

Emmanuel Youth and Family Mission Services, Inc.

Standard Procedures, Policies, and Guidance For Youth Workers

INTRODUCTION

These protocols are designed to inform and protect Youth Workers in carrying out their duties.

1.1 Professional Intervention

a) Staff who works with children and young people in the informal context has a personal responsibility concerning themselves and the nature of their intervention. They should plan and reflect on all aspects of their intervention and organize their work continually to do so. They need at all times to be aware of their role in different contexts, the likely dilemmas in each situation, the purpose of their intervention, the limitations of their role and power and the latest ideas concerning good practice in the area of intervention concerned. They should at all times be aware of the policies, procedures, and guidance available to them to support work with young people in a safe, legal and productively educational environment. The repertoire of curricula approaches and activities should be continually updated so that the practitioner is able to offer a wide range of rewarding experiences to the young people they work with.

b) There are particular responsibilities to:

I. Develop and utilize skills, knowledge and experience as fully as possible;

II. Undertake in-service training and professional development in order to remain up-to-date on professional issues and relevant curricula and legal issues;

III. Regularly re-examine attitudes and methods of intervention in order to renew motivation and manage dilemmas at work;

IV Foster good interpersonal relationships with all those involved with the service;

V. Behave and act reliably and consistently;

VI. Acknowledge personal limitations in knowledge and competence and to decline duties or responsibilities if unable to perform them in a safe and skilled manner;

VII Seek advice as necessary;

VIII. Continuously evaluate outcomes and dilemmas encountered in the course of professional duties and to reflect on them in an organized manner with colleagues;

IX. Be aware of personal physical and mental fitness at the level required to meet service users' needs;

X. Ensure the safety of service users at all times and to ensure the use of appropriate equipment, clothing, insurances and procedures, etc.;

XI. Avoid the personalization of issues with young people and colleagues at work;

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Part 1:

XII. Act in a way that encourages equal opportunities opposes discriminatory action or policy and harassing, intimidating or bullying behavior;

c) It is recognized that Youth Workers have a particular responsibility to maintain and enhance the physical, emotional, educational, and spiritual well being of the young people they work with, and to provide them with honest descriptions of roles and responsibilities and opportunities. It is therefore important to have contemporary knowledge of:

- I. Health and Safety legislation and good practice;
- II. The law as it effects young people, families and citizen's rights;
- III. Anti-discriminatory practice and legislation;
- IV. Employment, law, practice and policies (if a paid staff)
- V. The employers' expectations; (if a paid staff)
- VI. Good practice in advice and counseling;
- VII. Effective communication skills;
- VIII. The needs and aspirations of young people.

1.2 Responsibility for young people

a) Youth Workers have a responsibility to:

- I. Promote the policies and practice that enhance the self-determination, self-esteem, collective responsibility and active citizenship of young people;
- II. Promote the rights of young people;
- III. Advise, befriend and counsel young people for the purpose of extending and developing the interests, awareness and responsibility of young people themselves;
- IV. Assist young people in the transition to adulthood by respecting and understanding their needs, and the opportunities available to them;
- V. Respect confidences shared by young people unless it there is a threat to their lives;
- VI. Involve young people in the development of the service;
- VII. Protect young people from abuse and neglect;
- VIII. Report abuse and neglect so that action can be taken by proper authorities;
- IX. Avoid commissioning or assisting an infringement of the law;
- X. Ensure that the welfare and personal safety of young people are at all times paramount.

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Part 2

a) In your work, which is primarily concerned with the creation of informal learning opportunities for the purpose of counseling, coaching, teaching, etc., Youth Workers need to ensure clear boundaries at all times between these purposes and personal relationships. In particular they need to:

- I. Avoid emotional dependency relationships with young people;
- II. Avoid any sexual intimacy with young people;
- III. Avoid relationships with young people outside work;
- IV. Be sensitive to the use of words and language; and avoid swearing;
- V. Respect the physical and emotional privacy of young people;

- VI. Develop professional relationships with young people;
- VII. Avoid drinking alcohol, smoking and taking illegal substance whilst on duty or in the company of young people whilst off duty but in a leadership capacity.

c) Youth Workers work with a variety of individuals and agencies to secure provision and meet the needs of young people. This work should have as its prime focus the meeting of the needs of young people, and the encouragement of collaborative partnerships which enable communities and young people to further their interests and create new and more varied support opportunities. Youth Workers will need to assure parents, and other agencies that their planned intervention and processes are transparent and comprehensible, and that all staff working with young people are appropriately background checked, trained and followed-up.

This applies to both paid and voluntary staff.

1.3 Responsibility to Colleagues

Youth Workers have responsibilities to their immediate Youth Service colleagues and to staff and volunteers in other agencies seeking to collaborate with the service to benefit young people. There are therefore professional responsibilities to:

- I. Belong to an appropriate professional association and respect its codes of conduct and policies;
- II. Treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith;
- III. Recognize colleague's professional achievements;
- IV. Act as a member of a team, sharing information and concerns and opportunities, and ensuring effective communications and prompt responses and mutual support;
- V. Observe confidentiality in respect of discussions with colleagues about their professional problems and difficulties;
- VI. To draw bad practice and shortfalls in professional practice to the attention of colleagues through the recognized professional channels for such discussions;
- VII. To assist the design and implementation of agreed monitoring and appraisal mechanisms;

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Part 3

- VIII. To seek to resolve differences and difficulties openly, swiftly and within the recognized professional channels of communication;
- IX. To uphold Health and Safety legislation and ensure that all potential risks and dangers are appropriately notified;
- X. Avoid sexual relationships with colleagues whilst acting in a leadership capacity;
- XI. To promote equality of access to in-service training opportunities.

This applies to both paid and voluntary staff.

1.4 Staff responsibility to Employers

a) Have responsibilities to:

- I. Uphold high Health and Safety standards;
- II. Maintain agreed employment rules and contractual obligations;
- III. Work accordingly to the volunteer/employment/ministry agreements (whichever is applicable);
- IV. Participate in the professional associations recognized by the employer for the purpose of bargaining and agreeing employment policies and practices;
- V. Upholding the Youth Service's interests;

- VI. Record transactions honestly on behalf of the Service;
- VII. To ensure the employer rather than the employee is signatory to key legal documents - insurances, leases, hiring agreements, etc.;
- VIII. Remain accountable to the employer for all work undertaken on their behalf and to report regularly to the employer on this work;

This applies to paid and voluntary staff.

1.5 Responsibility of Employers

Employing organizations will ensure that their responsible persons are:

- I. Implementing this Protocol and ensuring acceptable by staff;
- II. Implementing agreed Employment and Health and Safety legislation;
- III. Acting in accordance with the state law for youth workers.
- IV. Aware of the services and support materials available to them through their affiliates and in their field of ministry;