

Knowing the Facts

for Military Families



Youth Workers' Professional Development: The Importance of Youth Development Certificate Programs

Promoting positive youth development of all young people is an important task of civilian and military communities. This task is shared by not only youth's families, but also non-parental adults who interact with youth in youth programs such as sports leagues and religious groups. Those adults, often referred to as youth workers, support the healthy and adaptive development of the young people with whom they work.

Youth programs exist in communities for many reasons, including providing a safe place and offering opportunities to learn new skills and a place to have fun. Youth programs use a variety of models and target differing goals. Some of these programs have been developed using a positive youth development models that emphasizes developing positive traits and assets across multiple domains.

Elements of Quality Youth Programs



Youth Outcomes in the Context of Youth Programs

In order for a youth program to be categorized as “high quality” it must be able to produce positive youth outcomes. Research supports youth outcomes that include:



Socio-emotional well-being



Academic outcomes



Positive peer and non-parental adult relationships



Positive behavioral outcomes

Youth Workers’ Skills and Knowledge

Youth workers are expected to obtain certain knowledge and skills to excel in their roles and responsibilities in youth programs, such as the ability to:

- Build positive relationships between youth and community
- Maintain a safe environment both emotionally and physically
- Execute curriculum activities
- Recognize normative and non-normative behavior
- Communicate effectively
- Conflict Resolution

Youth Workers’ Professional Development

Professional development is imperative for the success of youth workers and youth program outcomes. Certificate programs have emerged as a new standard in the professional development of youth workers as they tend to provide more comprehensive training than individual workshops or trainings.

Characteristics of High-Quality Youth Development Certificate Programs



Education and training materials based on empirical research



Assessments of youth workers’ competency



Portability of education and training materials



On-going evaluation of certificate program



Clear training objectives

To read the full Research Report on this subject visit:

<https://reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu/research/document/10717>

