

Name:

Instructor:

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### The Youth Worker and Juvenile Justice

Juvenile justice exemplifies a critical legal workers' responsibility for analyzing the behavior of the troubled youth to help them reintegrate into society. By implementing positive change, they also observe the possible threats that may emerge when cooperation is impossible. Currently, youth workers may engage in work differently depending on the interest of the professional and the needs of the person with whom he or she works. Youth workers educate juveniles, monitor their behavior, offer practical strategies for change, and protect their rights while working with legal issues, mental health cases, and social agencies.

Youth workers in the juvenile justice system serve the essential role of a mediator between juveniles and the legal system. Recognizing the specific needs of youth offenders, they observe the variety of factors contributing to deviant behavior and the way the youth responds to it. These people serve in different institutions where they assist offenders with rehabilitation and represent their interests from legal and social perspectives. Youth workers' task is to ensure that offenders have a chance for improvement and their rights are acknowledged when legal authorities make decisions regarding their progress and improvement.

One of the most common strategies for the promotion of positive behavior is education. Youth work includes the understanding that the illegal activities committed by offenders are often the result of social, economic, legal, and family constituents. Youth workers assist young people in developing self-awareness: “Youth workers should engage young people by encouraging them to name and explore their identities” (McDaniel 144). They help each individual recognize the negative contributors that impacted their current status. At the same time, such a perspective offers them to develop solidarity with the community and within the existing social units to rely on similarities regardless of differences. They integrate offenders into the community to ensure the first steps in rehabilitation are successful.

Furthermore, youth workers offer strategies for change and help in forming the coping mechanisms for further development and the adequate assessment of the youth’s possibilities. Youth workers explain and help to understand what factors limit young people’s potential and help them to address these challenges. They inform them on the issues other people have and how they intersect. By telling offenders that the issues they face are not inevitable, youth workers inform them on the strategies to target their inequalities (145). Rather than focusing on the damaging and harmful acts these individuals committed, professionals show them the possibilities to return to the community and overcome existing limitations.

Nevertheless, juvenile justice professionals combine education and prevention strategies with advocacy and cooperation with legal agencies. Legal institutions have the main impact on youth offenders, and the laws that regulate their re-adaptation should not concentrate

on punishment but improvement and psychological assistance. Also, they should perform evaluation and reduce community risk: “Balance between officers’ dual roles of overseeing youth’s fulfillment of legal requirements, if necessary, while simultaneously working in partnership with youth” (Weber et al. 17). They may advocate for a better environment for meetings and communication, create a flexible and adaptable system that considers youth’s efforts, and ensure that the discrimination against this group is eliminated.

Additionally, youth workers cooperate with mental health facilities. Reintegration into society often requires mental health and drug abuse screening (11). The task of juvenile justice is not only to control and monitor but also to develop initiatives that target the sources of disturbance for offenders. They should observe whether an individual needs additional help with distancing himself or herself from previous destructive patterns and offer him or her counseling. Youth workers are familiar with the needs of these individuals and may stimulate the creation of specific counseling programs that target particular behaviors that were problematic for them. Understanding that juveniles probably do not possess the resources for psychological treatment, youth workers may either provide emotional support themselves or ask responsible agencies to provide non-intrusive comfortable support.

Finally, youth workers may cooperate with social agencies to promote the community cooperation and acceptance of juveniles. The best effects are achieved by an equal investment in the assessment and promotion of the youth’s rights in the community. Youth workers encourage societies to provide economic and social support to decrease the probability of social

isolation and stigmatization. Similarly, they encourage agencies to develop a comfortable and flexible scheme where youth's families receive help: "Jurisdictions can invest in home-based, family-centered programs such as Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy or more generic practices such as parenting skills programs and family therapy, which have been shown to reduce recidivism rates" (21). The cooperation with agencies varies depending on the needs of each person but should account for the causes of previous offenses.

Consequently, youth workers assess and supervise youth offenders for mental, physical, and personal rehabilitation. They teach juveniles about the aspects that have impacted their behavior and offer them a realistic plan for change. At the same time, they promote their interests through cooperation with legal, mental health, and social agencies.

Works Cited

McDaniel, Monica. "Social Justice Youth Work: Actualizing Youth Rights." *Journal of Youth Development*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2017, pp. 136–148.

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