

DEVELOPING

Professional Relationships with Young People

Support and Learning Cards



FOCUS
learning



Erasmus+

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The material these cards are based on is from **FOCUS learning**, Chapter 2 - 'The Youth Worker and the Learning Environment'

THE YOUTH WORKER AS THE DEVELOPER OF

RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

This set of cards explores different perspectives in developing professional relationships with young people.

This process requires a lot of effort from the youth worker.

This building of purposeful relationships with young people is one of the cornerstones of youth work.

THE YOUTH WORKER

The traits a youth worker needs for building healthy relationships with young people should include...



...Authenticity and Integrity

The youth worker needs to be someone who...

- Walks the talk
- Avoids double standards
- Endeavours to be genuine
- Has and shows empathy
- Willingness to give time and energy to listening
- Willingness to give time and energy to being

THE RELATIONSHIP



**A good youth worker /
young person
relationship is about...**

- Travelling with the young person
- Dialogue
- Conversation
- Listening
- Challenging different behaviours
- Asking challenging questions

The building of the relationship requires...

...a holistic approach and an understanding of the young person's social context.

Building and developing a positive and supportive relationship...

...enables the young person to begin to guide how and what happens to themselves.

...influences and moulds the young person – for good and / or bad.

THE YOUTH WORKER

AND LISTENING¹

Good listening demands...

- Dialogue
- Active listening
- “speaking to listen”²
- Asking questions that invite a response
- Indicates to the young person that they have been and are being heard
- Listening “to things besides the words”³
- Being sensitive to non-verbal communication
- Understand how the young person expresses themselves
- Having awareness of their thoughts and feelings



¹ Tilsen, J. (2018), ^{2&3} Cooper, T. (2018).

THE YOUTH WORKER

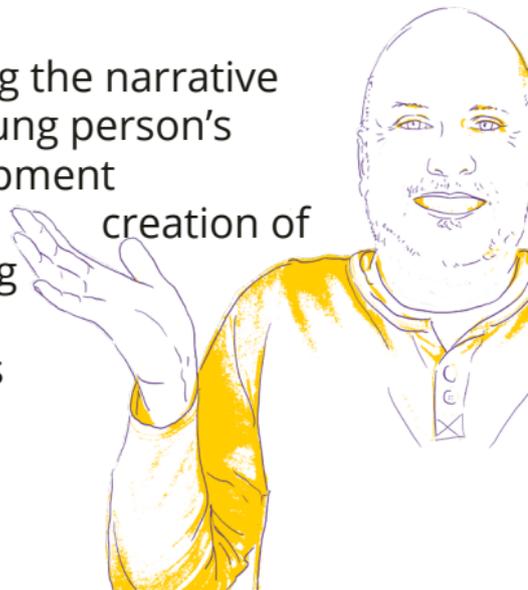
AND QUESTIONS

Good listening also demands good questioning competence...

- Understanding and knowing how to ask questions
- The desire and ability to develop this skill
- Asking the right questions
- Asking in the right way

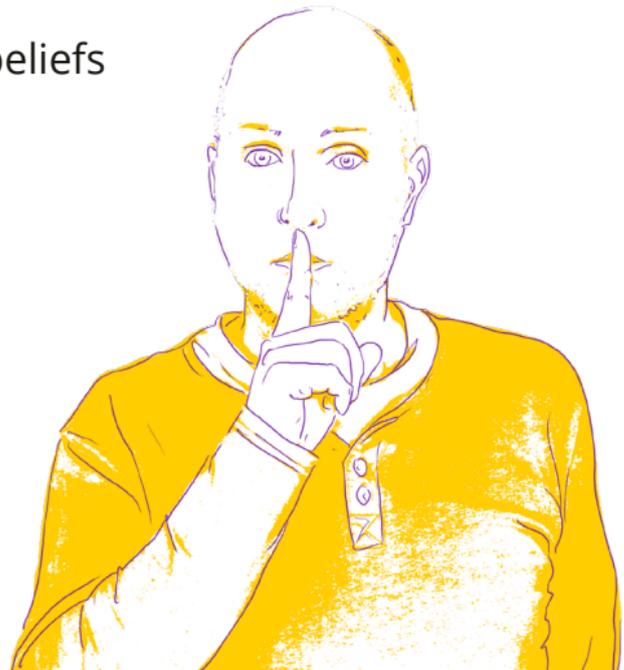
Asking questions supports...

- Creating the narrative
- The young person's development
- The creation of learning opportunities



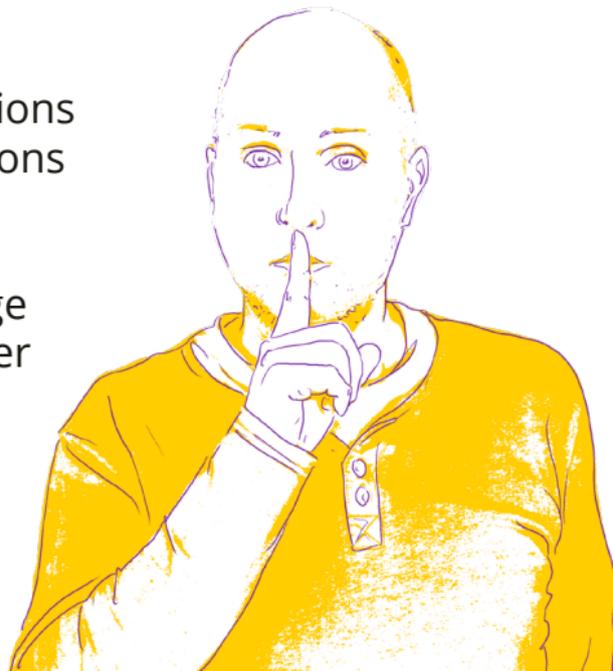
Trust allows the youth worker to...

...challenge the values and beliefs
of that young person
*(which may or may not include
prejudices and discrimination).*



Trust allows the young person to...

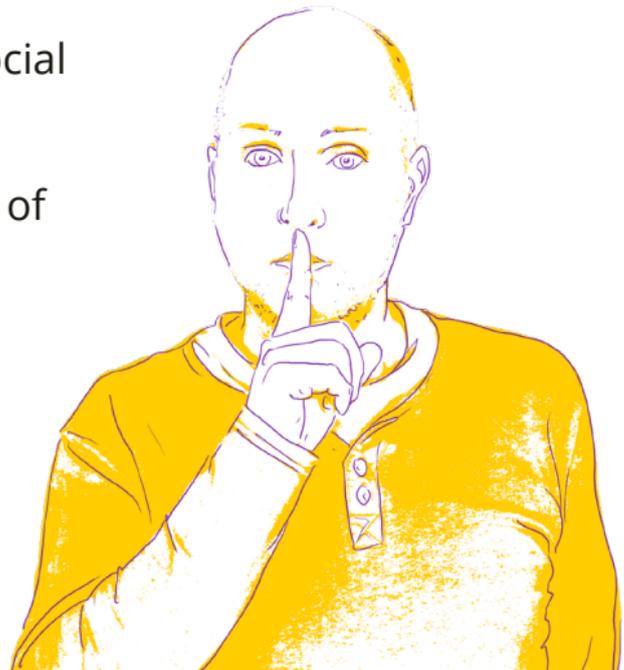
- Step out of their comfort zone
- Consider potentially difficult questions
- Consider potentially difficult decisions
- Try new things
- Gain new skills
- Take action with others to challenge issues that impact on them or wider society



Trust...

...Leads to their personal, social and political development

...Leads to the development of their learning



When young people come to trust the youth worker...

...they share different aspects of their lives.

...they may share aspects that have never been shared
with any adult before.

Each young person...

- ...is on their own specific and individual physical, mental, emotional and spiritual journey as an adolescent.
- ...is an individual with a specific and unique background.
- ...has specific cultural and societal influences.

THE RELATIONSHIP

YOUNG PEOPLE

Each young person is a part of many groups that influence their behaviours, attitudes, needs, thoughts, wants and emotions...

- High school or higher education class
- Family
- Youth organisation
- A leisure group
(sports, arts, cultural, religious)
- A neighbourhood
- Group of peers that hang out
- A community
- An identity group
(ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability / disability...)

YOUTH WORK PRACTICE AS A BACKGROUND

Good youth work...

...places young people and their interests first.

...is a relational practice.

...finds the youth workers operating alongside the young person in their context.

...is empowering practice.

...ensures the young person understands what it is they are engaging in.

THE RELATIONSHIP

YOUTH WORK PRACTICE AS A BACKGROUND

Good youth work...

...advocates for and facilitates a young person's:

- Independence
- Participation in society
- Connectedness
- Realisation of their rights.⁴

⁴Australian Youth Affairs Coalition. (2013).

New skills Social Context Genuine
Trust Political Challenging

Dialogue Advocates Integrity Sharing
Values Empathy

Enabling
Travelling
Decisions
Moulds

THE KEY WORDS OF
'BUILDING YOUTH WORK
RELATIONSHIPS'

Holistic Beliefs
Learning
Personal
Understanding

Development Authentic

Influences Purposeful Awareness
Empowering
Being heard
Listening
Cultural and societal influences Non-verbal communication

1.

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

What does the 'developer of relationships' mean to you?

As youth worker and 'developer of relationships' with young people, which of the cards from this pack would you like to focus on for your youth worker development over the next 6 months?

2.

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

1.

Order the cards from the easiest to the most difficult as you experience them in your practice, and reflect on why...

2.

Which cards represent your strengths at this time?

3.

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

What is the most difficult aspect of relationship building that you experience in your work?

How do you build trust with the young people you work with, is it a conscious effort or something that develops naturally?

1.

YOUR IDEAS

2.

YOUR IDEAS