

Youth Work & Trauma-Informed Practice: 5 Overlapping Core Values



This factsheet was developed from Trauma Informed Practice: A Solution to Some of the Problems of Targeted Youth Work (2022) by Emma Bainborough and Jon Ord in *Youth & Policy*.

Both youth work and trauma-informed practice approaches require the practitioner to understand existing and historical trauma, and to recognize how these experiences may impact and influence a young person's wellbeing and development. **The core values of youth work and trauma-informed practice align and overlap in a variety of ways, and can ensure that services are empathic and empowering, recognizing that this work is always relational.**

Four Youth Work Practice Principles:

1

Treat youth with respect.

2

Respect the agency and autonomy youth have to make their own informed decisions.

3

Advocate for the safety and welfare of all young people.

4

Support the advancement of social justice for youth in communities.

These practice principles are the cornerstone of youth work – centering the young person and supporting them to find ethical solutions to the challenges in their lives.

Three Objectives of Youth Work Practice:

1

Holistic youth development.

2

Facilitation of youth’s prosocial, educational, and personal goals being met.

3

Empowerment through self-advocacy and the ability for youth to make their mark.

Youth workers ensure that programming is individualized, allowing youth to set their own pace and accepting that their participation is voluntary. Youth work is critical of power differentials, “responsive to people’s wider community and cultural identities,” and not heavily focused on outcomes or behaviour adjustment.

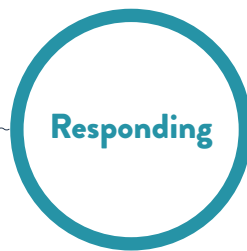
The 4Rs of Trauma-Informed Practice:



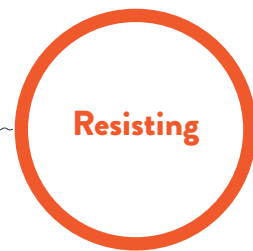
Realizing how prevalent trauma is and the barriers that exist to recovery.



Recognizing how trauma affects every aspect of life and how systems interact with that trauma.



Responding to trauma by using culturally relevant practices and policies and ensuring that all knowledge is relevant to the individual.



Resisting re-traumatization of youth and youth workers.

Trauma-informed practice is used to engage with trauma and not as a way to treat it.

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Safety

Safety: develop safe relationships that build confidence, resilience, and trust.



Person Centred

Person Centred: work with individuals and communities on their priorities, starting where they are at.



Kind

Kind: create connections and enhance wellbeing by avoiding judgement and being empathic and kind.



Collaborative

Collaborative: seek the most proportionate and least intrusive interventions, focusing on a fully coordinated, integrated, and compassionate response.



Empowering

Empowering: support healing and building resilience; in working with others, we become empowered to make a difference.