Module 11

Young People and Drugs Issues for Workers
Young People and Drugs Issues for Workers

Topic 1

Introduction
Learning outcomes

✓ When you have completed this module you will be able to:

- Develop and maintain professional boundaries when working with young people on AOD issues

- Maintain confidentiality when working with young people on AOD issues

- Work in an ethical manner with young people on AOD issues
Learning outcomes Cont…

- Ensure duty of care when working with young people on AOD issues
- Develop comprehensive case notes
- Outline appropriate supervision processes for work with clients
- Specify self-care strategies used to support work with clients
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Topic 2

Professional conduct
Professional conduct

Professional conduct involves workers behaving in ways which:

✓ comply with the law
✓ comply with the rules
✓ are in accordance with the Code of Ethics of their professional body
✓ are in the best interest of the client or young person
✓ if possible, involve the participation of the young person.
Developing and maintaining professional boundaries

- Trust
- Relationships which empower young people
- Limits
Conflicts of interest

✓ Interpersonal conflicts occur between individual workers. For example, when two workers are trying to make a decision about the best course of action for their client, or when workers disagree about the purpose and direction of their work.

✓ Interpersonal conflicts occur when your personal values conflict with the guidelines of the agency, or when some of your personal values conflict with others.
Professional conduct

Summary

- Problems can arise when the rights of an individual conflict with the rights of people in the wider community. For example, when you know that one young person is putting the health or safety of other young people at risk.

- Workers often develop close relationships with young people. It is important that you have a clear idea of ‘professional behaviour’ and do not abuse your position of power.
Summary

✔ Workers need to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries in their relationships with young people. You should not disclose unnecessary personal information and minimise physical contact as this can be misinterpreted by young people. Contact of a sexual nature is never appropriate.

✔ Conflicts of interest can occur when working with young people. The interests of young people sometimes need to be weighed against the interests of parents and the wider community.
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Topic 3

Worker values
The significance of values and attitudes

✓ Values are beliefs or assumptions about what is good and desirable for people.

✓ Each worker has a unique perspective on the world and has their own set of values. You bring to the workplace a whole range of life experiences that define who you are.

✓ It is neither possible nor desirable to separate yourself into a 'work' self and another 'social' or 'family' self. It is not psychologically healthy to alter your whole personality or to split your psyche into separate selves.

✓ Your identity is not fixed, but is constantly evolving as a result of your interactions with friends, family co-workers and clients.
Workers’ values

Being aware of your values and attitudes is important because it helps you to:

✓ identify why you are doing what you are doing

✓ identify what the consequences of your actions will be for yourself or for the young person or a colleague

✓ consider other or better options

✓ be more aware of the reasons for your responses to situations.
Summary

✓ We all have personal values and attitudes that can impact significantly on the way we work with young people

✓ Conflicts of interest are a normal part of human interactions and the key is to handle them in a professional, respectful way

✓ Reflecting upon your values and attitudes can assist you in developing strategies to manage your work with young people
Summary

- The nature of work with young AOD users can evoke emotional and personal responses.

- Developing strategies for managing those responses is critical both for yourself as a worker and for the quality and effectiveness of your work with young people.
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Topic 4

Professional ethics
Professional ethics

Ethical principles in youth and community work

✓ Respect for basic human rights

✓ Respect for the individual and right to self-determination

✓ Respect for different cultures and religions

✓ A commitment to empowerment and participatory democracy

✓ A commitment to collaborative working relationships and collective action.

✓ An acknowledgment that all relationships and with activities with young people are based on their consent.
The Code of Ethics for alcohol and other drug workers states that:

- Equity and access is important in service provision
- Services should be responsive to the individual's needs
- Services should be effective
- Services should be cost-efficient.
Summary

✓ A Code of Conduct deals with general standards of conduct. It acts as a set of guidelines or ground rules.

✓ To be effective, a Code of Conduct would need to address the needs and rights of young people, the needs and rights of workers and the needs and rights of the employer.
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Topic 5

Confidentiality
Confidentiality

Most case notes contain the same general information, which includes:

- personal details of the client (on a referral sheet/cover sheet)
- family history
- type of contact (e.g. did you phone the client, see the client at home, at a centre or in a formal counselling situation?)
- details of major issues
- action plans (detailing who is responsible for which action)
- arrangements for the next meeting.
Confidentiality

Summary

- Confidentiality requires that you ensure a client’s family and health history are kept in a secure and confidential manner.

- Case notes can be brief or lengthy. They contain a range of various information, depending on your organisation’s requirements.

- Young people are legally able to access case notes.

- Case notes need to be kept simple and relevant.

- You may be subpoenaed to court to explain your case notes. Hence they need to be accurate.
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Topic 6

Duty of care
Duty of care

There are several aspects to duty of care:

✓ Legal - What does the law suggest you do?

✓ Professional/ethical - What do other workers expect you to do?

✓ Organisational - What does your organisation, and its funding body, say you should do?

✓ Community - What do the parents of our clients and other community members expect you to do?

✓ Personal - What do your own beliefs and values suggest you do?
Duty of care

✓ ‘Duty of care’ requires workers to keep clients, themselves and other workers safe from harm, where possible

✓ Young people with AOD issues are particularly at risk and this can result in conflicts of interest for workers who must balance the rights of young people against the need to protect them from harm.

✓ A wide range of legislation impacts on the lives of young people and can vary from state to state.

✓ In most states, child protection legislation requires workers to report situations where children and young people are at risk.
Duty of care  Cont …

We can reasonably expect that workers will:

✓ act within the law

✓ have knowledge of workplace policies

✓ have the skills and training to work with young people

✓ have knowledge of legal and illicit drugs and their effects

✓ use their common sense.
The principle of duty of care is that you have an obligation to avoid acts or omissions, which could be reasonably foreseen to injure or harm other people.

This means that you must anticipate risks to your clients and take care to prevent them from coming to harm. Remember that harm encompasses both physical and emotional harm.
Duty of care Cont...

You need to balance the safety of the young person against other concerns such as:

- the safety of other people/your personal safety
- other rights of young people (e.g. the right to privacy)
- the aims of the service (e.g. to empower young people)
- the limits of your organisation (e.g. money and other resources).
Duty of care Cont…

✓ Supervision is an important part of taking care of yourself and should be an ongoing process.

✓ Supervision can be provided by managers (in-house), by external providers (usually on a contract basis), or by peers (in a team supervision situation).

✓ Supervision provides a learning opportunity by allowing you time to reflect on your work and develop your professional skills.
Duty of care Cont...

Summary

✓ 'Duty of care' requires workers to keep clients, themselves and other workers safe from harm, where possible

✓ Young people with AOD issues are particularly at risk and this can result in conflicts of interest for workers who must balance the rights of young people against the need to protect them from harm

✓ A wide range of legislation impacts on the lives of young people and can vary from state to state.

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Topic 7

Supervision
Negotiating and maintaining effective supervision

The supervision process provides you with the opportunity to:

✓ reflect and discuss challenging and confronting aspects of your work

✓ reflect on things that you have done well and work out ways of dealing with situations more effectively

✓ discuss situations with clients where you feel you are ‘stuck’ (whilst maintaining confidentiality, of course!)

✓ explore any issues arising out of their work role that need addressing
Negotiating and maintaining effective supervision Cont …

- Supervision can be provided by managers, by external providers or by peers

- Supervision provides a learning opportunity by allowing you to reflect on your work and develop your professional skills
Identifying support networks

Summary

 ✓ Working with young people can be demanding and workers need to develop support networks, including workplace supervision

 ✓ Supervision should be regarded as a right and provides an opportunity to debrief and to develop strategies for dealing with issues

 ✓ Supervision is more effective when it is planned and when the worker has set clear goals for the session