



Youth Work Ireland

Youth Work with Young Asylum Seekers

THE YOUTH WORK IRELAND SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY MODEL OF PRACTICE

This model describes a process of working with young people that is intended to have the following impact - 'Youth workers will develop the capacity to better support young people seeking asylum and will be familiar with the mechanisms and resources needed to achieve effective outcomes.'

- The model is not necessarily hierarchical, the work of youth workers at every stage has value in the lives of young people.
- The model describes the development of a youth work relationship with young people seeking asylum.
- As this is primarily a process of developing relationships all youth workers have the skills and experience necessary to work in the ways described below.
- As in any relationship, progress will ebb and flow with circumstances in the service, or the young person's life may move the relationship back to a previous stage, or leapfrog forward.
- For the same reasons, the entry point into the model may be at a later stage for some young people.

Using the model

Youth workers engage with young people seeking asylum at various stages – so the process of using this document maybe not be necessarily linear. Youth workers are encouraged to dip in and out of the toolkit as needed to support their practice, reflection and learning.

STAGE ONE: INITIATING CONTACT

At this stage the young person is likely not to be attending the youth service nor does the youth worker have a relationship with the young person or their family.

Youth workers know -	Youth workers work to -	Outcomes
<p>How youth work practice has prepared them to work with young people seeking asylum.</p> <p>The role of youth work in accessing and advocating for human rights and social justice.</p> <p>How to support young people in the context of a family.</p> <p>Basic policy and legislation knowledge relating to the asylum-seeking system in Ireland.</p>	<p>Initiate relationships and develop connections with Direct Provision Centres and other relevant local and national organisations.</p> <p>Connect with the young people and their families to begin to develop a mutual understanding of the role and benefits youth work can offer them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A connection has been established with the centre manager and other relevant agencies in the local community.• Youth worker has identified ways that are effective in engaging and connecting with young people and their families.• Youth worker has identified young people and has some initial indication of any unmet needs.• Young people know who you are and what your role as a youth worker is.• Young person and their family are open to voluntary engagement and participation in the youth service.

STAGE TWO: IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS, NEEDS AND BARRIERS

At this stage the youth worker is able to identify the strengths, needs and barriers to engaging with the young person and their family, and they in turn are beginning to trust the youth worker and understand the offer of youth work.



Youth workers know -	Youth workers work to -	Outcomes
<p>Tools to guide practice in an intercultural context.</p> <p>How to work with young people who have experienced trauma.</p>	<p>Understand the young person's knowledge of human rights and social justice.</p> <p>Identify and address barriers to the young person's progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth worker has a basic understanding of the young person's needs. • Young person and their family understand the offer of youth work and the boundaries. • Young people suffering from trauma are supported to access additional services if needed. • Young person is supported to understand how the protection system in Ireland works.

STAGE THREE: ESTABLISHING REGULAR CONTACT

Youth worker and young person establish an effective working relationship with regular connections and patterns of meetings.



Youth workers know -	Youth workers work to -	Outcomes
<p>How to reflect and be aware of their own conscious and unconscious bias.</p> <p>Theories and definitions of racism and how these impacts on young peoples' lives.</p>	<p>Use group work activities to build relationships, support integration, and break down boundaries through recreational and social activities in the youth centre and in the community.</p> <p>Engage young women in youth work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working alliance is established between the young person and worker with work taking place in a youth work setting. • As the bond and trust is strengthened, the young person is more open to the possibilities of change and growth that exist. • The young person's world is beginning to expand, and they are developing links with the community and have access to new supports and opportunities • Young person is becoming more resilient.

STAGE FOUR: OUTCOMES BEING REALISED

Outcomes are being realised as the young person works with the youth worker to achieve change and progress in their life.

Youth workers know -	Youth workers work to -	Outcomes
<p>How to support a young person in the process of leaving Direct Provision.</p> <p>General Principles of advocacy practices.</p>	<p>Develop an agreed plan of action with the young person.</p> <p>Support the young person in self and peer advocacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The young person has clarity about their rights and entitlements and so expectations and aspirations have evolved. • The young person has worked with the youth worker to develop a plan of action and is clear about the process of moving out of Direct Provision. • The young person has developed their own individual relationships in the community. • The young person is becoming empowered to advocate for themselves and their peers. • Peer support and solidarity is taking place.

This model of practice is designed to be used in conjunction with Youth Work Ireland online resource ‘Youth Work with Young People in Direct Provision and Young People Seeking Asylum’ which expands on this model and offers youth workers additional information, resources, activities and tools to enhance this work.

The resource can be downloaded at

www.youthworkireland.ie/youth-supports/young-refugees

