



Getting Started with Detached Youth Work

Training Handout for Manna Youth Training, 7th July 2020

****This training offers guidance and advice for starting Detached Youth Work, however, it is essential that you confirm your organisation has policies and insurance requirements had are adequate and appropriate for the work.****

This training includes:

- Defining Detached Youth Work
- Preparing & Equipping for Detached Youth Work
- Staying safe and keeping young people safe
- Making 'First Contact'
- Moving beyond 'outreach'

Defining Detached Youth Work

Detached Youth Work is so called as it takes place outside of a centre, club or location that young people choose to be connected to. Like all youth work, detached youth work seeks to bring about informal and social education for young people based on the needs assess by the youth worker.

Detached Youth Workers meet young people in the place of their choosing, seeking to bring the youth work engagement to them. This could be parks, car parks, high streets, shopping centres, cafes etc.

Similarities to other forms of Youth Work

Work which shares similar engagement traits with Detached Youth includes:

- 'Outreach Youth Work' – engaging young people in their location with the express objective of drawing them into an established youth work setting – e.g. a youth club
- 'Mobile Youth Work' – using a vehicle or mobile equipment to run a programme within a community. In this setting it could be argued that due to the ownership of vehicle/equipment, this is a centre-based provision due to the expected rules of engagement.

In a Nutshell ...

Detached Youth Work is planned, intentional Youth Work which takes place where young people choose to be, rather than where you (or anyone else) wants young people to be

The Purpose of Detached Youth Work

Purpose from Theory

- To make contact with and engage young people in a place of their choosing
 - To deliver planned programmes of personal and social education based on the assessed needs of young people engaged and with their involvement
 - To build effective and meaningful relationships with young people based on continuity of contact, mutual trust, respect and agreed boundaries
 - To identify and respond to individual needs
 - To empower and equip young people to live full lives, encouraging them to make positive decisions and informed choices
 - To enable young people to gain a voice and influence in society
- (adapted from Burgess & Burgess, 2006, Don't Shoot, I'm a Detached Youth Worker)

Original:

- to make contact and be available to young people in the settings of their choosing;
- to work with young people through programmes of personal and social education, which help them gain knowledge and recognise new opportunities in the world around them;
- to build effective and meaningful relationships with young people through regular contact, mutual trust, respect and understanding;
- to identify and respond to the needs and agendas of individuals and groups of young people by developing appropriate strategies for action which are both educational and fun;
- to support and challenge young people's attitudes and action towards issues such as unemployment, drugs, poverty, racism, sexism, disability, health, sexuality, criminality, peer, parental and community pressure;
- to enable young people to take more control over their lives and create experiences with them which enable them to make informed choices;
- to support appropriate action that young people take resulting from their own ideas and suggestions;
- to bridge the gaps in understanding between the local community and young people; and to highlight issues affecting young people and act as advocates for and with them within the wider community and world.

The Nature of Detached Youth work

Whilst Detached Youth Work holds the same aims as all youth work – the personal and social development of young people – due to its detached nature, its engagements with young people will have a different 'flavour'.

Detached Youth Work regularly addresses issues such as:

- Social exclusion and disengagement from education, employment, or society
- Criminal Behaviours and Gangs
- Risky behaviours including substance misuse, poor sexual health, exploitation, anti-social behaviour
- Community Development – specifically the development of support and facilities for young people, filling 'gaps' in provision

Since Detached Youth Workers are not operating from a building or activity over which they have power and control young people are under no obligation to participate or follow any rules that the workers may feel they want to hold. Therefore, the relationship between youth worker and young people is entirely voluntary and everything is always up for negotiation.

Preparing for Detached Youth Work

Reconnaissance is an essential part of detached youth work. This is an intentional and planned intervention into our communities and as such there should be evidence of why you're doing what you're doing allowing you to set your objectives and purposes out clearly.

Find out:

- Where young people hang out
- Where local shops are (and whether they have issues)
- What other youth provisions there are (e.g. Youth Clubs etc.)
- What crime (especially youth crime and ASB) is like in the area
- What the latest local news is
- Who else might be working in the area

Networks:

- Inform local police and local council that you are undertaking this work - COVID 19, obtain Key Worker Status
- Introduce yourself to local shop keepers, door staff etc.
- Connect with other youth work agencies
- Join Social Media groups for the area

Preparation

- Walk the area and become familiar with the local community
- Be mindful of how you feel - 'Am I comfortable here?', 'Why/Why Not?', 'What could change that?'
- Ask young people you already know about the area
- Think about routes, locations etc. and their potential risks - e.g. lighting

Equipping

We're not just going out for a stroll, this is intentional work and we have responsibilities to our team, young people and the wider community. So there are some essentials to take with us.

What's in the Bag? List:

- First Aid Kit**
- ID**
- Mobile Phone (Charged)**
- PPE & Hand Sanitiser**
- Contact Cards for young people to get in touch later (if appropriate)
- Information Leaflets (mental health, sexual health, drugs etc.)
- Activity Equipment

** = Essential Items

Making First Contact

Knowing your place!

- Be open with young people - introduce yourself
- Tell young people what you're doing in the area
- Be prepared to be ignored or challenged by young people
- Don't 'sneak up' on young people - be obvious
- Don't outstay your welcome
- Reflect on more challenging groups and get creative

Staying Safe

- Always work with a minimum of 2 people - and stay together
- Always carry your ID Badge
- Undertake a full risk assessment
- Carry a first aid kit
- Plan your routes - consider 'logging in' with a third party
- Ensure your phone is fully charged
- Be clear about your purpose and what you want to achieve
- Dress appropriately

Keeping Young People Safe

- Refresh your safeguarding training
- Know your safeguarding policy well
- Consider storing the Family Operations Hub number in your phone
- Carry a first aid kit
- Be nosy if you suspect a young people may be at risk
- Think carefully about the activities you undertake and what young people doing
- Constantly reflect on what additional training you might need

Going Beyond Outreach

This is young people's space – how are you going to bring informal education and development to that space?

- Negotiated activities
- Planned interventions
- Young people gaining a voice and influence
- Development of services

"In working with young people, do not try to call them back to where they were, and do not try to call them to where you are, as beautiful as that place may seem to you. You must have the courage to go with them to a place that neither you nor they have ever been before". Vincent Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered, 1982

Theological Reflection

Incarnational Youth Work – Jesus is the Ultimate Detached Youth Worker

- Comes to earth to meet with us
- Accepts us as we are in grace and humility
- Gives us the choice to have relationship with Him
- Works with us to renew, redeem and restore our world

References and Useful Links:

- Youth Work Support – Practical Support and Advice for Youth Workers during COVID-19 situation. <https://youthworksupport.co.uk/>
- Direct link to National Youth Agency Intro to Detached Youth Work Mini-Course (eLearning) - https://youthworksupport.co.uk/detached-youth-work-course/story_html5.html
- Recent Guidance for Detached Youth Work from NYA and Federation of Detached Youth Work - <https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Detached-Guidance-full.pdf>
- Youtube link to full film from clips - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psiThrTitvM>
- Federation of Detached Youth Work Resources - <https://www.fdyw.org.uk/resources>
- Craig Pinkney Resource Site - <https://craigpinkney.com/>

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