

National Youth Settlement Framework

Applying Good Practice Capabilities



This resource has been developed as a supplement to MYAN's *National Youth Settlement Framework (NYSF)*, providing a detailed description of each of the NYSF good practice capabilities and how these are applied in practice. While it can be utilised as a standalone resource, it is best read alongside the NYSF, in particular Part 5: Facilitating active citizenship through good practice capabilities.

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Good practice capability	What does it mean?	What does it look like in practice?
<p>Cultural competence</p>	<p>Cultural competence recognises that cultural dislocation is a significant factor in the migration and settlement experience. It also recognises the fundamental role that culture and cultural identity play in a young person’s life, and the significance of negotiating cultural differences in the settlement process – both for young people and service providers.</p> <p>Cultural competence is not a point that is reached but something that individual workers and organisations work towards, continually improving and refining skills and knowledge. It involves understanding culture and how it impacts on our worldview and work practices with young people.</p> <p>Workers can assist young people by also building their capacity to think and talk about the significance and impact of culture in their lives, and the challenges of managing bi or multi-cultural identities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in cross-cultural professional development. • Sensitively explore meanings of culture with young people, and learn about their cultural background. This involves both educating yourself (‘doing your homework’), and sensitively exploring the unique way in which the young person experiences and perceives the role of culture in their life. Culture is complex and dynamic and is likely to vary among young people/families/communities. • Young people are your best cultural teachers. • Regularly review organisational and program policies, procedures and practices to ensure they are culturally inclusive and responsive. • Establish and maintain links and partnerships with organisations involved in the settlement of young people. • Provide an inclusive, multicultural and youth-friendly environment through visual representations of cultural and language diversity. • Engage same-culture workers and interpreters wherever needed and provide written information in young people’s first languages.

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<p>Youth-centred</p>	<p>A youth-centred approach to practice considers that young people are at the centre of all program decisions.</p> <p>Youth-centred practice understands a young person as the primary client, while also maintaining a family-aware approach in providing support.</p> <p>It recognises the specific rights, needs and circumstances of young people in the settlement context and the distinct ways that young people experience the settlement process – distinct from adults and young children.</p> <p>It recognises that young people need targeted support to best meet their needs and aspirations and access their rights to achieve their potential as active participants in their community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify young people’s particular needs - understanding these in the broader context of their family, culture and journey to Australia - and the way in which these needs shape their particular experience. • Respond to young people’s particular needs by developing youth-specific policies and programs. • Don’t assume that approaches and models designed for adults can simply be applied to meet a young person’s needs.

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<p>Strengths-based</p>	<p>A strengths-based approach to practice recognises that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds come to Australia with enormous strengths, resources and capabilities. These strengths and capabilities are fundamental to them becoming active participants in and contributors to Australian society.</p> <p>A strengths-based approach to practice in service delivery involves supporting young people to identify and utilise their strengths, resources and capabilities in navigating settlement and becoming active citizens in Australian society. It also involves affirming young people’s strengths in a range of aspects of their lives, across each of the domains of active citizenship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support young people to identify, use and build on their strengths and capabilities, including: cross-cultural knowledge and experience, bi/multi-lingual skills, pre-migration employment, higher education and employment aspirations, commitment to family and community and access to global networks. • Encourage young people to view challenges as capacity building opportunities, and provide respectful, supportive and non-judgemental support.
<p>Youth development</p>	<p>Youth development is a foundation of youth work that recognises the developmental stage of adolescence. It is commonly defined as a process which builds young people’s personal strengths that create positive attributes (competencies, knowledge, experiences, behaviours, and beliefs).</p> <p>‘Development’ is understood to allow for the growth of identity and sense of self in the world, supporting young people’s sense of belonging, connection and engagement in their communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and recognise the developmental stages that adolescents experience as they transition to adulthood. • Ensure youth development approaches promote personal development capabilities through age and culturally appropriate strategies. • Communicate with young people their rights and responsibilities. • Ensure that young people have a clear understanding of the goals and aims of your organisation and what (support) you can offer/how you can work together. • Provide mechanisms that support participation in decision-making by young people, e.g. ‘Not just ticking a box: Youth participation with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.’

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<p>Youth participation</p>	<p>A youth participation approach to practice promotes and supports the equal participation of young people in society. Youth participation is particularly important for organisations working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, as it recognises that the voices of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are often marginalised in policy, advocacy and service delivery.</p> <p>A youth participatory approach to practice supports young people to build and exercise agency and social capital and recognises the importance of relationships between workers and young people.</p> <p>It recognises young people’s right to participate in decision making that affects and shapes their lives and that this is commonly undervalued, misunderstood, or overlooked. Young people are often best placed to identify their needs and should be supported to identify and advocate for solutions.</p> <p>Meaningful youth participation is not just about opportunity; it is about seeing young people as partners and equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively participate and influence policy and service delivery models.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve young people as active participants (rather than just recipients) in the design, planning, development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs and services. This includes creating accessible environments to seek contributions, such as regular youth-friendly get-togethers, and providing timely feedback to young people about how their input was used. • Provide information and resources to support young people to better understand and navigate the service system, including: income support, health, legal, education, English language education, training, employment, sports and recreation. • Support and provide opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making that affects their lives. This could include personal decisions about education, employment or relationships, or informing the design, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs and service delivery. • Respect young people’s opinions and withhold judgement about their decisions or behaviour – they are valued, respected, active and contributing members of society now and in the future. • Ensure gender parity and implement strategies to ensure young women’s participation, as well as participation of diverse young people utilising services, including young people with disability and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

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<p>Trauma-informed</p>	<p>Trauma-informed practice recognises the trauma of the refugee experience and the significant ways in which it can impact on adolescence and the settlement experience for young people.</p> <p>Trauma-informed practice recognises the importance of core recovery goals as fundamental to supporting young people to manage and recover from trauma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build your understanding of the impact and manifestation of torture and trauma for young people and strategies for supporting young people who have experienced torture or trauma – seek training from FASSTT agencies. • Explore how your service/program can support core recovery goals. • Ensure that young people feel physically and emotionally safe, by providing a safe, welcoming environment, as well as ensuring predictability – service delivery should be consistent and uphold privacy and confidentiality. • Be aware that young people who are survivors of torture and/or trauma may need time to establish trust, and be proactive in seeking out opportunities to develop this with the young person and family. For example, this may include meeting practical needs (identified by the young person or family), and ensuring you follow through on what you say you will do. It may mean taking time to develop rapport - whether it be over a cup of tea, providing transportation or follow up phone calls.

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<p>Family-aware</p>	<p>Family-aware practice recognises the impact of the refugee and migration experience on families and the critical role that family plays in a young person's life – wherever they are located.</p> <p>Relationships with family and community often provide young people with a sense of belonging and support in negotiating difficult challenges and transitions, connection to shared values, culture and history, and play a key role in decision-making regarding a young person's choices. This is particularly important for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds given the impact of the migration experience and settlement on family configurations and relationships.</p> <p>Family-aware practice recognises, legitimises and facilitates connections with family as a core part of support/service delivery models.</p> <p>Family-aware practice acknowledges that for refugee and migrant young people, the concept of family may be broader and more complex than Western constructs or understandings, and that family commitments, expectations and responsibilities are often key priorities in a young person's life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build your understanding of the impact of the refugee and settlement experience on families, particularly the issue of intergenerational conflict. • Sensitively explore the role of family in young people's lives. • Build relationships with family members to assist them in understanding youth services, programs and the broader service system. This will also help to facilitate a young person's choices, goals or participation in programs. • Use professional interpreters when needed, being guided by the young person and family members as to what language they prefer to use in the case they are multilingual. Avoid using young people as interpreters in meetings with family as this will compound the power imbalance between young people and older family members. • Strengthen family relationships wherever possible and support family members to understand the common challenges and experiences of young people in the settlement journey. • When supporting young people's decision making, work on balancing both their desires and aspirations with those of their family members. Encourage decision making to take place in the context of family relationships where possible. • Undertake shared case management with family workers where appropriate. If family members have existing positive relationships with community or family workers, work together with these professionals where possible, to develop greater trust, collaboration and coordination. • Acknowledge that family-aware multicultural youth work practice can be complex and challenging - seek the support you need from your organisation, colleagues or professional mentors. • Organisations should provide supportive policies, procedures and practices for youth workers (such as regular supervision and case conferencing by experienced professionals). This will enable staff to navigate the complexity and sensitivity of family-aware multicultural youth work.

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<p>Flexible and responsive</p>	<p>Flexibility and responsiveness practice recognises that that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds have specific and often complex needs, but that this group of young people comprise numerous heterogeneous subgroups. It recognises that their circumstances and needs vary, and that culture, as well as the settlement context, is dynamic and complex. Needs and issues vary substantially between and within groups according to cultural and religious background, English language proficiency, level of acculturation to Australian society, level of family support, migration experience and socioeconomic and demographic factors such as age and gender. Flexible and responsive service delivery involves adapting service delivery models to be responsive to a young person's needs and circumstances, rather than applying a 'one size fits all' approach. This includes addressing specific barriers to accessing services and support, including those that are specific to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds – service unfamiliarity and complexity, language, culture, racism and discrimination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet young people at their point of need, as defined by them, and develop responses to meet their needs and achieve their aspirations with them. • Be flexible about where, when and how you deliver your services to ensure they best respond to the needs of young people - adjust service delivery approaches wherever possible and be prepared to work 'outside the square'. This could include working outside standard 'office hours', meeting young people in public places where they are comfortable, using sport and the arts to engage, and bringing services to them, rather than the other way round. • If programme funding criteria is restrictive, advocate with funding bodies for greater flexibility in order to meet the real needs of young people in the community. • Have adequate staff to young people ratios to ensure young people receive the attention they need and outcomes are sustained over time. • Engage people significant to the young person in service delivery where possible, ensuring you have gained a young person's consent to do so (such as involving family members in the planning of a recreation programme or camp). • Engage in planned, regular outreach in recognition that most young people are not familiar with services or their relevance to their lives. • Understand the demographics of your area – are there specific groups of young people missing from your service? (E.g. think about cultural groups, age groups and the participation of young men and women, as well as young people with disability and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+). Develop proactive strategies to engage with new or 'missing' cohorts of your community. • Consider a range of methods of engagement with young people (e.g. sport or arts-based programs, when culturally appropriate and accepted).

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<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Collaboration recognises the challenges that young people face in navigating a complex and unfamiliar service system and navigating and accessing services is enhanced through coordination and collaboration between services. It recognises that settlement outcomes are affected by the type, nature, range and quality of services and programs available to young people, and the extent to which these services are coordinated or linked.</p> <p>A collaborative approach to service delivery involves workers, programs and organisations investing in collaboration – seeking opportunities to work together. A collaborative service delivery approach also acknowledges the value in sharing resources, knowledge, expertise and networks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalist youth organisations should establish strong relationships with agencies and institutions that have extensive contact with new arrivals (such as language schools, multicultural youth specialist programs/services and settlement agencies). • Settlement organisations to develop strong networks with the broader youth and community sector, to ensure referral pathways and increase opportunities for participation. Council youth services have a particularly important role to play, given the consistent and local nature of their work. • Participate in diverse organisational partnerships to address service gaps, complexity, bureaucracy and fragmentation, e.g. network meetings that bring together workers across the health, education, employment, justice, recreation sectors. • Share information and expertise between services to encourage the pooling of knowledge and resources, rather than service duplication. • Encourage inter-agency training and staff support (e.g. mentoring) amongst organisations working with and for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

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<p>Advocacy</p>	<p>Engaging in individual and systemic advocacy recognises and responds to the range of individual and structural barriers that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds face in accessing the support they need. Advocacy involves engaging in both individual and systemic advocacy, as well as supporting young people to develop their skills, confidence and networks to engage in their own advocacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in individual advocacy on behalf of a young person to facilitate access to services or supports (e.g. interpreters, Centrelink, health care, legal advice, education, training, and employment). • Support young people to build their skills, knowledge, confidence and networks to self-advocate – both with individual services and systemically. This can occur on a one-to-one level, or by providing collective opportunities (e.g. leadership programmes). This will build young people’s agency and social capital. • Provide practical support to youth-led initiatives so that young people can be change-makers/leaders in positive social change. • Inform and resource service providers to better meet the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. This might include providing tailored advice (secondary consultations), training or resources to meet this need. • Identify service gaps and collaborate with other service providers to document and propose solutions to addressing these gaps. This might include partnering to seek funding for a project/program or raising issues with local or state government.

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<p>Reflective practice</p>	<p>In its simplest form, reflective practice is about thinking critically about your own effectiveness as a practitioner in order to: refine and develop your practice, enhance the quality of your work and ensure your practice results in the most effective outcomes for young people. It involves reflecting on what you did, the strategies you used (how), what happened and why. In doing so, it allows you to recognise what is working well and identify areas for improvement and further support.</p> <p>Reflective practice with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds requires the exploration of our own cultural values, assumptions, and perceptions and how they influence our work.</p> <p>Reflective practice is an ongoing process and, in an ongoing and systematic way, is essential to responsible professional practice. It also acknowledges the complexity of this work, the need to seek support and the importance of self-care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify tools to support reflective practice, including the NYSF and its supplementary guides, to use as an individual, in supervision or in team discussions. • Reflect on the way in which cultural assumptions, on both a personal and organisational level, shape your worldview and work practices with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. • Be honest about all aspects of practice including elements that are positive and those that are more challenging • Identify training and development as part of a cycle of continuous improvement. • Listen to and learn from others – young people, colleagues (in and outside your organization) and your supervisors. • Seek feedback from others, including young people. • Allow space and time to reflect on the personal impact of your work and prioritise self-care. • Engage in reflective practice as an ongoing process and not a ‘one-off’ activity.

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<p>Outcomes focused</p>	<p>Outcome measurement supports organisational reflection and improvement - crucial to improving the quality of service provision and settlement outcomes for young people and their communities.</p> <p>Firstly, it can help ensure that the service is not creating any unintended harm and secondly, determines whether the service is making a positive contribution.</p> <p>Though practitioners working with young people are usually required to undertake reporting to funders, executives, members or donors, organisations, they are not always asked to demonstrate the impact or outcomes they have achieved.</p> <p>Measuring outcomes creates an evidence base that helps organisations demonstrate the value of their service and the impact it has for clients and other key stakeholders. It should be considered an essential element of service provision.</p> <p>Effective outcome measurement builds an evidence base which can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep organisations accountable to young people and their communities; • Provide useful data for advocacy and policy-making; • Identify the efficiency with which organisations are using their resources; and • Identify program and service effectiveness and • Help secure ongoing funding or additional funding for new initiatives that build on previous work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how outcome measurement can be embedded or promoted within your own organisations. • Define your goals and objectives-be clear on what outcomes you want to achieve. • Incorporate indicators that matter most to young people in their settlement within monitoring and measuring frameworks. • Identify what data you will need to collect and find ways to hear from and/or collect regular feedback from young people on your practice, policies, programs and services, and outcomes that come from these for young people • Examples of data include surveys, interviews, and tailored client assessment tools, staff observations, government data etc. and feedback can be gathered through surveys, consultations or one on one conversations for example. • Regularly assess organisational policies, programs and service delivery, identifying gaps and challenges, as well as good practices. • Seek support/professional development on strategies for measuring outcomes

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<p>Rights-based</p>	<p>A rights-based approach recognises that young people are ‘...key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients of commodities and services.’</p> <p>Young people have rights and protections under domestic and international laws and international human rights treaties - e.g. under Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities legislation (state and Commonwealth). All young people have the right to be treated in a fair and appropriate manner, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC) provides a rights-based standard for those working with children and young people, including the right to information and the right to participate in decision making that affects them.</p> <p>A rights-based approach empowers young people to understand and exercise their rights. It increases the ability and accountability of individuals and organisations that are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of young people. A rights-based approach should be embedded in organisational policies and charters, as well as policy and service delivery models and approaches.</p> <p>A rights-based approach is particularly important in working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds as their rights (legal, civic, political, economic, social) are often undermined, unrecognised or exploited because of their age, ethnicity, cultural background, migration experience, visa/citizenship status. This includes experiences of racism and discrimination in the community and exploitation in the workplace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not assume that the rights of young people are always automatically upheld. Consider how your organisations/programs specifically uphold the rights of young people and explore ways of addressing any gaps. • Make explicit references to human rights in existing policy documents e.g. anti-discrimination policies. • Familiarise yourself with relevant international and domestic human rights frameworks, e.g. CROC (inc. Article 12 on the right to participate in decisions), the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Refugee Convention) and your state/territory equal opportunity commission and understand how these are relevant to your work. • Ensure that as a worker, you are informed of and understand a young person’s rights so you can support them to understand, enjoy, protect and strengthen their rights in a safe and informed way. E.g. linking a young person with Fair Work Australia to seek out information about employee rights and exploitation/discrimination in the workplace.