowledged and effectively used to inform future practice. McNamara, Lawley and Towler (2008, p. 79) highlight several areas of 'self-care' in youth work that could be addressed through reflective supervision, including initial enthusiasm and aspirations leading to over commitment and burn-out, a lack of realistic criteria for measuring achievement, precariat employment and scarce funding/resources, and 'the tension generated when public visibility is coupled with misunderstanding and suspicion'. Additionally, youth workers must constantly balance building authentic relationships with young people while maintaining professional boundaries (McNamara, Lawley & Towler 2008).

Tensions and barriers in reflective practice

In addition to the conditions required for effective reflection in youth work, there may also be barriers that impede the process (Calvert, Crowe & Grenyer 2016; Wiedow 2017). Barriers to reflective practice include a range of issues: trust is paramount to reflective practice and can be undermined (especially if the reflective supervisor is also in a managerial/employer role), the putting aside of time and the seemingly low priority given to reflection by employers or managers, poor or unsupportive organisational culture and lack of understanding about the importance of reflective practice by co-workers, and managers/employers/funding bodies (Wiedow 2017). To minimise barriers, the facilitators and reflective supervisors must be given training and regular support to enable meaningful, worker-centred reflective practice (Wiedow 2017). Garth (2012) emphasises a lack of resources (and available supervisors) as a barrier to meaningful *Reflective Practice,* reporting that many youth workers do not have regular access to trained supervisors or guided reflective opportunities either in peer-based groups or as individuals.

Awareness of some of the tensions experienced in reflective practice is important. For example, reflective practice is qualitative and relies upon participant perspectives. An individual's reflection may benefit from the reflection of others. In this sense, group or peer reflective processes may be beneficial as they provide numerous perspectives on a similar event, problem or issue. However, the subjectivity of the reflector can be a problem if there isn't a supervisor to facilitate, mediate and critically reflect with. Hence 'group supervision' practices that enable groups of peer workers as colleagues or as work teams to reflect collectively can broaden the reflective process and subsequent learnings.

Guided or supervised reflection

There are multiple forms of guided reflective supervision within youth work practice, where a facilitator guides or supervises the reflection through question and dialogue. However, this should not be confused with 'managerial supervision', where a line manager 'supervises' a worker's tasks within the employing agency. Priddis and Rogers (2017) stress that while a reflective supervisor may have more experience than the supervisee, they should not be in a position of power or authority over them as this impedes the learning possibilities and confuses reflection with reporting and line management.

An alternative to individually guided reflection is group or peer-based supervision, where workers meet with multiple workers simultaneously. This group supervision might be facilitated by a 'reflective supervisor' or may be collectively facilitated as 'peer supervision'. Workers meet to discuss their practice without a supervisor as a form of mutual support (Jenskinson 2010, p. 158).

Smith (1988; 1994) is a youth work academic who suggests that for reflection-on-practice to be genuine and to minimise the pitfalls of individualised reflection, practitioners must reflect with others in what he describes as communities of critical enquiry or a 'community of practice'. He argues convincingly that professional practice does not exist in a vacuum but is communal, suggesting that the community of practice is enquiring and reflecting critically on what makes for 'the good'.

One of the main functions of reflective practice supervision is to create a supportive, safe space for youth workers to process, articulate and work through their practice and any difficulties they may be facing, as well as celebrate their successes (Jenkinson 2010). Essential to this supportive function of supervision is that the youth worker feels listened to and supported in what they express and has the opportunity to critically reflect (Jenkinson 2010). Effective supervision also requires active participation from the worker; the self-awareness of the worker needs to be the focus of reflective practice (Babic 2014). Reflective frameworks can guide reflective practice and give the supervisee some responsibility for engaging in meaningful reflection (Sicora 2017; Babic 2014).

Models of reflective supervision

There are various models and tools to enable the reflective process. The following is a sample with links for further information on some available resources.

Child Family Community Australia provides a reflective supervision guide for working with youth workers, where both the supervisor and the supervisee share responsibility (Babic 2014). Entitled T.R.U.S.T.E.D, the guide consists of seven elements:

1. Time (Commitment)
2. Reflection (Self-awareness)
3. Understanding Adolescents (Specialist knowledge)
4. Skilled Guidance (Supervisor competency)
5. Tools (Capacity building)
6. Environment (Workplace setting)
7. Discussion (Other considerations) (Babic 2014).

Good supervision should include all of these elements, as its reflective focus helps youth workers identify and process the emotional impacts of their work and avoid trauma (Babic 2014). In this model, both the supervisor and the supervisee are expected to bring their own competencies and are both responsible for regular practice (Babic 2014).

Glassburn, McGuire and Lay (2019) summarise the D.E.A.L model of structured critical reflection that has been adapted by several human service professions. The model consists of three sections:

1. Describe
2. Examine
3. Articulate Learning.

Groups or individuals can use this model in oral or written reflection. In the Describe section, workers are encouraged to objectively describe the experience, going into fine detail to stimulate deep awareness of the situation. In Examine, workers are asked to critically evaluate the experience using set questions. Finally, in Articulate Learning, they are asked to describe what and how they have learned and how this will impact future practice (Glassburn, McGuire & Lay 2019).

Herman (2012, p. 122) proposes a framework for reflective supervisory practice in youth work that focuses on reflection through ‘action research’ to continually collect data to improve reflective practice within organisations. The framework consists of five approaches:

1. assess and analyse youth work practice outside your organisation
2. conduct data collection
3. identify themes and reflect upon the issues
4. incorporate the themes and issues identified into staff interactions
5. coach and mentor staff individually (Herman 2012, p. 122).

This framework bridges the gap between theory and practice and gives supervisors a tool to transform and improve the relationship between supervisor and supervisee (Herman 2012).

Writing in reflective practice

Written reflections can be used to inform supervised reflection and assist critical evaluation (Sicora 2017). Journals, diaries and written or audio-recorded notes can be exercised to facilitate and enhance the reflective process. These written reflections can be completed with limited time and are easily stored for further reflection in the future. Sicora (2017, p. 500) suggests that reflective writing can be approached from an analytical and rational perspective or through more creative methods using metaphors and imagination. She also suggests that reflective practice can benefit from analytical tools such as ‘SWOT’ analysis, critical incident analysis, or ‘dialogue’ writing. Her examples of creative methods of written reflection include writing an unsent letter or email (to yourself, a fellow worker, a service user, friend or journalist) and could also involve writing poetry or stories (Sicora 2017, p. 500).

Journaling has been identified as a valuable and achievable method of individual reflection for students and practising youth workers to inform supervision (Garth 2012; Boud 2001). As a record of written reflection, journals can be both the place where raw, unprocessed events are recorded and where they are evaluated and reformed (Boud 2001). Journaling can make thinking visible and encourage users to become their own problem solvers (Boud 2001). Journal entries can be used as a data source for group or peer-based reflection.

Garth (2012) provides a template for developing critical reflection in journaling:

1. identify the experience/issue
2. identify your strengths as a practitioner
3. identify the feelings/thoughts/values of you and everyone involved
4. identify external and internal factors
5. identify factors you have control over and those you don't
6. identify knowledge used that is factual/theoretical/practice-based
7. develop an action plan.

Similar to journaling, Hickson (2012) identifies online 'blogging' as a way that social media can be used as a tool for reflection. Participants in Hickson's (2012, p. 9) study reported that the main benefits of using their blogs for reflection were:

1. networking (engaging with the broader worker/peer community)
2. professional development (by challenging practice and discussing solutions among worker/peer community members)
3. self-care (as a way to express experiences and access supportive peer networks).

Blogging can also allow professionals to gain the benefits of reflective practice while controlling what they share and how much feedback they wish to receive by enabling or muting comments. Hickson (2012, p. 12) refers to this as a 'spectrum of reflection' that allows workers to engage with reflection at different levels with different outcomes, depending on what they require.

Reflective practice tools

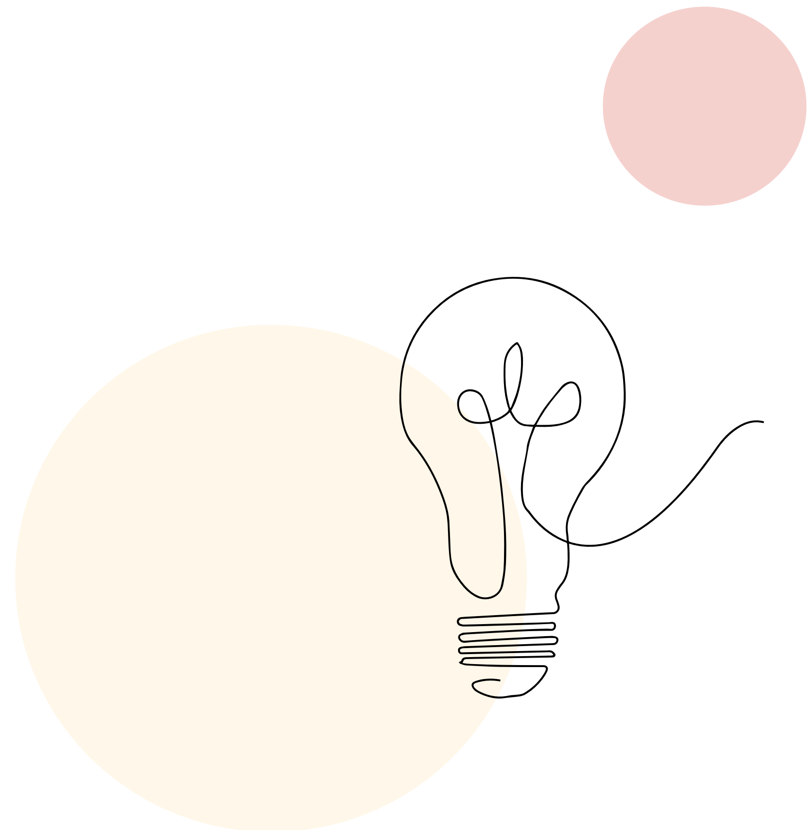
Schon (1983) developed a schema (below) to enable individual or group reflective learning processes. It uses questions to facilitate reflection before, during and after an action.

Similarly, the following four questions (and sub-questions) can be used to guide and enable 'reflective practice' on an event, issue, problem, case study or ethical scenario. The following was adapted from Rolfe, Freshwater and Jasper's (2001) *Critical reflection for nursing and the helping professions*.

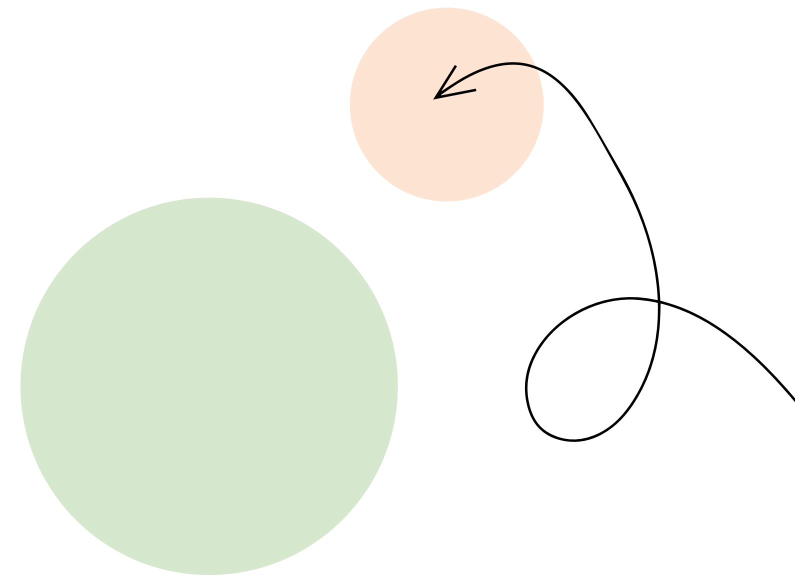
Before an experience	**During an experience**	**After an experience**
What do you think might happen?	What's happening now, as you make rapid decisions?	immediately after, and/or later when you have more emotional distance from the event?
What might be the challenges?	Is it working out as I expected?	In retrospect how did it go?
What do I need to know or do in order to be best prepared for these experiences?	Am I dealing with the challenges well?	What did I particularly value and why?
	Is there anything I should do, say or think to make the experience successful?	Is there anything I would do differently before or during a similar event?
	What am I learning from this? What are your insights	What have I learnt?

Four key questions for reflective practice:

1. **Who?** (Describe who are the actors/people involved in the event e.g., worker, other professional, service user/young person, agency/employer?).
2. **What?** (Describe the event e.g., What is the problem? What happened? What did I do? What did others do? What did I feel? What did I think? What was I trying to achieve/change? What were the results/outcomes?).
3. **So, what?** (Analysis of event – So, what is the importance of this event? Why is it a problem/ issue? So, what more do I need to know about this? What is positive or negative? So, what has been learned from this event? So, what are the implications? How does this apply to me, or others, or the agency or organisation?).
4. **Now what?** (Propose actions, a way forward/ response/action following an event. These could be based on reflecting on a professional code of ethics: What could I do? What should I do? What could others do? What should others do? What would be the best thing to do? What could I have done differently? What will I do next time?).



Case studies



Australian reflective case study number 1

(Using four key questions Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper 2001; Gibbs 1988)

Introduction

This section is a reflective case study based on an interview with a Senior Youth Worker. It describes an incident that took place during a work experience program for secondary school students run by youth workers through a local youth agency. The scenario under reflection describes a situation where two youth workers and a teacher's aide had to respond to a critical incident, where a student with disabilities went missing while participating in the work experience program excursion.

The reflection below is facilitated by using 'Four Key Questions' (Who? What? So what? Now what?) to describe and enable reflective learning by the participants on the situation. It also incorporates the Victorian Youth Sector Code of Ethical Practice ('the code') and reflects on the relationship of the code to the actions taken by the youth workers in the case study. The text below is an edited version of the events described by the Senior Youth Worker. It outlines the background and context by asking: **who** was involved, **what** happened in the event, **why** it happened, **what** was learned from the problem and **what** can be acted upon in the future (Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper 2001; Gibbs 1988).

Interviewer
'Who' was involved in the incident?

Youth Worker
With this particular incident, the people involved were me (Senior Youth Worker), another youth worker and a teacher's aide. We were running a work experience program for young people with learning difficulties from a mainstream school setting. The young people had experienced barriers to education, and some had physical and intellectual disabilities. The purpose of the program is to take students out of the school setting and introduce them to the world of work. Unfortunately, some young people with disabilities can slip through the cracks of formal schooling and can miss out on the opportunity of work experience.

The aim of the program was to increase the capacity of young people, preparing them for work. In line with the Youth Workers' Code of Ethics (YACVic 2007, p. 3), 'ensuring the safety of young people' (principle 4) while attending the program was a priority. This was particularly important as the cohort in the program had learning disabilities,

and one student had mental health issues. This was important in consideration of the activities of the program – making sure that young people were safe – particularly as we were away from the school, walking and taking public transport as a group to the work experience sites. As such, we had to have the route we would take planned out and exit/return strategies in case something went wrong and we needed to return the students to school.

Interviewer
'What' happened in the incident?

Youth Worker
On the first day of the program, we got to the excursion site, and everything was fine. We kept doing head counts until we got to lunchtime. Then we said, 'all right, students, we're going to break for lunch for an hour. Please stay in the Centre, if you need to go somewhere please let one of the youth work team know, so we can keep track of where you are in case of an emergency'. At the end of lunch, we did a head count, and one student was missing. Panic set in because we couldn't find her. We felt a bit of pressure as youth workers because it was the first program that we were running, and there were a number of schools participating. It was quite a stressful situation.

Interviewer
So **'Why'** did the event happen, and **'What'** were the ramifications?

Youth Worker
The student had decided to go to a shop to get something to eat without telling anyone, and no one saw her leave. (This was something for us as a team to reflect on as perhaps we had too many young people to adequately supervise or keep track of over lunch?) We don't know how she got so far away from the Centre without knowing the area. She had travelled a long way even though she was not familiar with the area at all. (A good reflection point was that a young person can travel a long distance in 15 minutes, and even though it seems a short period, someone can get very lost in that time).

Our initial reaction was panic because we didn't know why the student was missing. However, we had pre-planned safety protocols in place and, as the Senior Youth Worker, I immediately started to ask questions of myself and my co-workers – 'What's happened'? 'Where has the student gone'? 'How did she leave'? 'Did anyone see where she went'? 'How long has she been gone'? And so on.

The good news is that we found the student fairly quickly, as the teacher's aide had access to the student's personal contact details and mobile phone number and could ring her and make contact straight away. This was an ethical dilemma for us as youth workers, as we had previously decided that we wanted to respect the privacy of young people and didn't want to have access to personal information, such as mobile numbers, without their permission. This was in line with the code (YACVic 2007) regarding confidential information and respecting the autonomy and privacy of young people (principle 5 p. 3; & practice responsibility 4, p. 4). However, the teacher's aide, as an Education Department employee, did have access to the student's personal mobile number and rang the student's phone, and she answered and told us where she was. So, we were able to locate her and go and pick her up and bring her back safely and quickly to the excursion site. (This is a reflection point about ensuring young people provide contact details with permission, as they are important in an emergency situation. However, what would we do if we didn't have a personal mobile number?).

This critical incident was handled well because we followed the emergency protocols and procedures we had put in place. This was because 'safety' for both young people and workers was a key principle in our program planning – based on the Code of Ethics (YACVic 2007). One of the 'safety' issues we had pre-planned was what to do if someone went missing during the program.

We also had a critical incident report pro-forma for recording and reporting a critical incident 'safety' event. This was in line with the code (YACVic 2007) based on our 'duty of care' for young people and also for the safety and protection of workers (practice principle 3, p. 4). The report pro-forma enabled us to document what was happening and when and what actions we took at the time. This was important for our accountability to the young

person, parents and the school and funders and also, if required, for legal purposes. This pro-forma had been signed off by the executive of our youth agency responsible for the program.

So, when the young person went missing, we activated the protocols and documented what we were doing. All of us in the team had an A4 book that had the daily program of what we're doing throughout the day, and at the back, it also had the safety protocols and instructions on what to do in the case of a student going missing or getting injured, including the report. We went through the protocols step by step. The first step was, OK, a young person is missing – what school is that young person from? Find the teacher's aide and phone number and ask them to make contact as soon as possible. This demonstrated the importance of 'cooperation and collaboration' (Practice Responsibility 9, p. 5) with others to ensure the safety and 'best interests' of the young person in line with the 'Human Rights' basis of the code (YACVic 2007, p. 7).

Interviewer
'Now what'? What did you propose following the event?

Youth Worker
Afterwards, we reflected on the event and made notes on what we had learned and what we would do differently in the future.

We thought about how we might revise our protocols regarding having permission from young people to access personal contact information while protecting young people's privacy and autonomy. We thought about what we might change regarding the supervision of students during meal breaks.

We also reflected on the importance of key issues to be addressed in safety planning in the future:

- *getting both young peoples' and parents' consent for those under 18 to be contacted by the program in case of emergency*
- *collaborating between the youth work program staff, school/teaching staff and teaching aides*
- *ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the young person after the event.*

We reflected on the possible repercussions for the young person. For example, if we hadn't had access to the young person's contact details through the teacher's aide? What would have been the ramifications for the young person and the program if we had to call the school, parents or police to assist in locating the young person?

We reflected on the importance of planning for safety issues to occur and that we needed to ensure that we planned for every eventuality.

We reflected that one of the things we didn't consider when putting the program together was that some students would be particular about the foods they eat and may want to go to the shops to get different food rather than eat what was provided in the program. So, a key learning from reflecting on the event was making sure that going forward, young people's voices are heard and that they have choices and ensure that student agency is built into the program in the future. This is in line with the code, in particular, the principles 1, 2 and 5 of Participation and Empowerment of Young People and Respect for Young People.

Australian reflective case study number 2

(Using four key questions Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper 2001; Gibbs 1988)

Introduction

This is a reflective case study adapted from the author's experience. It describes a response to a young person disclosing and seeking support for emotional challenges at a youth centre in a regional area. The scenario describes the youth worker's response to the young person and how they navigated interactions with the young person's father, who the youth worker knew socially from their involvement at the local football club.

The reflection below is facilitated by using 'Four Key Questions' (Who? What? So what? Now what?) to describe and enable reflective learning by the participants on the situation. It also incorporates the Victorian Youth Sector Code of Ethical Practice ('the code') and reflects on the relationship of the code to the actions taken by the youth workers in the case study. The text below is an edited version of the events as described by the Senior Youth Worker. It outlines the background and context by asking: **who** was involved, **what** happened in the event, **why** it happened, **what** was learned from the problem and **what** can be acted upon in the future.

This case study is in the form of a video, and you can watch it here.

Interviewer
'Who' was involved in the incident?

Youth Worker
This incident was connected to a youth centre in a small regional community where I (Senior Youth Worker) and my colleague (Assistant Youth Worker) worked and ran the centre and its programs. At the youth centre, young people were provided opportunities to undertake employment training, develop skills in areas like hospitality and information technology and build their confidence through artistic pursuits. The youth centre also had a social drop-in component, as it was open after school, and young people were encouraged to come by and hang out in a positive environment and use the recreational facilities.

The aim of the program was to provide a positive community for young people, as well as to aid their development. This is in-line with the principles outlined in the Code of Ethics (YACVic 2007, p. 3), including 'the empowerment of all young people',

'positive health and wellbeing outcomes for young people', and 'positive transitions and healthy development of young people'.

The particular incident described here involved a young person who regularly came to the youth centre. However, I also knew the young person and their family through my involvement as a coach of junior teams and as a senior player at the local football club – especially their father, who was involved in the club's administration, and we had previously played together on the same team. Another youth worker, my colleague, also assisted in responding to the incident.

Interviewer
'What' *happened in the incident?*

Youth Worker
On a Monday afternoon at the youth centre, we were running a program and noticed that one of the participants – a young person (aged 16 years) – was distressed. I engaged them in conversation to try to ascertain the problem, to see if they were all right and what was going on for them. They shared that they had been really struggling with anxiety and depression and had been feeling really down. They also shared that they had been having lots of arguments with their parents and did not enjoy spending time at home. I involved the other youth worker at the youth centre in the conversation, and we agreed to support and monitor the young person, make sure that they were safe and refer them to health services if need be.

Later in the same week, I bumped into the father of the young person in town. The father asked me about the young person, and I felt that the father was pressuring me to disclose confidential information by asking me to 'tell me what they told you'. This led to a professional and personal conflict of interest that I had to address.

Interviewer
So ***'Why'*** *did the event happen, and* ***'What'*** *were the ramifications?*

Youth Worker
When I first engaged the young person, I was conscious that they did not just know me as a professional youth worker from the youth centre but also through our shared involvement at the local football club. Often this outside involvement had been useful to my youth work, as I had increased rapport and trust with the young person, but I was often conscious of the challenges this presented to my youth work boundaries (practice responsibility 5 of the code of practice, p. 14). In the past, I had had discussions with this young person about how when we are at the youth centre; I am their youth worker rather than a friend of their parents or their football coach.

After observing the young person's behaviour and mood, I initiated a conversation with them to see how they were feeling. They shared about struggles they were having, feeling stressed and sad, and having lots of arguments at home. They talked about how they didn't like spending time at home because 'they just got into fights with mum and dad'. Conscious of the relationship I have with the young person and their family, I suggested it might be good for us to chat together with another youth worker from the centre to see if we could solve the problem together. They said that would be fine, and I signalled for a colleague to come over and join the conversation.

Our first priority was to ensure that the young person was safe and not at risk of harm. This was in line with principle 4 of the code ('the safety of young people', p. 3) as well as our practice responsibility of duty of care (practice principle 3, p. 11). We conducted a risk assessment as we normally would for self-harm and suicide, as well as for signs and indicators of possible abuse. It was clear in our assessment that the young person was not describing a dangerous situation but was more typical of emotional stress and conflict. We discussed strategies for the young person to assist them with their issues, trying to give them tools in a way that would empower them. We also gave them resources and referral information about other health services they could contact, such as 24-hour telephone counselling support and mental health services.

While the young person was discussing their experiences, they specifically said that they didn't

want me to tell their parents. I reminded them of our centre's privacy policy – that there were some things we had to disclose (like the risk of harm, suicide or abuse). But I also said that what they told us that wasn't those things would be kept in confidence. I was conscious of the code's practice responsibility of 'privacy and confidentiality' (p. 12 of the code). We also encouraged the young person to think about how they could have constructive conversations with their parents about their experiences, recognising the principle that good youth work 'facilitates young people's connection to their family and community' (principle 6, p. 3). We were careful as professional youth workers to document our interaction with the young person, noting the major themes, what we had done, and noting some follow-up options.

Later in the week, I was at the football club, and the father of the young person came up to talk to me. They said they had been having trouble with their young person at home and were wondering if they had spoken to me about it and told me anything. I reminded him that when I'm at the youth centre, young people have to know that what they tell me is kept private. I tried to ask him what he had noticed about the young person's behaviour, to try and engage constructively with him about responding to the situation, but he brushed that off, instead getting angry that I wouldn't tell him what his 'child' had told me. He said that he was the father and had the right to know what the young person had said and that I shouldn't be keeping secrets. He said that he thought we were friends and that as his friend, I should help him look after his 'child'.

I was taken aback by the comments. I empathised with him and responded. I told him that I recognised he was concerned and acting out of care as a parent. But I also reaffirmed the young person's right to respect, privacy and autonomy – that if they hadn't spoken to their father, I could not do it for them. I suggested to the father that if young people at the centre couldn't trust us as youth workers, they would never confide in us, and we wouldn't be able to provide support. I also shared with the father that I had a professional obligation not to break confidentiality and to respect privacy, except in cases where I thought a young person was at risk of harm. I said that even though we were friends, as a youth worker, my primary concern is for the young person (practice principle 1, p. 11). In my interaction with the father, I tried to be honest and transparent about the work I did (practice principle 6, p. 14). I also suggested that perhaps the father would benefit from talking to someone about their relationship and suggested some options.

These points seemed to make sense to the father. Again, I affirmed the care he had shown and also provided some referral options. He shared his confusion about how to respond to the issues the young person was having and about how even when he tried to help, it just led to conflict. I listened and encouraged him, and together we discussed some strategies he could use to engage the young person more positively. I spoke generally about adolescent development and the world of young people. I recommended a website for parents of young people that could provide some useful tools for him. I was conscious of the practice principle of 'cooperation and collaboration' (p. 17), knowing that working with others can lead to best outcomes for young people. He said he was grateful for the conversation and thanked me for looking out for his 'child'.

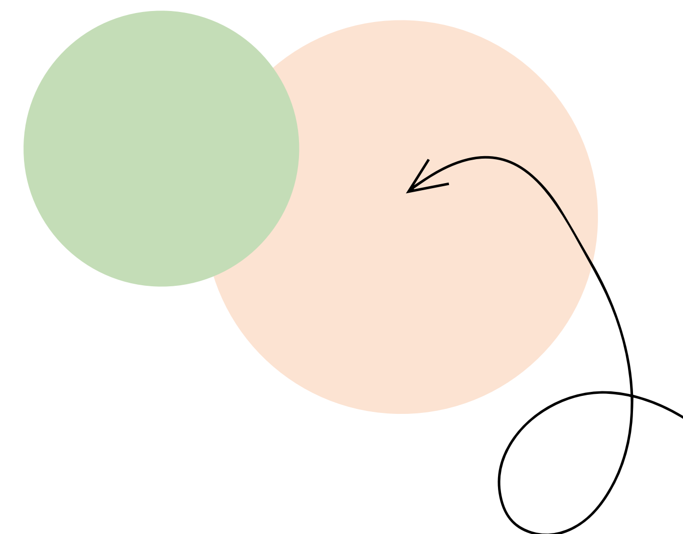
Interviewer
'Now what'? What did you propose following the event?

Youth Worker
The next day I was at the centre and related the conversation I had had with the father to my youth work colleague. I talked through my issues about feeling pressured to break the young person's privacy and how I felt I'd been put in a difficult situation by their father. My colleague affirmed what I had done, and we documented the interaction. The colleague also challenged me to reflect on my relationship with the father and the football club and if it might be a conflict of interest. We resolved that it would be in the young person's 'best interest' (UNCRC, code preamble) for the other youth worker to take over as the primary contact and support for the young person.

Following the interaction, we thought it would be good to revisit the issue of boundaries and potential conflicts of interest together with our whole staff

team. Being a small regional community, it is not uncommon for staff to know young people and their families outside of their involvement at the youth centre. As a team, we discussed the benefits and complications of these relationships and talked about how we could respond if issues arose with young people and their carers. We also discussed getting further training in this area, in line with the practice principle of 'extending our knowledge' (practice principle 8, p. 18), recognising that it wasn't as black and white in our context as it might be in other places.

We also discussed the need to communicate our privacy policies more effectively, not just to young people but to parents and carers as well. We looked at our fliers and information brochures and identified how we could better include this information. We also resolved to do further research on services for carers and parents to help them care for their young people.



Estonian case study number 1. Critical incident

(Using four key questions Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper 2001; Gibbs 1988)

Introduction

As the peak body, the Estonian Association of Youth Workers (EAYW) advocates for the Youth Work Code of Ethics through promotion and raising awareness within the community of practice. Among other activities, EAYW has organised different learning opportunities for youth workers to increase using the code by providing possibilities and tools for reflection on ethical issues in youth workers' practice. One of the approaches used in seminars/webinars is reflecting on critical incidents – either one's own, colleagues' or cases presented by a facilitator. Reflection on the incident is guided by questions based on a reflective practice framework.

Guiding questions for a group discussion and/or personal reflection (Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper 2001)

- **What happened in the situation? What is this incident about?**
  What are the different (ethical) issues in the situation? Which ethical dilemmas and questions do you notice?
- **How would have you reacted if you were in the youth worker's position in this situation?**
  Why? Which of the ethical theses from Occupational Ethics would inform or guide your decision and action? How?
- **Are there any contradictions between the theses and the solutions offered?**
  What are the possible contradictions between the theses?
- **What does it mean in your own practice?**
  How would you balance the contradictions? What could help in decision-making? What is influencing me in my decisions and my practice framework, in terms of my assumptions, beliefs, values etc?

The first three questions could be reflected upon in the group discussion. However, when the final question focuses on one's own practice, it could be a personal reflection (critically reflexive); therefore, there are no examples of it in the case study presented below.

Example of a critical incident (reflected on in one of the webinars organised by EAYW)

It was a full house on a Friday evening in a small town's youth centre. That was not extraordinary for Fridays, as many older youngsters studying in bigger

cities would arrive home for the weekend, and a youth centre has become their meeting place. A youth worker (who was working alone as usual) did notice that a group of older youngsters (two of them being over 18 years) had kept to themselves for quite some time already in one of the rooms further away. Being busy finishing an activity with a younger group, they couldn't investigate the situation further. As the older youngsters always managed themselves in the centre, they also didn't feel the need to check up on them.

Suddenly, a police patrol entered the youth centre. To the youth worker's surprise, they were called for the group of older youngsters. As it turned out, some of them had been smoking and rumbling behind the youth centre. An attentive neighbour, noticing youngsters smoking on the premises of the youth centre, had called the police. As the youth worker entered the room together with the police, they noticed a smell of alcohol in the room. The otherwise cooperative youngsters showed an arrogant attitude and behaviour towards the police officers who were trying to find out what had happened and who did what. In response to the youngsters showing off, the police officers' demands became stricter and they started questioning the youth worker's duty and responsibilities in keeping order in the youth centre. The situation worsened when younger kids, curious about what was happening, joined the room and started to cheer the older ones' behaviour towards police officers.

Example of outcomes of the group discussion

'What' is the incident about? Some of the issues brought out by the youth workers:

- Breaking the law and/or the rules of the youth centre.
    - Youngsters have violated the rules of the youth centre – smoking or drinking alcohol is forbidden on the premises, including in the area of the youth centre.
    - By smoking (and possibly drinking alcohol), youngsters have also committed an offence (by law, a person of less than 18 years of age shall not possess, smoke or consume tobacco products and/or alcoholic beverages)
- Trustful relationships between young people and youth workers are under threat. By smoking and drinking on the premises of the youth centre, the youngsters have misused the youth worker's trust toward them, keeping the common agreements of the youth centre.
- Cooperation with partners/networking with the police is not working effectively. Police undermining or not understanding youth workers' role and specific aims of the practice – building rapport with youngsters to support young people's independence and development through informal/social learning.
- Difficulties in addressing age differences and the developmental needs of young people in the 'universal' youth centre/work (open for everybody from age seven to 26). For example, something that is legal (allowed) for an adult (18+) might be prohibited in the youth work centre. The older youths' behaviour (not respecting the rules of the centre, law and police) provides an unwanted influence and example for the younger group.

'So, what' would youth workers do in the situation described and **'What'** are the ethical theses that could be informing youth workers decision?

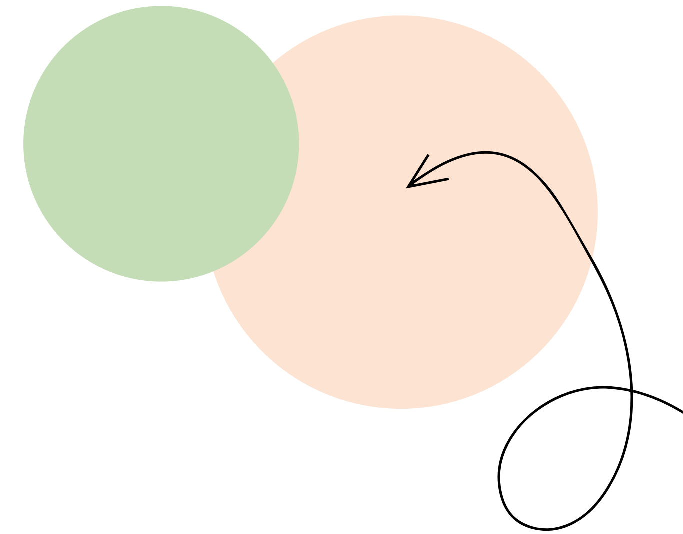
Usually, participants have different opinions about the solution, which creates debate when the focus should be on different points of view and not on finding consensus. Examples of solutions brought out in group discussion (theses of the code presented in brackets):

- mediating the situation between youngsters and police, keeping the focus on learning opportunities for the young people and not on finding the guilty one or on punishment (*Youth worker pays attention to activities, including those initiated by young people, that are supposed to allow youngsters to obtain new knowledge, skills and experiences and to learn from them, and creates conditions for acknowledging the process; Youth worker*

attempts to understand young people's real situation, its development and influential factors; Youth worker supports and respects young people's right to make independent choices)
- letting the situation unravel without intervening; recognising the youngsters have made a conscious decision to break the rules of the youth centre and must take responsibility for their actions (*Youth worker supports and respects young people's right to make independent choices; Youth worker guarantees that youngsters have access to information that allows them to make conscious choices about participating in youth work activities and in their lives in general*)
- making the police primarily responsible for dealing with the situation to remove youngsters from the youth centre since there has been illegal conduct and/or youngsters don't accept the authority of the youth workers (*Youth worker takes responsibility or only participates in activities for which they have the right to take part and sufficient knowledge and skills; Youth worker actively looks for cooperation opportunities with colleagues and professionals in other fields; Youth worker supports and respects young people's right to make independent choices*)
- guiding younger kids away from the situation to protect their well-being; supporting appropriate, respectful behaviour and explaining the consequences and harmful effects of substance use (*Youth worker conducts youth work in an environment that is acceptable to the young person; Youth worker guarantees that youngsters have access to information that allows them to make conscious choices about participating in youth work activities and in their lives in general*)
- bringing up the issue of workforce shortage (the need for more than one youth worker) in the centre with the supervisor (*The environment in which youth work is conducted is acceptable to the young person and supports non-formal learning*).

'Now what' would be your solution in the critical incident described above? And **'What'** are the reasons/ethical theses behind your decisions?

During the seminars and workshops, this question led to discrepancies in responses across participants. Nevertheless, the main debate concerned the learning opportunities for the young persons and the youth worker's role in the situation. Should youth workers try to 'protect' youngsters from the legal consequences of their behaviour? This opinion suggests that testing boundaries is part of youth development, and punishment is not supportive of learning new behaviour. The opposite opinion emphasises informal and social learning, where every action has consequences, and youth work has a responsibility to prepare young people for society and adult life (where there is no youth worker to protect them).



Estonian case study 2 – Using the 'GROW' model used in coaching

Introduction and background

The purpose of coaching is for a coach to help a person (coachee) find solutions to challenges they are facing and to help them develop and make progress in the process. At the heart of coaching practice are learning theories, for example, the theory of adult learning, experiential learning and transformative learning, which presume that adults are internally motivated, self-directed and autonomous human beings who take responsibility for their own learning and professional growth. According to Cox, Bachkirova, and Clutterbuck (2014, p. 1), 'coaching is a human development process that involves structured, focussed interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change'. Therefore, coaching can be one way to help youth workers solve ethical dilemmas in work situations, which also results in youth workers growing professionally. (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck 2014).

The EAYW has been providing free coaching to its members since 2016. This has been an appreciated support for youth workers who often work alone and face work-related challenges, which can be hard to find solutions alone.

The GROW model

Various coaching models help to ensure the coachee will reach the set goals or find solutions and answers to their questions or problems through the structured interaction between the coach and coachee. One model is called the GROW model, which has been used in a brief coaching video (usually, one coaching session can take 1–1.5 hours) to illustrate how coaching can be a useful tool in solving an ethical dilemma (Cox & Jackson 2014, p. 223). Below, each stage of the model is illustrated by the example of the demo video.

The case study

In this case study, a youth worker has already met with the coach several times. This time, the youth worker wants to discuss an ethical dilemma. Recently, the youth worker has been supporting a suicidal young person with whom she has built a trusting relationship. Now, after several serious incidents of the young person hurting herself and the youth worker being the main person supporting

the young person, she has started to think about the boundaries for the professional youth worker and wondering whether she is doing things that are still within her professional responsibilities and competencies.

This case study is in the form of a video in Estonian (with English subtitles), and you can watch it here.

The stages of the GROW model

G – Goal: What are the long- and short-term goals?

Here, the youth worker talks about the topic she has come to this coaching session with and says that her goal is to know how to best support the young person so that she can manage this situation well for herself and the young person. She also wants to look after herself by understanding where the boundaries are for her as a professional youth worker.

R – Reality: What is the situation right now? What is your story?

Here, the youth worker expands on the situation and explains what has been recently happening. She gives examples of the incidents that have made her wonder what the boundaries are for her as a youth worker when seemingly, she is the only person who cares for the young person and is the only one this young person has and trusts.

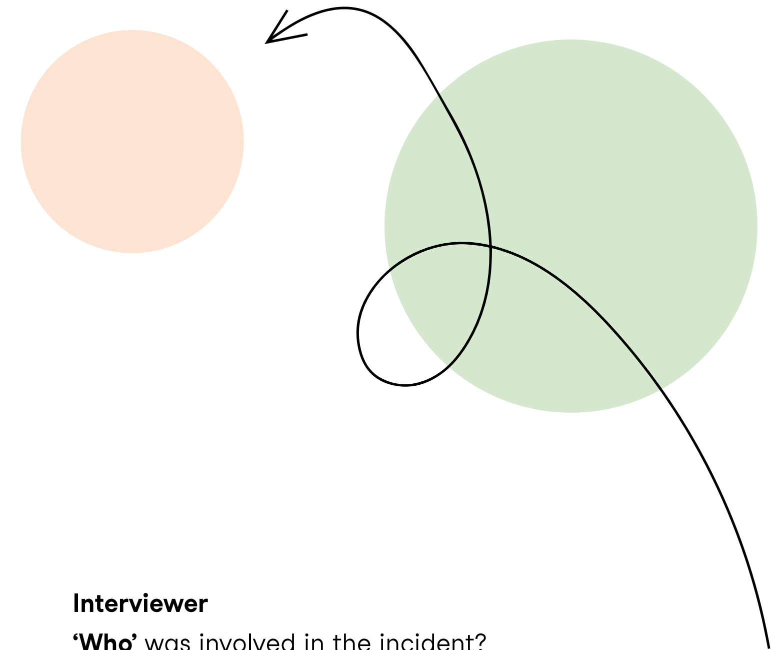
In this stage, the youth worker also talks about what she has already done to solve this issue or to find answers to the questions she has. For example, she says that she has been talking to her colleagues and has also done some reading and research on mental health topics to understand the young person better. She has also talked to other specialists who work with young people.

O – Options: What's possible? What options and thoughts do you have to take you forward?

Here, the coach asks the youth worker what other options she has to solve this issue. The youth worker says that she believes she will need to continue discussing this with her colleagues in light of the Code of Ethics and needs to keep learning about young people's mental health issues.

W – Wrap-up: Clarity/commitment, support – What will you do and what support do you have?

Here, the coach asks the youth worker how close she thinks she is to figure out the boundaries for her as a youth worker on a scale of 1–10. The youth worker thinks she is at 7. The coach asks the youth worker what is needed for it to be 9 or 10. The youth worker thinks she needs time and this type of conversation with someone who can help her understand the situation better. The youth worker concludes by saying that after this session, she will be thinking about how to get from 7 to 9 or 10. This illustrates the effect of coaching, as the impact of the coaching session doesn't end when the session ends but will give more food for thought in the days to come and will influence the youth worker's actions regarding solving the issue.



Icelandic reflective case study number 1

(Using four key questions Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper 2001; Gibbs 1988)

Introduction

In this case study, we had four youth workers use the Four Key Questions to simulate a scenario with an ethical dilemma and how they would respond to the situation. The goal of the simulation was to see how the youth workers would deal with an ethical dilemma using the Four Key Questions as a guideline for reflective practice. The youth workers also had access to the FFF Code of Ethics, so they could use it for support.

This is a case study adapted from a real-life experience. It describes a situation where there is a clash between two teenage boys at a municipality-run youth club. One of the boys has very little support from home, and the other comes from a strong background and a supportive family. The supportive family wants the youth club to ban the other boy from attending the youth club after he hit their son.

The text below is an edited version of the events. It outlines the background and context by asking: **'Who'** was involved, **'What'** happened in the event, **'Why'** it happened, **'What'** was learned from the problem and then the youth workers discuss **'What'** they would do as the youth worker in this kind of situation.

This case study is in the form of a video in Icelandic (with English subtitles), and you can watch it here.

Interviewer
'Who' was involved in the incident?

Chris and Peter (names changed) are two teenage boys who are regular guests at a municipal-run youth club. Chris comes from a low-income household that the youth workers know social service has been supporting and monitoring. Chris is usually hungry when he arrives at the youth club, and when it closes in the evenings, he is never in a hurry to go home. On the other hand, Peter comes from a different background with more structure and support. His family contacts the youth workers regularly, show interest in the work done at the club and have built up a relationship with the youth workers.

Interviewer
'What' happened in the incident?

Chris and Peter have become acquaintances through the youth club and participating in projects together. However, Peter can be a bit controlling in their communications; he is judgemental and sometimes makes rude comments about Chris, his appearance, clothes or lack of knowledge. Chris has been calm in these situations before, but one day, when Peter made a remark that implied Chris was stupid, Chris lost his temper and punched Peter, breaking his nose. The youth workers stepped in, stopped the fight and called their parents. Peter's parents were outraged and demanded that Chris be banned from the youth club to punish him and ensure the safety of the children attending the youth club.

Interviewer
So **'Why'** did the event happen, and **'What'** were the ramifications?

Youth Worker
The youth workers in the case study first started to discuss if they needed to report this to child custodies:

YW1: I think we need to report this to child custodies.

YW2: We are supposed to report all incidents that make us think that a child under the age of 18 needs help or support. It was said that social services are monitoring this so it could be part of a bigger picture.

Next, all the youth workers agreed that they would not ban Chris from showing up and participating in youth club projects, as that would not be in their best interest. That being said, they agreed that something needed to be done:

YW3: We are not going to ban Chris from coming to the youth club.

YW2: We are far from banning him from participating in the youth club.

YW4: We would need to make it really clear to the parents that it is not our policy to exclude or ban individuals from the youth club since this is the first offence.

Next, the youth workers discussed responsibility and that this was a serious incident. Therefore, it was necessary to signal that this kind of behaviour is unacceptable in the youth club and that the youth workers need to take responsibility for their part in the incident.

YW3: But Peter was assaulted, and we can't forget that.

YW2: Wouldn't we need to have a conciliation meeting?

YW1: Yes, I agree; it is important to explain to the parents of both boys that it is very important for us to make sure that everybody is safe in our youth club. Maybe we also need to create a communication charter. It is obvious that there have been some negative communications before; we need to take responsibility. Shouldn't we have done something different already to prevent this from happening?

YW2: It also sounds like we could have done more to prevent this from happening; it was clear from the story that there had been conflicts before, so we need to work on the communication within our youth club as well as signal that this kind of behaviour is not acceptable.

YW4: I am not sure that this would be sufficient for Peter's parents, though.

YW1: No, that's true; we need to talk to them and admit our failure in creating a safe environment. We can apologise for that and inform them of the procedure we will take to make the youth club a safe and fun place for everyone. We need to rebuild trust.

YW3: Yes, we would need to go through our procedure and also make an assessment on if we think this scenario is likely to happen again. Why did this happen? Do we need more staff? Do we need more training for staff members? We need to be in good communication with the parents and

admit our failure to be able to build up trust again.

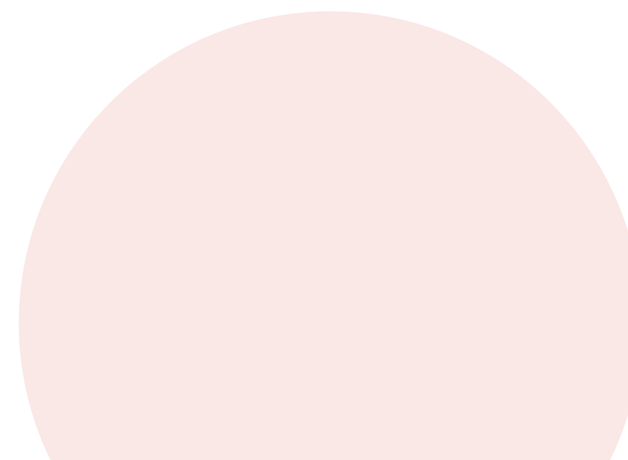
YW2: Yes, there are many things that we could do with these boys. All kinds of group work etc. We need to work on building up positive communication skills with both of them. They are clearly going over the boundaries of each other, physically and mentally.

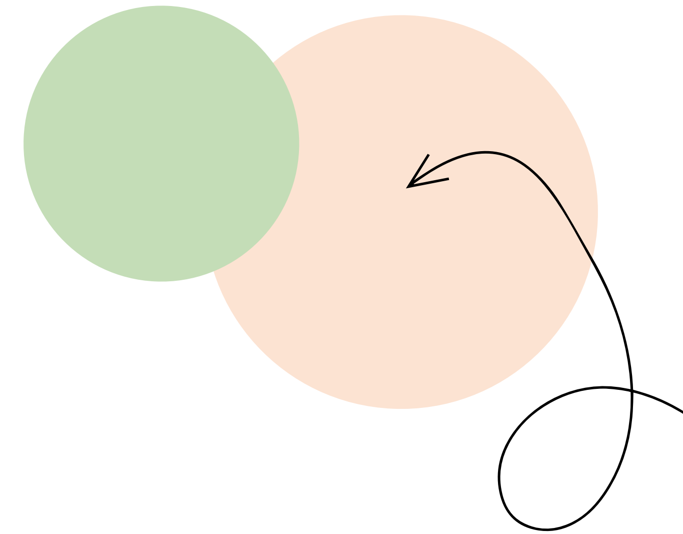
YW3: Yes, I am a bit worried about Chris; somebody needs to work with him on many levels.

Interviewer
'Now what'? What did you propose following the event?

Youth workers
After the discussion, the conclusion was that the youth workers were going to talk to child services since Chris had been in their care, and it is important to report every incident to ensure that everybody is making the right decisions based on the correct information.

We will not ban anyone from the youth club, but we will inform our youth workers to take procedures to ensure that this does not happen again. We are going to work with our staff members as well as the youth club participants. It is important to keep parents informed of our procedures and start to build back the trust that is lost.





Icelandic Reflective Case Study Number 2

(Using Four Key Questions Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper 2001; Gibbs 1988)

Introduction

In this case study, we had four youth workers use the Four Key Questions to simulate a scenario with an ethical dilemma and how they would respond to the situation. The goal of the simulation was to see how the youth workers would deal with an ethical dilemma using the Four Key Questions as a guideline for reflective practice. The youth workers also had access to the FFF Code of Ethics, so they could use it for support.

This is a case study adapted from a real-life experience. It describes a situation where a young person with a troubled background (who has been growing through participation in the municipal youth club) informs a staff member in his youth club that he committed a robbery. The youth workers need to discuss what they should do with this information and why.

This case study is in the form of a video in Icelandic (with English subtitles), and you can watch it here.

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