

RAP RAISING AWARENESS ON POWER, EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN YOUTH



WORKBOOK



Diplomatic Council
The Global Think Tank



anefore



**Co-funded by
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Table of contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	4
2.	TRUST	5
1.1	Trust as a consequence of deconstructing the roles of power	5
1.2	Practice: Building Trust Through The Deconstruction Of Power Roles	7
3.	COMMUNICATION	10
2.1	Communication and Power Dynamics	10
2.2	Practice: Reflecting Upon Your Own Communication Style	12
4.	ATTENTION TO LANGUAGE	14
4.1	Language as tool for power	14
4.2	Practice: Empowering Language Through Externalisation	16
5.	RESPONSIBILITY	18
5.1	Responsibility and Personal agency	18
5.2	Practice: Developing Personal Agency For Responsible Actions	19
6.	CONSISTENCY	22
6.1	Consistency to values	23
6.2	Practice: Creating the Compass of Your Values	24
7.	LISTENING	26
7.1	Double Listening and Curiosity	26
7.2	Practice: Capturing the sub-stories in dominant narratives	28
8.	SAFE ENVIRONMENT	30
8.1	Deconstructing power in youth work environments	30
8.2	Practice: Cultivating A Safe Environment Through New Narratives About Power	32
9.	REFLECTING ON THE ROLES	34
9.1	Reflecting on supporting stances	34

9.2	Practice: Reflecting On Power Roles With Positioning Maps	36
10.	COLLABORATION	39
10.1	Collaboration as a two-way teaching and learning process	40
10.2	Practice: Nurturing collaboration through a two-way teaching and learning process	41

1.INTRODUCTION

RAP (Raising Awareness of Power) highlights the subject of power dynamics in youth work, helping and supporting relationships and the good use of non-oppressive empowerment and accountability practices with the aim of helping professionals to manage this issue of power dynamics.

We can define "Power Dynamics" as an aspect of every relationship. "Power" can be defined as the capacity to somehow affect the world. Should this impact be good or bad, it can be re-examined.

As Foucault (1978) states, power is everywhere. It becomes diffused throughout the whole network of social relationships with each one a potential source of domination and subordination, established and confirmed in the method of discourse and language.

Power can be used in different ways. It can be used to oppress or to empower people and this can happen at personal, cultural and professional levels.

If power is everywhere, we should also see how the youth workers themselves apply their power and if and how they apply oppressive practices towards their young clients. A youth worker, since he/she is considered as an expert, has a great impact on a young client. There may be an imbalance of power in the relationship because the youth workers are considered to be experts. So, we at RAP, aim to help youth workers reflect on the type of impact they have on youth.

Youth workers need to have instruments and tools that help them reflect upon their own power and how they use it in working with young people. They need to reflect on their social background, their personal and professional experience and the impact that this will have on their involvement with their clients.

Youth work is widely recognised as a "caring" profession, but services that work for one person may not work for another or reflect the sensitivity required to work with another. There may be a "care vs control" issue. Where there is care, there is responsibility because of the youth worker's role as a "professional", "expert" and "adult". Where there is responsibility, there is control and power which can lead to exclusions (Humphries, 2004). Thus, through their work, professionals may cause a form of oppression by maintaining discrimination and inequality within their young clients, most of times without even being aware of acting like "dividing practitioners" (Foucault, 2000).

By training youth workers to reflect upon their position of power, RAP Workbook contents, materials and processes help them to establish accountable relationships with their young clients where the youth worker is clear about his role in the power structure, what the scope of the mandate is and what mutual obligations flow from the relationship. This, in turn, invites young people to become active members of the relationship and consequently enhances their personal responsibility and promotes their personal autonomy.

2. TRUST



Trust means a firm belief in the truth or ability of someone or something. It can be defined as the glue that holds relationships together. It is what makes people feel safe and comfortable with others. It has to be reciprocal and earned. In the context of youth work, trust is especially important between youth workers and young people.

Thinking of trust as the structure of a bridge between two people, if there is trust in any kind of relationship, they will act in the best interest of each other from the heart. Trust helps people to open up, share their thoughts and feelings, and rely on each other for support.

For youth workers, building trust with young people is essential. It means being honest, reliable, and respectful. It should be about listening to young people without judgement, understanding their experiences, and being there for them when they need guidance or help.

Trust does not happen overnight. It takes time and effort to develop, and it can be fragile. One small betrayal or broken promise can damage it and take a long time to repair.

If trust is strong and reciprocal, it can have powerful effects. It creates a positive and supportive environment where people feel valued and empowered, allowing them to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and grow into positive, optimistic, confident, and independent individuals.

Therefore, trust is the foundation of any meaningful relationship. It is what allows us to connect with others, build bonds, and make a positive difference in each other's lives.

1.1 Trust as a consequence of deconstructing the roles of power

We now introduce you to a practice that might not be so familiar to you: “Deconstruction”. In this workbook, deconstruction is defined as the practice of interrogating a theory, a methodology or a discipline and asking how it establishes its legitimacy and authority.

So, deconstructing the role of power in the context of youth work means asking questions like:

- *Why does the youth worker have more power than the young client?*
- *According to what criteria?*
- *Who established it?*
- *What type of power does the youth worker have?*
- *What type of power does the young client have?*
- *How does the youth worker's role of power impact the relationship with the young clients?*
- *How does the young client's role of power impact the relationship with the youth worker?*
- *Is the youth worker aware of their role of power towards the young client?*
- *Is the young client aware of the role of youth worker?*



These are just examples of questions that help us take a first step in the practice of deconstructing the role of power in youth work. However, there is another question that we believe to be of utter importance:

- *How can a youth worker exploit his/her role of power to effectively help and support young clients?*

Because the main point of this workbook is that “Power” is not a bad thing. It is not a good thing, either. Power is power and is “good” or “bad” depending on how it is used.

As a youth worker, you can use your power in different ways. Sometimes you need to highlight your authority and expertise and show yourself as the representative of the “adult world” who teaches young people good practices to face a problem or to simply manage their everyday lives.

In these situations, you need to be directive and give suggestions, indications, or interpretations that may help the young client gain new perspectives about themselves, their relationships, and their lives.

Maybe, in these situations, you are more focused on the theoretical and practical approaches you have learned in your professional training, as they provide you with a useful lens to “read” your clients’ behaviour and attitude.

Sometimes, however, you need to be less focused on your theoretical approach and let your client tell their stories, leaving practices of interpretations, suggestions, and indications behind. Sometimes, you need to be less directive and more eager to listen to young people’s ideas, desires and needs.

When we adopt the former stance, the gap of power between us and our young clients is wider. We exploit our authority and expertise with the aim of supporting them in getting through their personal and relational issues.

The downside of this stance is that we consider ourselves “bringers of truth”; in other words, we start to believe that, since we are experts in particular approaches and models in youth work, we say the truth about our clients.

But these models are just what they are: models, theories, and approaches. Simplified representations of reality. They do not speak the truth; they provide explanations that can be useful to us as guidelines for our work.

When we adopt the latter stance, the gap of power between us and our young clients is narrower. When we give them the space to tell their stories, we give them the possibility to express their point of view. The downside of this stance is that we can be seen as “friends” and not as “professionals”. Young people might not respect our role and our work might not be effective and supportive of them.

We are sure you usually adopt both stances. Sometimes you are more authoritative, and sometimes you are less. But what we want to bring your attention to is that, when you adopt a less directive stance, you acknowledge your clients’ power. You give them the opportunity to express their power by giving them the space to tell their narratives and share their thoughts and reflections. If you ask them questions like:

- *How would you face this issue?*
- *What solutions can you identify?*
- *What are your thoughts?*
- *Etc.*

You also give them the space to reflect on their skills, abilities, and resources.

So, we believe it is fundamental that youth workers continuously vary their approach, oscillating between a more and a less directive stance, depending on the context and the situations they are

working in. In order to do that, we need to be aware of our role of power so we can exploit it according to what we believe is useful for our young clients.

Sometimes it is useful to impose our power over them and sometimes it is useful to let them express theirs. In this way, our young clients can more easily trust us. They know that we have power—that we have expertise, knowledge, and authority.

But they also know that we respect their story and we want them to show their power because we trust them as we believe they are able to be active agents of their lives.

1.2 Practice: Building Trust Through The Deconstruction Of Power Roles

The “deconstruction of power role” is a practice that encourages youth workers to carefully examine how the concept of power manifests itself in their interactions with clients. Essentially, it is about questioning and deeply understanding how power operates in the context of youth work to foster more balanced, conscious and empathetic relationships between professionals and the young people they work with. This process includes a critical analysis of how power is distributed and recognised within the relationship, how this power impacts interaction dynamics, and whether it is consciously used for the benefit of young clients.



Above all, it helps you understand how the deconstruction of power can help cement mutual trust between youth workers and young clients and create a working environment that allows you to make shared choices capable of improving the quality of services and overall results.

We at RAP propose that you examine the imaginary situation below and follow the guided reflection regarding the management of authority and competence, the impact of your suggestions and directions and the support of the client's autonomy during the narration of their story.

Imagine you are a young consultant at a consulting firm. You have been assigned the case of a young client who is facing difficulties managing the team and improving performance. During a session with the client, you need to help them deal with the situation.

Authority and competence management refers to the way professionals use and embody their power and knowledge in the context of work. This means not only understanding and applying the professional skills acquired through training and experience but also being aware of the role of authority this confers. Then ask yourself the following questions:

- *How can I use my authority and expertise to lead the consulting meeting?*
- *How can I maintain a balance between guiding the process and allowing the clients to express their opinions?*
- *How can I manage power and authority in a balanced and anti-oppressive way?*

Now try to also pay attention to the impact of your suggestions and indications. Carefully consider how your words and actions may affect the situation and the relationship with the client.

Consider:

- *How can my suggestions and indications potentially influence the client's perception of our relationship and their confidence in my guidance?*
- *How can I ensure that I consider and integrate the client's experiences and knowledge into the decision-making process?*

- *How can I balance encouraging the client to consider alternative perspectives with my professional vision?*

Another important element to analyse is autonomy support which aims to promote the clients' independence and self-determination, allowing them to make informed decisions and act according to their own abilities, resources and desires.

Consider:

- *How can I show empathy towards the client's difficulties and problems without focusing exclusively on transmitting my knowledge?*
- *How can I support the client in making autonomous and informed decisions?*
- *How can I leave enough space for the client to explore his/her own solutions and strategies?*

Adopting an approach that makes room for the client to tell their story can help build trust between the youth worker and the client. When the youth workers use their authority and expertise in a responsible, open and respectful way, they demonstrate to the client that they can rely on their guidance and support. This, in turn, improves the professional relationship. Deconstructing power and your position as a "bringer of truth", finally take some time to reflect on the trust between you and the client based on the following questions:

- *How can I build trust during the consulting meeting?*
- *How can respect and acceptance of different perspectives help consolidate mutual trust?*
- *How can I improve my ability to build and maintain trust with clients?*

You can stop the practice here by analyzing your individual responses and thinking more deeply about the why of your responses. But the practice becomes more enriching if you share/compare answers with others. You can do this on two levels, with your peers (i.e., other youth workers) and with your beneficiaries.

If done with colleagues, the other person or people consider the same imaginary situation, reflect on the same questions, and share the answers.

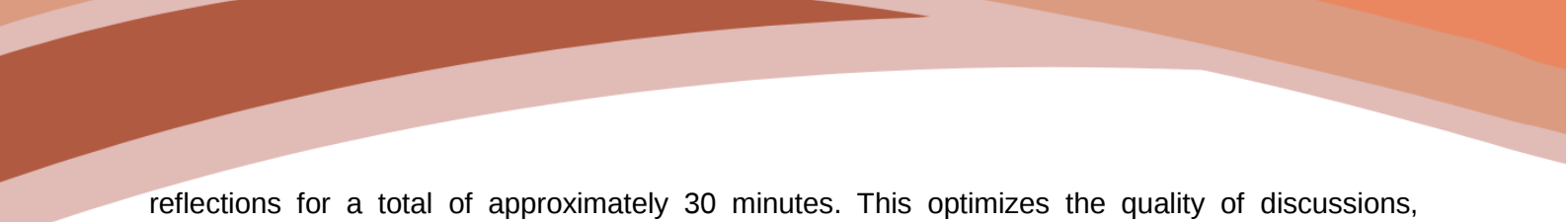
If done with your beneficiaries or clients, propose the following imaginary situation to them, which allows you to reflect further thanks to the perspective provided by clients:

Imagine you are a young client at a consulting firm. You have difficulty managing your team and improving performance. I am the consultant who will help you deal with this situation during a session.

Then ask them the following questions:

- *How would you prefer me to use my experience to guide you in improving your team's performance?*
- *When you work with me, what would make you feel more listened to and respected in the decision-making process?*
- *What behaviors on my part would make you feel more supported in exploring new perspectives and solutions to challenges?*
- *How can listening and respecting your perspectives help consolidate mutual trust and achieve more satisfactory results?*

In both cases you can do this on an individual level or in a group context. If done in a group context, we recommend addressing 3-4 people who will take turns sharing with you, one at a time, their



reflections for a total of approximately 30 minutes. This optimizes the quality of discussions, maintains high attention and energy, promotes inclusiveness, and ensures that time is used productively and efficiently.

At the end of the practice, whether carried out with your colleagues or with the beneficiary/client, at an individual or group level, you jointly analyze:

- *How has the process of deconstructing power contributed to improving mutual trust?*
- *What are the concrete strategies we have learned to deconstruct power?*
- *How can we use what we have learned from this experience in our future professional interactions?*

3. Communication



What do we mean by Communication? It can be interpreted artistically, literarily, or scientifically. It means to work in conjunction with another or others. It means teamwork, interaction, and a willingness to work with others to help create a partnership. It can be positive or negative; it can be political. Communication is the basis of human relationships, and without it, little would be accomplished.

There is no doubt that the internet and social media have created a vast platform of communication. It “should be an environment rich in humanity, a network not of wires but of people” (Pope Francis, 2014). This underlines the value of interaction, understood as dialogue and as an opportunity to meet with others. This would be positive communication.

In youth work, communication can create a joint partnership between the professional and the young people. Communication brings about a constructive exchange of information. It is a form of education that encourages cooperation, ideas, and discussion with the group or with individuals and can lead to the most interesting concepts and assignments. It encourages the willing engagement of the young people in the creation of their plan, carried through and completed by themselves.

Communication teaches each person to see the point of view of others. This is important in a group in order to have dialogue and not argument and strife.

In a group event, good communication among leaders, youth workers, and young people is essential. After discussions and an exchange of information and ideas, the result is unity, understanding, satisfaction, and enjoyment. We need these qualities badly today to foster a more positive attitude for all social groups.

2.1 Communication and Power Dynamics

Communication and Power Dynamics are deeply intertwined in at least two ways.

First, the way we communicate, verbally and non-verbally, expresses our role of power towards our interlocutor.

In youth work, the use of technical jargon expresses our expertise, and this contributes to creating a power gap in the relationship with young clients.

On the other hand, the use of a more colloquial language may contribute to diminishing such a gap.



Keep in mind: We are not telling you that the right thing to do is to put the technical jargon and/or the authoritative language aside and adopt a more informal language. You need to consider the contexts and evaluate the situations you are in.

Sometimes more authoritative language is needed, and sometimes it is better to use a more informal language—youth slang, even!

The same argument can be applied to nonverbal communication. Our tone, our gestures, our proxemics, and even our style of clothing communicate how we handle relationships with our young clients.

So, our suggestion is to pay more attention to your nonverbal communication and use it in a way that is consistent with your goals in relationships.

- *What do you want to communicate to your young clients by using that specific language/set of words?*
- *What do you want to communicate to your young clients by dressing in that specific way?*
- *And by using that specific tone?*
- *And by using that specific gesture?*
- *Are your set of words/clothes/tones/gestures/proxemics consistent with the role and the power you want to show and express to your young clients?*
- *Is your verbal and/or nonverbal communication consistent with the values you want to express in your work?*

These are some examples of guiding questions to help you start self-reflecting and enhance your awareness about how you use verbal and nonverbal communication with young clients.

Second, communication can be used to empower our young clients.

One idea informing this workbook is that language shapes our reality.

That is, the way we describe and narrate our lives defines how we experience ourselves, our relationships, and all the dimensions of our lives.

We are usually very good at describing our problems in great detail.

We are usually really experts in our problem stories. We pay great attention to the causes of our problems, and we can also describe how these problems affect our lives in great detail. It has been often said that if we talk about problems, we can have power over them; the more we know about our problem, the more we can control them.

Steve De Shazer, one of the creators of the Solution-Focused Approach, says that “Problem talk creates problems and solution talk creates solutions”. In other words, talking about what does not work all the time might not be that useful, as we pay a lot of attention to the problems. That is, we give a lot of power to the problems.

We also need to pay attention to what works in our lives: our desires, our skills, our abilities, our assets, and our resources. Following the Solution-Focused Approach framework, the following table proposes a difference in communication between problem talk and solution talk:

Problem Talk	Solution Talk
- Looks at what clients are doing "wrong." - Emphasises what clients do not want. - Interested in "why" the problem happens (e.g., what "causes" & "maintains" the problem).	- Looks at what clients are doing "right". - Emphasises what clients do want. - Highlights what is already being done well. - Seeks to accentuate positive client strengths - Interested in "when" the problem does not happen (e.g., exceptions to the problem)

So, what you can do is not only explore with your young client what does not work in their lives, but what works as well:

- *Can you tell me three personal skills of yours that you believe could help you face this problem?*
- *Can you name three social skills that help you in your relationships?*
- *Can you tell me about a moment in your life when you think you had some sort of success? Where were you? When did this situation happen? What actions did you take? Who was with you?*

These are just examples of questions you can ask that will help your young client explore what works in their lives and try to experience a more solution oriented attitude.

2.2 Practice: Reflecting Upon Your Own Communication Style

Planet of Communication: This practice is centred around understanding the importance of communication and exploration of different communication tools and strategies.

It supports you in gaining more awareness and understanding better your own communication styles and habits and how these influence and impact your work with youth.

Think about the following:

- Which communication tool do you feel more comfortable with?
- Which communication tool do you feel less comfortable with?
- What is the most interesting experience you have had when communicating with youth? - What communication tool was employed?
- How can you make communication more effective with young people?

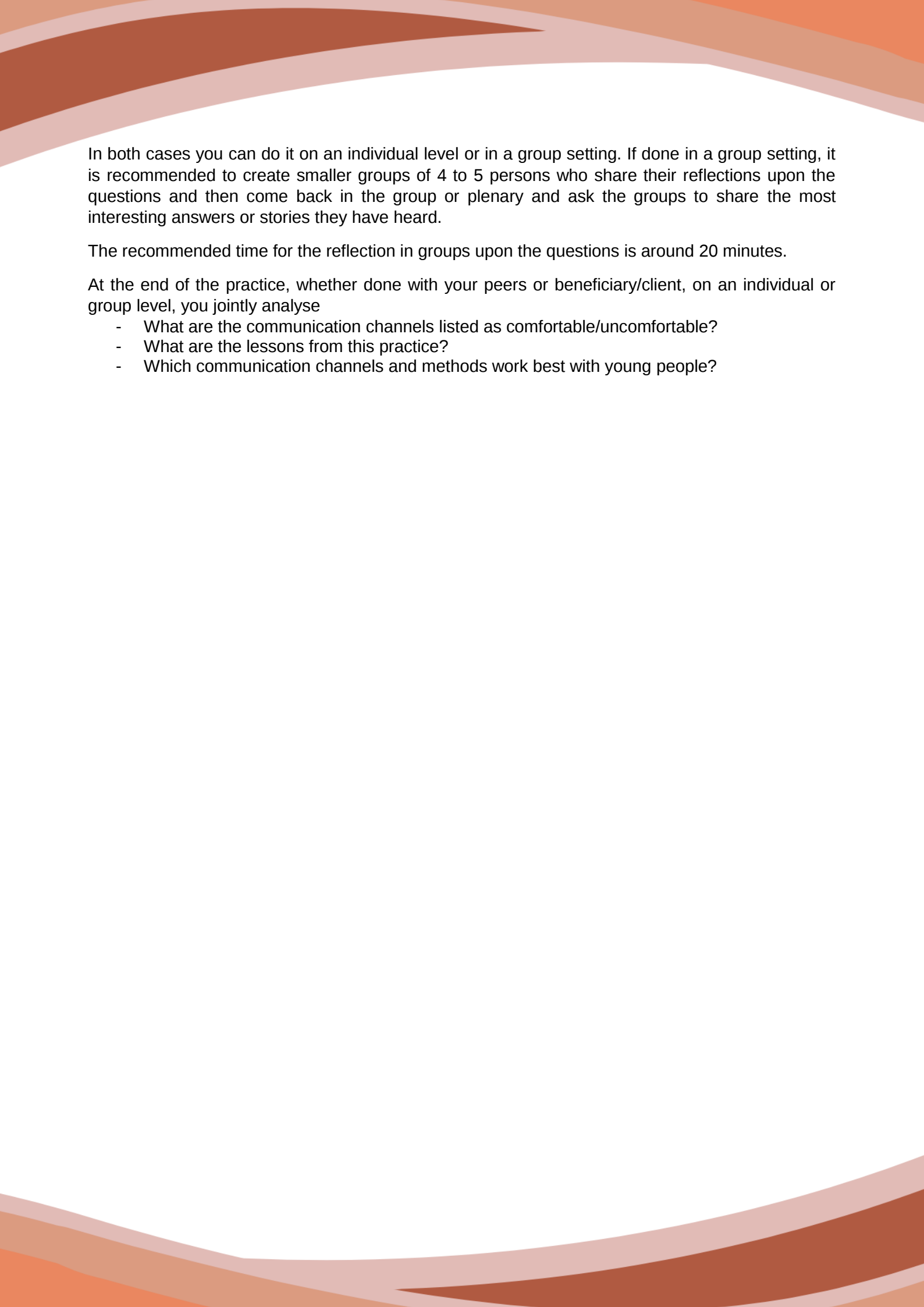
You can stop the practise here by analysing the answers and think more in depth on the why of your answers.

But the practice becomes more enriching if you share/compare the answers with others. You can do this on two levels, with your peers (i.e. other youth professionals) and with your beneficiaries.

If done with peers, the other person or persons reflect upon the same questions and you share the answers.

If done with your beneficiaries or clients, the last questions should be changed:

- Which communication tool do you feel more comfortable to use?
- Which communication tool do you feel less comfortable to use?
- What is the most interesting experience you have had communicating with the youth professional? - What communication tool was applied?
- How can you make communication more effective with youth professionals?



In both cases you can do it on an individual level or in a group setting. If done in a group setting, it is recommended to create smaller groups of 4 to 5 persons who share their reflections upon the questions and then come back in the group or plenary and ask the groups to share the most interesting answers or stories they have heard.

The recommended time for the reflection in groups upon the questions is around 20 minutes.

At the end of the practice, whether done with your peers or beneficiary/client, on an individual or group level, you jointly analyse

- What are the communication channels listed as comfortable/uncomfortable?
- What are the lessons from this practice?
- Which communication channels and methods work best with young people?

4. Attention to language



The spoken word is the easiest and quickest form of communication to get across a plan or project or begin a discussion, and great attention must be paid to the way it is used, as it is also the quickest way to cause offence if misunderstood. It can be colloquial, informal. “Jargon” can be used, that is easily interpreted by the young group. It is more direct. To avoid confusion, the youth worker must be prepared before the meetings with his / her programme with clear proposals for the clients. There is a need for clarity and direction so that the youth worker can put his / her ideas to the young person or the group, encouraging collaboration and constructive participation.

The written word is an excellent way of communicating, as normally more time is spent on composing the text, which can be long or short, with bullet points or a schedule with a clear strategy. Clarity leads to understanding.

Body language has a powerful effect when combined with words. To be interested and compassionate, to talk with a smile (you can hear a smile in the voice on the telephone), to be polite, and to listen. These qualities can be very helpful when there is movement and expression in the body language.

The use of language can be very empowering or dominating. For youth work, it should not be used in this way. Talking to another person and exchanging ideas is very helpful. With care, the youth worker can bring the best out of his / her clients, boost confidence and ability, and find hidden qualities of character that were going unnoticed. The result of this care with words can be satisfactory for all.

4.1 Language as tool for power

A language is a dialect with an army and navy (Max Weinreich)

Language is closely associated with power. As mentioned earlier, language can be a tool for empowerment as well as a tool for dominating. Numerous academic disciplines have described and explained the ways in which language can subjugate, alienate, marginalise, and manipulate people (Goldstein, 2005).

According to the literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, any language stratifies into many voices: social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargon, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles, and of passing fashions.



These stratifications of language represent distinct points of view on the world, characterised by their own meanings and values. In this view, language is always expressed with intentions and accents, and thus there are no neutral words. Even the most unremarkable statement possesses a taste, whether of a profession, a party, a generation, a place, or a time. To Bakhtin, when language is expressed, it is imprinted with the signature of the speaker.

In this framework, language is social. Words are indicators often of the sorts of values particular people hold, of the kinds of tools and ideas they think are important, and of the kinds of activities in which people have participated in the past. In other words, the type of language we use reflects our social role and position, as it is a specific way of conceptualising, understanding, and evaluating the world.

In this regard, youth and social work literature has affirmed that language is not neutral, that some commonly used language is not consistent with social work values, and that choices of words may objectify people, cause stigma, and cause shame (Cooper et al., 2024). Language reflects the political framing of youth work and power relationships within their practice. Language has implications for how youth workers perceive their professional identity, for how accountability is construed, and for inter-professional working. It conveys messages about power relationships between youth workers and young people, about the purpose of youth work practice, and has implications for accountability.

Applying Bakhtin's notion of social language, Penuel (1996) identifies two patterns of how youth workers talk about youth: The **Unilateral Youth Worker Language** and the **Empowering Youth Worker Language**.

Unilateral Youth Worker Language emphasises youth as problems and as needing adult supervision and control. It assumes a highly directive role for adults in promoting youth development. It charges adults with the task of unilaterally directing youth towards certain developmental goals with little or no consideration of their perspectives. *Control* is one of this social language's structuring themes. It is believed that circumstances, issues, and even young people are either "under control" or "out of control". Most youth programmes have at some point experienced issues like an unstable structure, irregular participant engagement, a high staff turnover rate, and occasionally direct confrontations between participants and staff. Unilateral Youth Worker Language tends to link these issues to individuals (rather than to systems or patterns of relating) who must be controlled or kept under control at all costs. This language also emphasises exercising self-control over one's own inclinations and desires, while responsibility is defined individualistically as personal accountability and the ability to control oneself. Most often, this demand is made not on adults but on youth, who must learn self-control and responsibility.

Empowering Youth Worker Language, on the other hand, encourages youth to participate actively, as it sees them as partners rather than problems. Since it prioritises the virtues of respect, sharing, and establishing safe spaces for young people to study, this language is more consistent with the programming goals of youth work. Empowering Youth Worker Language tends to see responsibility as a consideration of the needs and concerns of others: it promotes a deliberate shifting of viewpoints and an examination of situations from the viewpoint of the other person and usually legitimises a space where youth themselves can be heard. Consequently, Empowering Youth Worker Language seems more consistent with the programming goals of youth work: it highlights the value of "doing with" rather than "doing for" youth.

However, it might not be so simple to change the way a youth worker speaks about and relates to youth. Other languages remain in our consciousness, available to our use, and if we have used them in the past, we may be prepared to use them again, even if we would prefer to use a more empowering language for youth work. Likewise, powerful institutions in our society maintain a unilateral language of youth, primarily characterising them in the media as issues that need to be

resolved or as a burden on the resources of the community. Those images are difficult to overcome, we believe, because of the lack of practice and ideas helping professionals deconstruct the dominant narratives emerging from the use of unilateral youth worker language.

Practices like externalising, which we are presenting in the next few pages, may help you start reflecting on how to use a more empowering youth worker language.

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4.2 Practice: Empowering Language Through Externalisation

The practice of externalisation allows youth workers to work on themselves and, consequently, to improve the quality of their relationships with their clients. Youth workers have the opportunity to acquire a new way of viewing problems and their possibilities for solutions, which makes the service they offer more efficient. Externalisation helps youth workers reflect on how to develop a more empowering language in professional settings, as it allows people to separate their problems from their identity. Instead of seeing the problem as an integral part of the person, externalisation allows you to see it as something “external” from the person, that can be addressed and solved. This approach allows people to understand that they are not defined by their problems and that they have the power to change them. It shifts responsibility for the problem from the person to the problem itself, reducing feelings of guilt, shame or inadequacy.



As a result, it supports you in creating a stimulating and rewarding working environment that allows you to tackle problems with a solution-oriented approach, encouraging creativity and collaboration. The possible outcome is not only an increase in your productivity regarding the results you want to achieve, but also the promotion of well-being in a positive and proactive climate that fosters innovation and continuous improvement.

Begin the practice by identifying the specific problem you are facing in the workplace, which you can often perceive as inseparable from your identity. The first goal is, therefore, to separate the problem from yourself. For example, stating that “*Disorganisation is causing difficulty*” rather than telling yourself “*I am disorganised*” helps make it clear that the problem is external and more addressable.

Consider:

- *What is the specific problem that is affecting my work with clients?*
- *How can I describe this problem without judging or negatively labelling myself and/or clients?*
- *How can my perception of the problem influence the way I interact with clients?*

Giving a name to the problem helps make it tangible and separate from your identity. This can transform an abstract problem into something more concrete, facilitating dialogue and the development of strategies to face it. For example, calling disorganisation a term of your free choice that resonates with how you perceive your problem, such as “*Chaos*” or anything else you prefer, allows you to view and talk about it as a separate entity, reducing the feeling of being trapped with no way out.

Consider:

- *What name can I give to the problem to make it more tangible and less threatening?*
- *How do I feel when I name the problem? Do I feel more capable of dealing with it?*
- *How can this approach help me see the problem as something external to me?*

Reflecting on how "Chaos" has affected your life and activities helps you understand the extent of the problem and see how it can be handled. This phase allows you to recognise that the problem is manageable and that you have already faced similar situations in the past.

Consider:

- *How has "Chaos" influenced my work life and my interactions with clients?*
- *Are there specific moments when I noticed the negative impact of "Chaos"? What were they?*
- *How can I describe the impact of "Chaos" so that it is clear and specific?*

Identify times when you resisted or overcame "Chaos" to build confidence in your ability to manage it. This step helps highlight the resources and strategies you have already used successfully, promoting a more positive and proactive outlook.

Consider:

- *When have I resisted or overcome "Chaos" in the past? What strategies did I use?*
- *How can I encourage clients to reflect on their successes in overcoming similar problems?*
- *What personal and professional resources can I draw on to face "Chaos" in the future?*

You can stop the practice here by analysing your individual responses and thinking more deeply about the why of your responses.

But the practice becomes more enriching if you share/compare answers with others. You can do this on two levels with your peers (i.e., other youth professionals) and with your beneficiaries.

If done with colleagues, the other person or people reflect on the same questions, and you share the answers.

If done with your beneficiaries or clients, the questions should be modified to listen to the clients' perspectives, balance the power dynamic and further stimulate your reflection:

- *How do you think externalising problems can influence my perspective on problems and finding solutions?*
- *How can externalising problems improve our ability to improve collaboration between us?*
- *In your opinion, what are the differences between addressing a problem as part of our personal identity and considering it as an event separate from ourselves?*

In both cases you can do this on an individual level or in a group context. If done in a group context, we recommend creating smaller groups of 4 or 5 people who share their reflections on the questions, then returning to the plenary and asking the groups to share their answers.

The recommended time for group reflection on the questions is approximately 20 minutes to optimise the quality of discussions, maintain high attention and energy, promote inclusiveness and ensure that time is used productively and efficiently.

At the end of the practice, whether it is carried out with your colleagues or with the beneficiary/client, at an individual or group level, you jointly analyse:

- *How has this practice helped us develop new perspectives on how to approach problems?*
- *What strategies have we identified that we could use to manage problems in the future?*
- *What are practical steps we can take to integrate externalisation into our everyday language at work?*

5. Responsibility



Responsibility is about taking ownership of actions and understanding the impact they have on others, as well as being reliable and taking care of duties. Responsibility is crucial for everybody, including youth workers and young people.

Youth workers are often seen as professionals and experts, and being responsible means recognising the power they have and using it wisely. They must be aware of how their words and actions can affect the young people they work with. This means being honest, fair, supportive, respectful, and keeping promises at all times.

It also means reflecting on their own behaviour and making sure they are not unintentionally causing harm. Because of this, it gives them a lot of influence over young people, making it their duty to act in the best interests of the young people they support. Youth workers need to create a safe and trusting environment where young people feel valued and heard, follow through on their commitments, and be there when young people need them.

In any relationship, there is a balance between care and control. For youth workers, it is important to find this balance. They need to care for young people without controlling them. This involves giving young people the space to make their own decisions, solving problems, and taking care of themselves and others while providing guidance and support.

For young people, learning about responsibility is an important part of their growth. It means understanding how their actions affect themselves and others. When young people take responsibility, they learn to be accountable for their choices. This helps them become more independent and confident.

In conclusion, responsibility for youth workers is about being accountable for their actions and making a positive impact on their surroundings, acting with integrity, and supporting young people in a way that promotes their independence and growth. It is a foundation for building trust and supportive relationships and creating a community focused on the well-being of everyone.

5.1 Responsibility and Personal agency

Responsibility is strictly related to power. In our vision, taking responsibility for our actions means reflecting on the effect of our power over our lives and the lives of others. In our vision, what makes it possible for people to engage in what is usually regarded as “responsible” action in relation to the predicaments and problems of their lives is the sense of **personal agency**.

By “personal agency” we define the capacity of individuals to act independently and make their own free choices. It involves a sense of control over one’s life and the ability to influence outcomes through one’s actions. Key aspects of personal agency include:

1. Self-Efficacy: The belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task.
2. Autonomy: The ability to make one's own decisions without undue influence from others.

3. Intentionality: The quality of being directed towards a goal or purpose, where actions are performed with intention and deliberation.
4. Self-Regulation: The ability to manage one's behaviour, emotions, and thoughts in pursuit of long-term goals.

In youth work, empowering youth's personal agency allows us to enhance their sense of responsibility in the following aspects:

- **Accountability**. If youth have a strong sense of personal agency, they are more likely to take responsibility for their actions. They understand that their choices have consequences, and they feel empowered to influence those outcomes.
- **Moral and ethical development**. Personal agency allows youth to make ethical choices and take responsibility for them. This is crucial for moral development, as it encourages thoughtful decision-making and accountability.
- **Growth and learning**. Taking responsibility for their actions allows youth to learn from their mistakes and successes, fostering resilience and self-improvement.
- **Social contributions**. With personal agency, youth are more likely to take social responsibility seriously. They recognise their potential to effect positive change in their communities and broader society.

As professionals, we can ask questions to explore youth's personal agency in relation to the aforementioned aspects:

- *Can you identify just one positive impact of your actions in that specific situation?* (Accountability)
- *Can you list three of your most important values that your actions reflect?* (Moral and ethical development)
- *What did you learn from the consequences of your actions in that specific situation?* (Growth and learning)
- *How does acting according to your values positively affect the lives of the people you care about?* (Social contribution)

These are just some examples of questions you could ask your young clients.

Similarly, you can ask these types of questions to yourself as a means of self-reflection about your personal agency and how you use it in your daily work:

- *Do you believe you take enough responsibility for your actions while supporting your young clients?*
- *Do you effectively express your values and principles when working with youth?*
- *Can you identify three things that you have learned in your work with youth?*
- *How do you think your work positively impacts the lives of your young clients?*

5.2 Practice: Developing Personal Agency For Responsible Actions

The development of personal agency, understood as the ability to act independently and make free choices, is a practice closely linked to the making of responsible choices. It is a way for youth workers to work on themselves and, at the same time, consequently improve the quality of the relationship with their clients and therefore the efficiency and result of the service. A strong sense of personal agency implies **self-efficacy, autonomy, intentionality and self-regulation**, which are fundamental to consciously taking on one's responsibilities and balancing the use of power. Confidence in their own skills (self-efficacy) and the ability to make independent decisions (autonomy) allow youth workers to manage complex situations with greater firmness. Intentionality



then ensures that actions are deliberate and targeted, while self-regulation helps maintain ethical and responsible behaviour even under stress.

These four elements combined help you strengthen your ability to take responsibility for your actions, promoting conscientious behaviour and an active commitment to creating positive and effective changes in your work environment and professional relationships.

The following reflective practice is divided into four steps, which correspond respectively to the four combined elements of personal agency we suggest to develop: self-efficacy, autonomy, intentionality and self-regulation.

Step 1: Self-efficacy

Think about a situation where you had to perform a task in your working relationship with your client. Write the situation in detail, highlighting the actions taken and the young client's reactions. Through the questions below, reflect on the skills and knowledge used and evaluate their effectiveness:

- *What skills and knowledge did I use in this situation?*
- *How confident did I feel in my abilities to handle this situation?*
- *How did the client react to my actions, and how did it influence my perception of my effectiveness?*

Step 2: Autonomy

Identify an important decision you made in your work with a young client. Carefully review your decision-making process, including external factors that may have influenced your choice. Through the questions below, try to better understand the extent of your decision-making independence:

- *To what extent did I make this decision independently?*
- *What external influences (colleagues, superiors, context) played a role in my decision-making process?*
- *How can I improve my ability to make autonomous decisions that both respect and support client autonomy?*

Step 3: Intentionality

Describe a specific goal you tried to reach with a young client. Through the questions below, reflect on the actions taken to achieve this objective and their intentionality. This helps to evaluate the coherence between the actions and the set objectives:

- *What was my main goal in this situation?*
- *Were my actions aligned with this goal? Why or why not?*
- *How has my intentionality influenced the client and how can I improve my clarity and coherence for future goals?*

Step 4: Self-Regulation

Think of a situation where you had to manage strong emotions or stress in your work with a young client. Describe how you regulated your behaviour and emotions in that situation. Through the questions below, reflect on the actions you have taken to develop awareness of your self-regulation strategies:

- *What strategies did I use to manage my emotions and behaviour in this situation?*
- *How did the situation and the young client involved affect my self-control?*
- *What techniques can I adopt to improve my self-regulation ability in the future?*

When professionals feel effective, autonomous, have clear intentions and are able to self-regulate, they are more inclined to accept responsibility for their choices, promoting more conscientious and reliable behaviour.

In fact, this condition increases their confidence and motivation and helps them remain disciplined and adaptable, reinforcing a culture of accountability and trust within the organization. This leads to better moral and ethical development, encouraging thoughtful decision-making. Furthermore, taking responsibility for their actions helps youth workers learn from their mistakes and successes, promoting resilience and self-improvement. Finally, with strong personal agency, youth workers become more aware of their potential to make positive changes in their communities and society at large, taking social responsibility seriously and contributing significantly to the common good.

Consider:

- *How can I improve my ability to take responsibility for my daily actions when working with my clients?*
- *What are my core values that will guide my ethical decisions when working with my clients?*
- *How can I use past experiences and my mistakes to improve my approach to supporting my clients in their personal and professional development?*
- *What steps can I take to maximise the positive impact of my actions on my clients and the community in which I operate?*

You can stop the practice here by analysing your individual responses and thinking more deeply about the why of your responses. But the practice becomes more enriching if you share/compare answers with others. You can do this on two levels, with your peers (i.e., other youth professionals) and with your beneficiaries.

If done with colleagues, the other person or people reflect on the same questions and you share the answers.

If done with your beneficiaries or clients, the questions should be modified to listen to the clients' perspectives, balance the power dynamic and further stimulate your reflection:

- *How can I better support you in recognising and developing your skills to manage difficult situations?*
- *How can I foster an environment that supports your autonomy, allowing you to take responsibility for your choices?*
- *How can I help you set clear goals and act with intentionality, while promoting a strong sense of responsibility?*
- *What strategies can I adopt to help you improve your self-regulation and better manage responsibility for your actions?*

In both cases you can do this on an individual level or in a group context. If done in a group context, we recommend creating smaller groups of 4 or 5 people who share their reflections on the questions, then returning to the plenary and asking the groups to share their answers.

The recommended time for group reflection on the questions is approximately 30 minutes to optimise the quality of discussions, maintain high attention and energy, promote inclusiveness and ensure that time is used productively and efficiently.

At the end of the practice, whether it is carried out with your colleagues or with the beneficiary/client, at an individual or group level, you jointly analyse:

- *How can we use these lessons to improve our behaviour and decisions in the future?*
- *How can we become more aware of our role in the decisions we make?*
- *What did we learn about managing our responsibilities from this experience?*

6. Consistency



Consistency is about doing things in a reliable and predictable way. It is an important concept in our lives and relationships. In the context of youth work, consistency is crucial for building trust and creating a stable and safe environment for young people.

Being consistent means showing up and acting in the same reliable way every time. It is about keeping promises, following through on commitments, and maintaining the same standards and behavior. It also involves fairness. It means applying rules and expectations and not showing favoritism.

When youth workers are consistent, young people know what to expect, which makes them feel safe and secure, because youth workers use their power in fair and transparent ways. It means treating all young people with the same level of respect and care, regardless of the situation. This helps prevent feelings of unfair treatment, which can undermine trust and create tension.

When young people see that their youth workers are consistent, they feel more comfortable opening up and sharing their thoughts and feelings. They know that the support and guidance they receive will be reliable. Consistency in actions and words reassures young people that they can rely on their youth workers.

Learning about consistency is part of the youth workers' development. It means understanding the importance of being reliable in their actions and interactions with others. When young people practice consistency, they build stronger relationships and earn the trust and respect of those around them.

Consistency also plays a role in creating routines and structure, which are important for a sense of stability. Regular routines help young people feel more organized and less stressed because they know what to expect and can plan accordingly. It means developing habits and behaviors that contribute to their growth and the well-being of their community.

Overall, it is about creating a stable and trustworthy environment where everyone knows what to expect and feels secure. This foundation of consistency helps build strong, supportive relationships and a positive ambiance.

6.1 Consistency to values

Showing consistency also means clearly expressing our own values and principles and acting according to them.

For “values” we intend ideas and worldviews that matter to us. Stillman (2010) defines values as the compass directing our lives. A compass is an object that shows direction, and the person has the choice to follow it or not.

By centering the compass on their trip, some people can be methodical and plan ahead. Other people may want to keep it with them and use it in case they get lost or encounter roadblocks and have to take an alternate route.

Some people know their compass by heart. This may be because they had a relatively straightforward walk with little difficulty, which allowed them to travel in a similar general direction. This path and the compass do not require much attention, and they get comfortable with their journey.

For some, however, the journey has been so hard that seeing the way ahead of them was difficult. As a result, they have had to often check and occasionally rely on their compass.

Out of metaphor, some people are quite comfortable talking about values and how they influence their lives. Some people, on the other hand, are not so used to talking about their values. They might not have had the chance previously, or they might not have had the time to take a step back and evaluate because they were too busy dealing with difficulties.

We at RAP believe that the focus on consistency might help youth workers improve the quality of their work, at least in two ways.

First, youth workers can relate to young people in a way that is consistent with their personal and professional values, with their moral and ethical principles. This means that youth workers need to self-reflect on their personal and professional values. Sometimes, in fact, we act according to values that have been imposed on us, but in the end, we do not believe in them.

- *Are the values I express aligned with my idea of the world?*
- *Are they aligned with my idea of what youth work should be?*
- *If not, why do I follow them?*
- *Who taught me those values?*
- *When did I learn those values in the first place?*

We believe that if youth workers check on their system of values, they can ensure a safe and supportive setting for young people as they are confident that their behaviors and actions are consistent with their moral and ethical principles.

The second way the focus on consistency can help youth workers is by supporting young people to become more aware of - and able to talk about - their values.

Asking questions about these values, how they learned them and who taught them might help youth raise their awareness about their moral and ethical stance. Also, they have the opportunity to evaluate whether their actions are more or less aligned with their personal system of values.

Then, youth workers can help young people reflect on how to change their behaviors in order to show more consistency with their values. In this way youth workers give young people the opportunity to re-examine their life stories and develop different or preferred stories that are more consistent with their preferred values and purposes.



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6.2 Practice: Creating the Compass of Your Values

This practice focuses on understanding the importance of consistency in managing power dynamics in professional relationships through identifying and expressing personal and professional values in your daily actions. Being aware of your values guarantees consistency between what you say and what you do and this gives you effective power. Young clients will trust you, perceive your integrity and be more inclined to collaborate and respect your decisions.

It helps you become more aware of and better understand your values and how they influence your work with young people. It supports you in meeting and overcoming ethical challenges, ensuring that your power is used in a constructive and respectful way and, as a result, improving the quality of the service you provide and the wellbeing of your clients.

The first step on this journey is to reflect deeply on the values that guide your work. Take a moment to think about what is really important to you when interacting with young clients. Write down these values if you want and consider why they are so crucial. Perhaps a personal experience or work situation has shown you the importance of a specific value.

During this phase, ask yourself some questions like these that can guide you in your reflection:

- *Who are the people you admire most, and why? What qualities or principles do you share with them?*
- *What are the most difficult decisions you have had to make? What guided your choices in those moments?*
- *What makes you feel most proud of yourself? Why are these achievements important to you?*
- *What compromises are you unwilling to make, no matter the circumstances?*
- *What qualities do you look for in the people you choose to work with or have close relationships with?*
- *What do you hope to convey to others through your work and interactions?*

Once you have reflected on your values, it is helpful to reflect on specific situations in which you acted consistently with them. Remember times when you faced difficult situations but managed to maintain your principles: this exercise will help you see how your values manifest themselves in practice and identify strategies that have helped you stay true to them.

Ask yourself:

- *Can I recall a time when I acted consistently with one of my core values?*
- *How did I use my power positively in that situation?*
What were the circumstances and decisions that allowed me to live in coherence with my values?



It is not always easy to live in harmony with your values. Recognising moments of inconsistency helps you strengthen your personal integrity. Everytime you manage to align your actions with your values, you feel your self-esteem and self-respect increase. In fact, by reflecting on these situations, you can identify the causes of discrepancies and develop strategies to better address them in the future. This will make you more prepared and aware of your professional interactions.

Consider:

- *Have there been times when I felt inconsistent with my values? What happened?*
- *How could I approach these situations differently next time?*
- *How can I use my power more constructively and respectfully?*

You can stop the practice here, analyze your individual responses and think more deeply about the why of your responses.

But the practice becomes more enriching if you share/compare answers with others. You can do this on two levels, with your peers (i.e., other youth professionals) and with your beneficiaries.

When done with colleagues, the other person or people reflect on the same questions and all of you share the answers.

If done with your beneficiaries or clients, the questions can be modified:

- *What makes you think that there is consistency between what I say and what I do?*
- *How can I show my values more through my actions when working with you?*
- *Has there ever been a time when you noticed a conflict between what I say and what I do? How did you react? How has this affected our working relationship?*

In both cases you can do this on an individual level or in a group context. If done in a group context, we suggest you create smaller groups of 4 or 5 people who share their reflections on the questions, then return to the plenary and ask the groups to share their answers.

The recommended time for group reflection on the questions is approximately 20 minutes to optimize the quality of discussions, maintain high attention and energy, promote inclusiveness and ensure that time is used productively and efficiently.

At the end of the practice, whether carried out with your colleagues or with the beneficiaries/clients, at an individual or group level, you jointly analyze:

- *What can we learn from episodes in which we noticed a lack of consistency between declared values and actual actions?*
- *How can we continue to support and strengthen the importance of values in power dynamics in the professional field?*
- *What strategies or changes can we adopt to improve our ability to maintain greater coherence with our values in our daily actions?*

7. Listening



Listening is not hearing. Hearing is recognising "sounds". It is one-way whereas listening is seriously engaging with the person we talked to, empathising with him / her.

It enhances communication and collaboration. When we listen, we create a positive work environment because we are actively involved in the concerns and opinions of the client(s), which creates a rapport between them and their youth worker.

Listening means paying attention. By being receptive to the ideas or problems of others, the youth worker can serve as an impartial mediator and resolve conflicts by understanding them. With the experience of the youth worker, his / her mentorship can lend valuable insights and promote team dynamics through active listening.

By paying attention and transmitting knowledge and experience, the youth worker is creating a very positive atmosphere. By absorbing ideas and having curiosity and interest in client conflicts or problems, the youth worker can transmit the idea that achieving anything is possible.

This positive framework in the youth worker's meetings with young people allows each party to have confidence in themselves and to develop and enjoy discussions and projects for future events or lifestyles.

7.1 Double Listening and Curiosity

In the definition we gave of listening, we described it as an active process. A practice we do on purpose.

Youth workers are surely familiar with the concept of **active listening**. Active listening involves paying attention to what someone is saying as well as their feelings and ideas. It transforms a discussion into a dynamic, two-way exchange that is free from competition.

We want to enrich the concept of active listening by adding another idea: **double listening**.

Double listening prompts the youth worker to listen to two kinds of stories simultaneously. First, he or she listens to the young clients' explicit stories about their problems. But the youth worker also listens to sub-stories that hint at more agentive ways of being, aiming to facilitate movement from problem-saturated (constituted) positioning to agentive positioning (Guilfoyle, 2014).



Double listening relies on the idea that the story of how we face issues often languishes in the shadows of the more dominant problem story. It is the *practice of staying open to hopeful possibilities, always on the other side of the struggle* (Pare, 2013, p. 89).

An example of double listening is the following. Imagine a young girl talking about problems at school with her peers. As youth workers, we can listen to her story about how hard it is for her to relate to other kids. But the very fact that she has asked us for help communicates to us another thing. It communicates to us that she has hope to improve her situation and that she wants to solve this problem. It also communicates to us that she has initiative because she came to us on her own, asking for help.

If we practise double listening, we are able to notice these other elements of the girl's narrative that communicate to us that she is not only suffering for her condition, but she also has some skills and strengths that may allow her to overcome this condition.

Double listening is not a departure from the listening skills commonly used by youth workers. Youth workers listen, paraphrase, reflect on what clients say and even help clients find new words to describe their feelings. These skills are important for helping young clients feel heard, understood, and validated. Double listening draws on the same skills as active listening and enriches it. While active listening is mostly about how we listen, double listening includes both attending to people's feelings AND hearing the content of people's stories.

An important prerequisite of double listening is **curiosity**. Genuine curiosity leaves youth workers with the mental space to hear multiple stories. Curiosity implies a stance of not knowing (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992). Adopting a not-knowing position is a way to use our role of power as professionals to our young clients' advantage. A not-knowing stance implies that we, as youth workers, do not have unique access to the truth and encourage clients to speak as experts about their own experiences. Using this tentative, not-knowing approach sets the stage for double listening because it creates space for youth workers and young clients to visualise multiple stories, thus creating more possibilities about them and their lives (Monk & Winslade, 2007).

Double listening helps youth workers reflect on power dynamics in youth work on two levels. First, it is a way to empower young people, as it helps draw attention to their strengths and skills. Second, it requires youth workers to exploit their role of power to the youth's advantage because the adoption of a not-knowing stance implies professionals should take a step back and admit they are not the experts in the clients' lives. Youth themselves are seen as the experts of their stories.

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7.2 Practice: Capturing the sub-stories in dominant narratives



This practice focuses on understanding the importance of double listening in the management of power dynamics in professional relationships, that is the ability to listen attentively, curiously and openly to the narratives of others, adopting a not-knowing stance that facilitates a dialogue that is more authentic, supportive and inclusive. In the position of not being an expert in clients' stories, you are able to prevent conflicts and misunderstandings and this gives you effective power: clients will feel understood and valued and will be more motivated and inclined to collaborate and find shared solutions.

It helps you better understand not only your clients' explicit stories about their problems or situations but also the implicit ones that suggest more agentive ways of dealing with difficulties. It allows you to grasp the signs of hope, initiative and resources that can influence the professional relationship and therefore the quality of the service or the final result of the working relationship.

Begin the practice by choosing a recent conversation with a young client in which you discussed a problem or concern. If you do not remember a specific conversation, imagine a typical situation.

Write a brief summary of the client's narrative. Include specific details about what the client said about the problem or concern.

Reread the narrative and look for clues to sub-stories. Think about what the client may not have said explicitly but that might suggest hope, resources or ability.

Write down these sub-stories to support reflection. For example, if a client talked about difficulties at work, you might notice that they reached out for help, indicating hope and initiative. The following questions might help you in the process:

- *What did the client do to try to solve the problem?*
- *What skills or resources did they implicitly demonstrate through his actions?*
- *What hopes or desires are suggested by the client's narrative?*

Reflect on how your position of power as a professional might affect the dynamic with the client. Write down your reflections.

Ask yourself:

- *How can I use my role to better support the client, recognising their experience and skills?*
- *How can I create a space where the client feels like an expert in their own story?*

Think of specific ways to encourage the client to recognise and develop their own skills and resources. For example, consider asking them the following questions:

- *What have you done in the past that has helped you overcome difficult situations or achieve important goals?*
- *What are your personal qualities that you think would be useful to you in managing the current challenge you are facing?*

You can stop the practice here, analyse your individual responses and think more deeply about the why of your responses.

But the practice becomes more enriching if you share/compare answers with others. You can do this with your peers (i.e. other young professionals) and with your beneficiaries/clients.

Form a mixed group of 4-6 people, including professionals and beneficiaries. Then divide professionals and beneficiaries into pairs, ideal for facilitating communication and allowing the

interlocutor to devote more attention to their narration. In addition, this work done in pairs often turns out to be more intimate and less dispersive and this can foster openness and sincere communication.

This practice allows for greater empathic understanding in the professional relationship and a reduction in power dynamics through grasping the other's perspective and self-reflection.

Each beneficiary thinks of a personal story they would like to share with the youth professional. The story can be about a significant moment in your life, a personal success, a challenge you overcame or a goal you want to achieve.

Each beneficiary tells their story to the professional who, in turn, does not just listen to the words but tries to elaborate and understand fully. Moreover, they take notes, pay attention to body language and gestures and try to ask questions in a thoughtful and relevant way, giving the client space to express themselves without interrupting. The youth professional is encouraged to look not only for the explicit problem or challenge but also for the hidden potential or personal resources that emerge through the story.

Think about the following:

- *What personal resources or potential did I notice in the beneficiary/client's story that they may not have recognised?*
- *What implicit hopes or desires did I identify in the beneficiary's narrative?*
- *How can I use my role to better support the beneficiary/client, respecting their perspective and encouraging their autonomy?*

At the end of the sharing, the entire group gathers to discuss the experiences.

In the first 15 minutes, the youth professionals take turns asking clients the following questions:

- *Did you feel or think that I understood your concerns or points of view better? How?*
- *Did you feel or think that I affected your level of trust and openness towards me? How?*
- *Have you sensed a change in the power dynamic between you and me?*

Over the next 15 minutes, the beneficiaries take turns asking the professionals the following questions:

- *What was the most important lesson you learned from this practice?*
- *Did you feel that this experience changed your perception of power? How?*
- *How do you think this experience contributed to your professional goals?*

The overall recommended time for group reflection on the questions is approximately 30 minutes to allow a sufficiently in-depth, fair and balanced discussion between clients and professionals. Furthermore, it encourages participants to be concise and focused on the points they consider key.

At the end of the practice, whether carried out individually or in a group, you analyse jointly

- *How do we think double listening can improve the quality of our professional relationships?*
- *How has this experience influenced our understanding of power dynamics in professional relationships?*
- *How can we use what we have learned about double listening in our future professional interactions?*

8. Safe Environment



A safe environment is one where people proceed without fear to flourish, confident of not being exposed to criticism, discrimination, harm, prejudice, or negative judgement when expressing their views. It could be described as a haven, a sanctuary that promotes confidence and understanding.

A safe environment is welcoming. It brings a sense of well-being and is stimulating, supportive, and inclusive, creating a good atmosphere for discussion and for creating future projects and plans.

How can this positive work environment be established with youth?

You can share the rules of engagement by sending out pre-meeting notes for discussion and debate and setting out what is expected of the group, which engages ideas and encourages open dialogue. The group behaviour rules of respect for others, cultural sensitivity, and a non-judgmental attitude—in other words, tolerance—foster a culture of inclusivity and acceptance of other people's opinions and personalities and the way others work. The group should show appreciation for each other and listen to even the quiet ones so that all can contribute. With this empathy in the group, a sense of community and belonging can be created, which is very helpful to the youth worker.

It might be useful for the youth worker to reflect on the achievements of the group, to celebrate the team's "wins," and also to enjoy the company of the group by spending time not working but relaxing together. This will create a fun atmosphere in which the feeling is that anything is possible.

8.1 Deconstructing power in youth work environments



An important statement of the RAP approach is that power dynamics are inherent in every relationship. Power dynamics are inherent in youth work, too.

Since the late 1700s, dramatic shifts have occurred in Western society as greater urbanisation and industrialization occurred in Western Europe. This includes a shift from what has been called operations of "traditional power" (acting to repress, suppress people, etc.) to operations of "modern power" (engaging people in the understanding of their lives through systems of evaluation, normalising judgement, etc.)—that is, an "internalisation" of power. Social sciences since the late 1800's have been heavily involved in this project.

Social scientists, in fact, turned very early on to the positivist physical sciences for examples upon which to base their own work in the interpretation of social systems. They reasoned that this would provide their own research with essential scientific integrity. The positivist approach to social science puts professionals in a position of master observers who describe and evaluate the client's story as

it "really is and ought to be" by observing, describing, and explaining human behaviour in ways that are deemed objective (Anderson, 1997).

The ones who can "objectively" describe and explain human behaviour are repositories of certain knowledge about human beings.

Unfortunately, as French philosopher Michel Foucault argues, knowledge is not hierarchical, objective, or observable by an expert; rather, it is "multiple and only ever partial" and "understood to be socially and historically specific and inseparable from social relations of power" (Brown, 2007, p. 5). According to Foucault, objective truths are, in fact, constructed ideas that are given the status of truth. These "truths" are then used as the norms around which people shape or constitute their lives. They categorise individuals as having their own identities, which are not only their own truth but also the truth believed by others around them.

In other words, in our society, some knowledge acquires the status of truth, thus becoming instruments of power, because people are forced to align with these truths through normalising judgements. Power, therefore, according to Foucault, is knowledge, and knowledge is power.

Knowledge as power can be seen in youth work as well. Since, as we said earlier, positivism highly informs modern social sciences, it often happens that young people are seen as the object of investigation and observation, while youth workers are authority figures with a position of power.

In such a framework, youth workers run the risk of using their role of power as an instrument for subjugating their young clients, by establishing a setting characterised by normalising judgements and forcing youth to align with the truths that the professionals impose, as they are the "experts".

On many occasions, professionals are not even aware of these dynamics which do not contribute to creating safe environments for their young clients.

Taking power dynamics into account is, in our opinion, an important step to avoid a normalising environment and create a safe youth work setting where young people can freely express their ideas and points of view without the fear of being judged.

First and foremost, professionals need to consider that power is collaboration through communication. It evolves through communication between people, where all the actors have an active role in defining and maintaining those particular dynamics of power in that particular situation.

Thus, for youth workers, being aware of their role of power and how it affects their relationships with youth helps them exploit this power to the youth's benefit.

Sometimes, professionals need to highlight their authority and assume a more directive approach when leading their young clients.

Sometimes, instead, they need to lead their young clients from one step behind (Cantwell & Holmes, 1994).

In order to do that, professionals need to continuously self-reflect on the way they use their power and how they can exploit it to support youth. Here are some guiding questions that may help start the process of self-reflection about power:

- *How does my role of power affect the relationship I have with the young people I professionally support?*
- *How do I relate to the power and authority society acknowledges in me as a youth work expert?*
- *How do my young clients relate to my authority as a youth professional?*

- *Is the way I exploit my role of power tending to be effective while supporting my young clients?*
- *Is there something I would change in the way I use my role of power to support my young clients?*

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8.2 Practice: Cultivating A Safe Environment Through New Narratives About Power

Re-authoring is a practice that can be used by youth professionals to reflect on and intervene in the power dynamics present in their work with young clients. It consists of understanding and reworking one's own stories, such as those relating to power dynamics, not only to enrich one's self-perception but also to highlight new perspectives and possibilities for action to improve the quality of the service offered and maximise professional results. It is based on the idea that the stories we tell about ourselves and our experiences shape our identity and the way we experience the world and relationships. These dominant narratives, as in the case of those regarding power dynamics, are constructed through language and generated and influenced by cultural contexts and social interactions.



As a result, re-authoring helps you think critically about these stories, recognise potential power imbalances, and actively work to transform these dynamics in ways that promote young clients' empowerment and active participation in the workplace. Creating fairer and more respectful relationships encourages the establishment of a safe environment where people can express themselves without fear of criticism, discrimination, prejudice or negative judgements and therefore work in a more productive and peaceful way.

Think about a specific work situation in which you felt you had exercised your power in an authoritarian and unwelcoming manner in a work context. Write a detailed narrative of this event describing the context, the people involved, your actions, their reactions and the emotions you felt.

Consider:

- *Which aspects of my role as a power figure emerged in this story? Were they effective?*
- *How did I exercise my power? Was it helpful or limiting to my clients?*
- *What emotions did I feel in my role of power, and how did they influence my actions?*

Now try to rewrite your narrative considering how you could have done differently to create a more inclusive and safe environment for your clients.

Consider:

- *How could I have used my power to better support my clients?*
- *What alternatives could I have considered to manage the situation?*

- *What kind of environment would I have liked to create and what actions could I have taken to achieve it?*

You can stop the practice here, analysing your individual responses and thinking more deeply about the why of your responses.

But the practice becomes more enriching if you share/compare answers with others. You can do this on two levels, with your peers (i.e., other youth professionals) and with your beneficiaries.

If done with colleagues, the other person or people reflect on the same questions and you share the answers.

If done with your beneficiaries or clients, add their perspective to your reflection to evaluate their possible contributions to creating a safe environment and a greater balance of power in your professional relationship, then ask them to think about a specific work situation in which they significantly perceived a power imbalance, i.e., a situation in which one person or group of people has more power, influence or control than others. If they have never personally experienced a power imbalance, add that it is still important to reflect on situations in which they had the impression that their opinions or needs were not taken into consideration compared to others, on moments in which they had to follow decisions or rules imposed by people or groups with greater authority or control or about events in which they have noticed different or privileged treatment for some people over others within a work or social context. Ask them to write a detailed narrative of this event, describing the context, the people involved, the actions taken, the reactions observed, and the emotions felt and then ask them the following questions:

- *How would you have liked the power to be used to feel more supported?*
- *Have you ever considered alternatives or different perspectives on how you would have liked difficult situations like this to be handled?*
- *What kind of environment would you have liked and what actions do you think you could take to help achieve it?*

In both cases you can do this on an individual level or in a group context. If done in a group context, we recommend creating smaller groups of 4 or 5 people who share their reflections on the questions, then returning to the plenary and asking the groups to share their answers.

The recommended time for group reflection on the questions is approximately 20 minutes to optimise the quality of discussions, maintain high attention and energy, promote inclusiveness and ensure that time is used productively and efficiently.

At the end of the practice, whether it is carried out with your colleagues or with the beneficiary/client, at an individual or group level, you jointly analyse

- *How can we use this practice to reflect a more conscious and positive use of power and create a more inclusive and safe environment?*
- *What were the main aspects that we learned or that we intend to carry forward in the professional field after this experience?*
- *How can we improve our collaboration to maximise the benefits of this practice?*

9. Reflecting on the roles



In our everyday lives we are all part of different relationships: with friends, family, co-workers and more. But have you ever stopped to think about how we have an effect on each other at play in these relationships? That is what reflecting on your role is all about.

In any relationship, there is a certain amount of power involved. 'Power' here does not mean being able to boss someone around, but rather having the ability to influence things in some way. This influence can be good or bad, and it is worth considering.

Taking a closer look at what this means for a youth worker, reflecting on your role means taking a moment to think about the impact you have on the young people you work with. Are you using your influence positively? Are there things you could do differently to make things better for them?

It also means considering your own background and experiences. How do they shape the way you interact with young people? Are there any biases or assumptions you might not even realise you have?

Imagine that you are someone who works with young people. You might not realise it, but being in this role gives you a lot of influence. Young people might look up to you and trust your advice because you are seen as an expert. But sometimes, this can create a bit of a lopsided relationship. They might feel like they have to listen to you because you are the "grown-up" in charge. Sometimes, this feeling can create an imbalance in the relationship. The young people might feel like they have to do what you say because you are the expert. And you might not even realise the influence you have over them.

Consequently, reflecting on your role is about taking a step back and thinking about your impact on the young people you work with. What kind of influence do you have? How do you use it? Are there any ways you might be unintentionally making things harder for them?

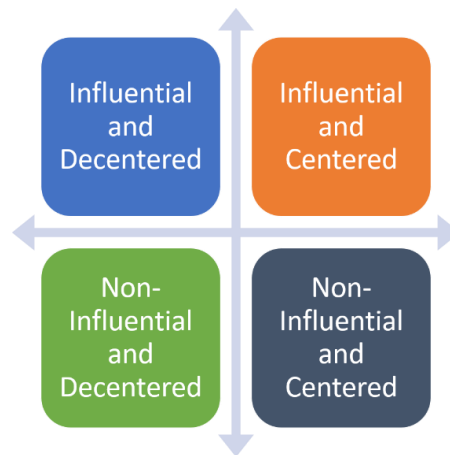
By thinking about your role in this way, you can start to build better and more accountable relationships. For youth workers, you can help young people grow and learn rather than just telling them what to do. And ultimately, you can help them become more independent and responsible for their own actions.

9.1 Reflecting on supporting stances

We hereby propose to you a map to help you reflect on your role of power with your young clients.

This map has been developed in the context of the Narrative Approach (White, 2007), which pays high attention to power dynamics in helping relationships, youth work included.

If we apply the narrative Map of Different Positions (Ilic, 2017) to youth work, we can identify four different helping sentences on the basis of two dimensions: **influence** and **centering**. The map can be represented as follows:



Map of Different Positions (Ilic, 2017)

A **centred position** places professionals at the centre of the supporting interaction. In a centred position, we as professionals take on an expert role by diagnosing, intervening and treating young people based on our predetermined assumptions about what would be the best approach for clients. Michael White (2007) believes that this approach closes the door to collaboration and the professional would feel burdened and exhausted while our young clients feel impotent.

Instead, a **de-centred position** places our young clients at the centre of the interaction. It is characterised by a not-knowing, curious and respectful attitude in which professionals do not assume that they know the meaning of young people's problems, what is important to them and how they should live their lives. Rather, we can ask youth to categorise and reflect on their experiences and to take their own stance on how they prefer to live their lives. As a result of such an inquiry, clients may experience "personal agency and the capacity for responsible action" (ibid., 2007, p. 289), and they may feel empowered "to pursue what is precious to them" (p. 59). Therefore, a de-centered position is more likely to create opportunities in conversation for a more in-depth exploration of our young clients' problems in relation to their preferences, an approach that is usually different from what our young clients experience in their lives.

A **non-influential position** leads us to take on a more conversational role, which incorporates non-directive responses to young people's statements. Through dialogue, we can collaborate with youth in order to involve them in the co-evolution of understanding and meaning (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988).

On the other hand an **influential position** allows youth workers to actively stimulate the conditions for change and take responsibility for enacting those conditions. By adopting an influential position, we do not impose our own agenda on our young clients. We work to help them step into and explore some of the neglected territories of their lives and become more acquainted with the knowledge and skills of their lives that are relevant to addressing the concerns, predicaments, and problems at hand.

In our opinion, and consistently with the Narrative Approach, adopting a **de-centred and influential position** would be very useful in the process of helping young people while, at the same time, taking into account the role of power we are socially invested in as professionals.

Practically speaking, this position leads us to increase the practice of asking questions.

Questions, in fact, are consistent with a de-centred stance because this stance is privileging our young clients' voices, pieces of knowledge and preferences over our expert knowledge. Thus, by

asking questions we give youth the space to express their narratives and reflect on their life experiences. Consequently, thanks to a de-centred attitude we can level the hierarchy with clients by collaborating, by asking for their feedback and by being transparent.

Also, questions are consistent with an influential stance because they basically lead the conversations. The choice of asking one question instead of another, the way it is formulated and the topic that question is about, define the trajectory of the conversation we are having with our young clients. For instance, we can choose to ask questions about a problem or about what makes our young clients suffer. Or, we can ask questions about what our young clients value and hold precious. Consequently, thanks to an influential attitude we can exploit our role of power by showing ourselves as the experts of asking questions that lead the conversation to explore a particular topic.

If we adopt a de-centred and influential stance we do not ask any type of questions. We prefer asking open questions that allow our young people to express their ideas, feelings and thoughts.

More specifically, the questions inspired by a de-centred and influential position are:

- **Generative**: they invite to consider experience and help build possible alternatives, possible futures and possible new ideas. In other words, new versions of life.
- **Circular**: they help develop a clearer idea of how things, events, people and relationships are influencing them and are in turn influenced by them.
- **Reflexive**: they are thought-provoking questions, often without existing definitive answers. They can be used to assess the youth's knowledge, experience or ideas.
- **Respectful**: their intent is to influence the persons respectfully, in an enabling and invitational way.

These types of questions help us professionals to be active participants in the helping conversations and take on the responsibility for creating conditions for preferred outcomes, in a way that can be respectful of the youth's experience and personal narratives and stimulate their creativity in developing new possibilities and solutions to their problems.

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9.2 Practice: Reflecting On Power Roles With Positioning Maps

"Map of Different Positions" is a practice designed to help you, as a youth professional, reflect on the power dynamics in your relationships with young clients. It is a tool that encourages you to visualise and reflect on how you relate to your clients to better understand what roles you take on and what kind of influence you exert in interactions with them, as well as how you can improve the quality of your work and therefore your overall service. The maps we consider examine two main dimensions: centering and influence.

The first refers to who is at the centre of the interaction between you and your clients. *Do you act as a professional leader and impose decisions, or do you put your clients at the centre, listening to their experiences and points of view?*

The second concerns the level of influence you have on your clients. *Are you actively trying to help find solutions, or do you take a more passive, non-directive approach?*

Now, we focus on two specific positions that combine these dimensions optimally for youth workers: **the de-centred position and the influential position.**

In the **de-centred position**, an attitude of curiosity and respect towards your clients' experiences and narratives prevails, avoiding assuming that you know what is best for them. You listen carefully to their words and body language, ask open-ended questions and encourage them to share their stories and perspectives.

Use these questions to reflect on your de-centred position:

- *How can I show an attitude of curiosity and respect in my interactions with my clients?*
- *What strategies can I use to avoid assuming I know what is best for my clients?*
- *How can I encourage my clients to express their opinions and preferences?*

Even if you maintain a decentralised attitude, your role remains influential. Indeed, in the **influential position**, instead of telling clients what to do, you help them explore aspects of their lives, encouraging them to develop their own resources and skills. This means asking questions that support them in improving their personal agency, reflecting on their choices and finding solutions that are meaningful to them.

Use these questions to reflect on your influential position:

- *How can I use my influence to create conditions for positive change without imposing my ideas and conditions?*
- *What questions can I ask to help clients explore overlooked aspects of their lives?*
- *How can I support clients in identifying and developing their resources and skills?*

By using these positions together, you can create a more collaborative and respectful work environment where clients feel heard and valued. This not only improves the quality of your professional relationships but also encourages outcomes for the young clients you support.

You can stop the practice here, by analysing your individual responses and thinking more deeply about the why of your responses.

But the practice becomes more enriching if you share/compare answers with others. You can do this on two levels, with your peers (i.e., other youth professionals) and with your beneficiaries.

If done with colleagues, the other person or people reflect on the same questions and you share the answers.

If done with beneficiaries or clients, we at RAP think that it is useful for youth professionals to train for a de-centred and influential position through the practice of asking generative, circular, reflective and respectful questions to their clients. This approach helps you create the conditions for better professional results in a climate of mutual influence, as it allows you to consider together new ideas and possible alternatives to situations or problems, to stimulate thinking without preconceived truths, and to respect and encourage the sharing of different points of view. This form of influence therefore represents the exercise of power in a balanced and fair way.

Think about this imaginary situation:

You are working with a young client who is going through a period of high work stress. Your client is facing tight deadlines, high expectations from his boss and an increasing sense of being overwhelmed.

Then ask your clients the following questions:

A generative question:

- *What are some goals you would like to achieve in your work?*

A circular question:

- *How is your current workload affecting your overall well-being?*

A reflexive question:

- *What are some strategies you could adopt to better manage your stress?*

A respectful question:

- *What are your personal priorities and how can we help you maintain a balance between work and personal life?*

In both cases you can do this on an individual level or in a group context. If done in a group context, we recommend creating smaller groups of 4 or 5 people who share their reflections on the questions, then returning to the plenary and asking the groups to share their answers.

The recommended time for group reflection on the questions is approximately 30 minutes to optimise the quality of discussions, maintain high attention and energy, promote inclusiveness and ensure that time is used productively and efficiently.

At the end of the practice, whether it is carried out with your colleagues or with the beneficiary/client, at an individual or group level, you jointly analyse:

- *How can we better balance mutual influence in our interactions, taking this experience into consideration?*
- *What steps can we take to better integrate this practice into our future work sessions?*
- *How can we use our understanding of mutual influence to create a more collaborative and productive work environment?*

10. Collaboration



Collaboration is when people work together to achieve a common goal. It is like teamwork. In the context of youth work, collaboration is all about youth workers and young people working side by side, sharing ideas and making decisions together.

Compare the collaboration process with a puzzle. Each piece represents a different person with their own skills and ideas. When everyone collaborates, they attach their pieces together to create something bigger and better than they could on their own.

For youth workers, collaboration means listening to young people and involving them in decision-making. It is about recognising that young people have valuable insights and experiences to share, working alongside them to find solutions to challenges and knowing that they can achieve more when working together.

But collaboration is not just about working together. It is also about building relationships. When youth workers and young people collaborate, they build trust and mutual respect. They learn from each other, support each other, and grow together as a team.

By working together as equals, youth workers and young people can share power and influence, creating a more inclusive and better environment with a sense of belonging and connection.

Collaboration also involves communication and respect. It is important for youth workers to listen to young people's ideas and concerns and to involve them in decision-making processes. This helps young people feel heard and respected, and to take ownership of their own experiences and outcomes.

Generally speaking, collaboration is about coming together, listening to each other and working as a team. In youth work, it is a powerful tool for empowering young people, building trust and creating positive change in their lives and communities.

10.1 Collaboration as a two-way teaching and learning process

If we relate the concept of collaboration to the power dynamics in youth work—and in every type of relationship, actually—an important concept emerges: **mutual influence**.

When people collaborate together, they mutually influence one another with their ideas, thoughts, feelings, worldviews, values, principles and so on. In a way, when we are in a relationship, we change. Our system of ideas changes as new ideas from the people we relate to enter our system and give us alternative ways of considering the world.

Practically speaking, what does “mutually influencing” mean? It means teaching one another our respective points of view.



According to the Russian psychologist Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky (1896–1934), the process of teaching and learning implies establishing a **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**. ZPD can be defined as the difference between a person's potential stage of development and their current stage of development which is based on their capacity to solve problems without assistance from others. ZPD is the context where the teacher gives the learner tasks that are perceived neither as under-challenging nor as over-challenging and guides and supports the learner in achieving these tasks. In this psychological, relational and physical space, learning ideally takes place (Kölbl, 2006).

How does ZPD work in practice? In ZPD, teachers establish a **scaffolding** dynamic (Bruner, 1978). When learners begin to learn new concepts, they need help from the teachers in the form of active support. Initially, they rely on this support, but as they become more independent in their thinking and acquire new skills and knowledge, the support can be gradually reduced. This form of structured interaction between learners and teachers is similar to the scaffolding that supports the construction of a building. It is gradually dismantled when the work is completed (Shvartz & Bekker, 2019).

Seeing youth work as a teaching and learning process, where the professional continuously creates ZPDs for young people and helps them achieve specific goals on different topics, seems quite obvious. The professional is the expert, and the young client is the one who needs support to learn new things about his or her attitude, behaviour, way of thinking and so on. The youth worker has a role of power over youth and teaching is a way for the professional to apply this power.

What does not seem so obvious, instead, is that **collaboration is a two-way teaching and learning process**. As we already highlighted, collaboration is when people work together to achieve a common goal. In other words, collaboration implies the active participation of everyone who is involved in this process. Consequently:

- if collaboration is an active process characterised by mutual influence,
- if mutual influence means teaching one another,
- if teaching means establishing ZPDs and scaffolding processes,

whenever we collaborate, we both teach and learn from the other people we collaborate with.

In the context of youth work, this means that youth workers do not just teach their young clients but learn from them as well.

Youth workers learn from youth new ways of living, of interpreting the world, of conceiving relationships and of coping with personal and relational issues. Also, youth workers learn how to treat their young clients. How to support them, how to talk with them and how to verbally and non-verbally communicate with them.

Taking inspiration from White (2007), we at RAP argue that this mutually influencing, teaching and learning process, characterises every youth work collaboration-based relationship. It is implicit that youth workers and youth learn from each other.

The question is whether we, as youth workers, want to accept the idea that our young clients can also be our teachers. In our opinion, to accept this idea means reflecting on our role of power and reframing the professional relationship we established with them. It means taking into account that the young people we work with have power over us, just as we have over them. If we as youth workers acknowledge the fact that we can learn from youth, this will enrich us on a personal and professional level, as we will be able to see that:

- power is fluid and evolves over time in relationships with young people;
- our role of power can be exploited to our client's benefit;
- our young clients need to become more and more aware of the power they have and how their behaviours affect other people, starting with the youth workers who are supporting them.

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10.2 Practice: Nurturing collaboration through a two-way teaching and learning process

In the context of youth work, collaboration, understood as a process of mutual teaching and learning, is a practice that can be used to facilitate a process of mutual influence and balance the power dynamic between youth workers and young clients. This approach, in fact, implies that youth workers can not only teach their young clients but also learn from them new ways of living, interpreting the world, conceiving relationships and dealing with problems with a view to continuous professional growth. This process, therefore, involves a sharing of power and influence that generates a more inclusive environment that encourages professional development.



This practice helps you understand how you can integrate new skills and approaches to apply in professional challenges through this collaborative process of mutual teaching and learning, encourage the development of new, more creative and inclusive problem solving strategies, and co-create solutions that are often more effective as they better respond to your and your clients' needs and desires.

We at RAP believe it is helpful to first consider your past professional experiences, roles, and contributions. Think about a recent collaboration with your clients, describe what your common goal was, and reflect on how each participant contributed to the success of the project.

Ask yourself:

- *How have I contributed with my specific skills and experience to achieving the common goal?*
- *How have clients' perspectives and feedback shaped our joint decisions?*
- *What were our respective strengths during the collaborative relationship that contributed to the success of the goal?*

Now consider how your ideas and behaviours have changed as a result of working with your clients and how you think you have influenced them in turn.

Ask yourself:

- *What were the main changes in my beliefs or understanding of certain topics as a result of this experience?*
- *How has interacting with clients improved my ability to solve problems, communicate effectively, or manage expectations?*
- *How did my way of working or my decisions influence my clients' perceptions, behaviours, or results?*

You can stop the practice here by analysing your individual responses and thinking more deeply about the why of your responses.

But the practice becomes more enriching if you share/compare answers with others. You can do this with your peers (i.e., other youth professionals) and with your beneficiaries.

Form a mixed group of 4-6 people, including professionals and beneficiaries. Then divide professionals and beneficiaries into pairs, ideal for facilitating communication and allowing the interlocutor to devote more attention to their narration. In addition, the work done in pairs often turns out to be more intimate and less dispersive, which can foster openness and sincere communication.

This practice helps to understand how a problem that may arise on a relational level in the workplace can be addressed collaboratively rather than deliberately decided by one of the two parties through a common reflection on possible solutions.

Each pair considers the following imaginary situation to evaluate how to collaborate effectively and achieve the common goal:

A problem emerged in the professional relationship related to the planning of weekly activities. Some young clients feel frustrated because the proposed activities do not fully reflect their interests and desires, while some professionals find it difficult to balance clients' requests with available resources.

In the first 15 minutes, each professional asks the beneficiary the following questions:

- *What are your main interests and what would you like to do during our sessions/weeks?*
- *What makes you feel more involved and motivated during the activities we propose?*
- *What can we do to improve your experience and make activities more stimulating for you?*

Over the next 15 minutes, each beneficiary asks the professional the following questions:

- *How are the proposed activities chosen? Is there room for suggestions or personal preferences?*
- *How are challenges in balancing clients' demands with available resources addressed?*
- *What can we do together to improve activity planning and ensure greater satisfaction for both parties?*

After the respective reflections on the questions, all pairs return to the plenary and the whole group shares their answers.

The overall recommended time for group reflection on the questions is approximately 30 minutes to allow a sufficiently in-depth, fair and balanced discussion between clients and professionals. Furthermore, encourage participants to be concise and focused on the points they consider key.

At the end of the practice, whether it is carried out with your colleagues or with the beneficiary/client, at an individual or group level, you jointly analyse:

- *How has this experience influenced our understanding of power dynamics?*
- *How can we apply what you have learned in our future professional interactions?*
- *What changes can we make to our approach to foster more equitable and inclusive collaboration?*