

# What is a Youth Service?



### **What is a Youth Service?**

This is an information guide for Parents, Families and Young People from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds, so that families can know more about youth services and what they do and how they can help.

### **What does the Term 'Youth' Mean in Australia?**

Different cultures may have different ideas about what it means to be young. In Australia, the people between the ages of 12 to 25 are considered 'Young people' or 'Youth'. This is considered to be a stage of life after being a child and before being an adult. Sometimes, young people aged 12 to 18 are considered to be 'teenagers' or 'adolescents'. Youth workers and youth services are especially for this age group from 12 to 25, and also their families.

### **How to get an Interpreter:**

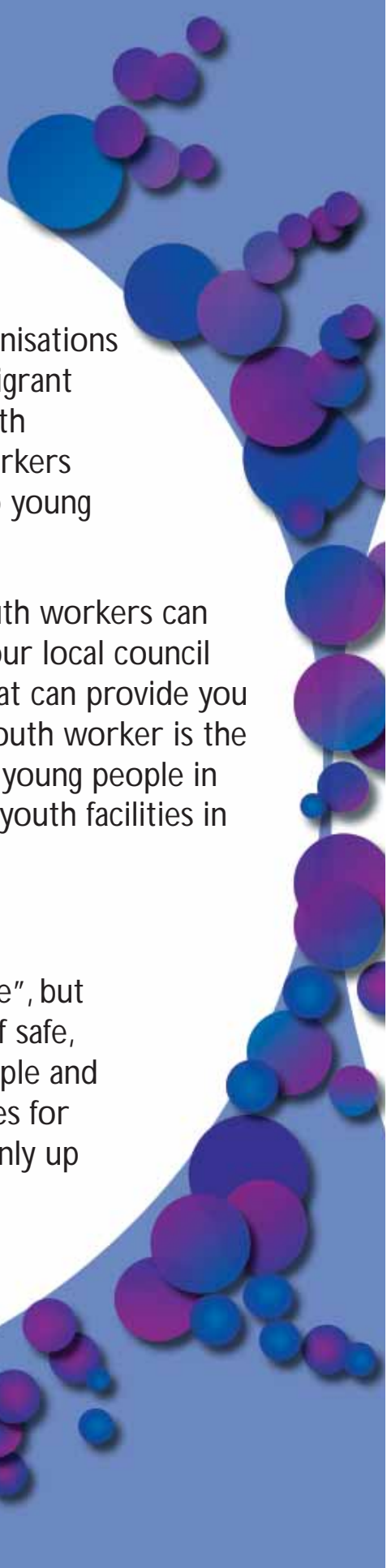
If you want to contact a youth service in your area and are unable to understand English well, you can call Translation and Interpreting Service (TIS) ph 131 450 (this is a free call if you explain to TIS that you are a new migrant).

## **A Note to Parents**

Sometimes young people argue, disagree or become tense with their families- this is normal for every family. Also, people who are from diverse cultural backgrounds may have extra conflict in families because of having more than one culture influencing what family members think and do. For example, parents or family members that have grown up in another country or culture can have different values and expectations to their teenager who is growing up in, or who gets more influenced by the Australian society. This can cause some conflict in some families. Another example is, young people can be confused about which ideas and values to use (the values and ideas of their cultural background or the values and ideas of mainstream society like their friends or TV). Young people can often feel like they are living in '2 worlds', and this can cause disagreements or arguments.

## **Who are Youth Workers and How Can They Help You?**

Youth workers are qualified and experienced people who work with young people. Their qualifications may vary and they may have different titles such as counsellors, social workers, welfare workers, youth health workers, community workers and youth development workers. They provide young people with information, help and activities in a safe environment.



Youth workers can be found in a variety of community organisations and government agencies. These can be in Youth Centres, Migrant Resource Centres, Neighbourhood Centres, Charities, Health Centres, Community Centres and Local Councils. These workers are available to answer questions and to give information to young people and parents

You can ring or go meet your local youth worker. Some youth workers can arrange to make a home visit, or meet you at a local café. Your local council has a youth worker in their Community Services section that can provide you with information about local youth services. Your Council youth worker is the person to contact if you want to know what is available for young people in your area or if you think there should be more activities or youth facilities in your neighbourhood.

### **What is a Youth Service?**

Youth Services are not for young people who are in “trouble”, but are there to work with young people to provide a variety of safe, useful and enjoyable activities. They can also help young people and families with problems. Most youth services provide activities for young people aged between 12 and 25 years of age, some only up

to 18. Some activities may be just for boys and other activities may be just for girls. Some youth services run programs for specific age groups only or for young people interested in specific issues. Opening hours for youth services vary from service to service.

**Youth Centres** are places where there are services for young people. They can also support parents/families while their young people are growing up. They may offer:

- Recreational and sporting activities
- Counselling (emotional support) and practical support for problems
- Homework and educational assistance
- Help to find a job
- School holiday and after school programs
- Music and dance
- Arts and crafts

Some youth centres also offer “Drop-In”. This means young people can come or “drop-in” to a youth centre, meet other young people or talk to a youth worker without making an appointment. Some “drop-in” centres have activities such as arts and craft and sports and recreation activities.

### **Youth Services in your area include -**

Local Council:

Ethno-specific service:

Generalist Youth Service:

Migrant Resource Centre:

PCYC:

Youth/Community Health Centre:

Centrelink:


This information guide has been prepared by the Multicultural Youth Issues Network NSW (MYINN), a statewide forum established to identify and develop action on issues affecting Multicultural or ethnic young people. For further information contact Youth Action Policy Association (YAPA) ph (02) 9687 1466.

## Other Types of Services for Young People

**Migrant Services** provide assistance for people from a migrant background. These services may include casework (practical information & support), groups, English classes, support groups, etc. Some migrant services have programs for one specific culture (they support one culture and they are usually from that culture themselves and can speak another language other than English).

**Family Support Services** offer support for families who are experiencing issues like conflict, separation, divorce or grief. Services include information, support and counselling for an individual or for a group. Some services have a youth worker who assists the family with their children or if the parent is a young person. Family support services can be found at Health Centres, Migrant Resource Centres, charities and other welfare agencies.

**Employment services** provide information and training on how to get a job. Services include help with choosing a career, information on different types of jobs and courses, and help with preparing job applications and interviews. These services may be based at a youth centre or part of a youth service.



**Youth Health Centres** provide free health information and help to young people. Most centres employ doctors, nurses, psychologists and youth workers. Youth Health centres can offer check ups, clinics and advice and counselling on a range of topics such as relationships with family and friends, school and confidence building. Many centres also run health education programs with schools. All health and counselling services are confidential. Some Youth Health Centres also provide services to parents of young people.

**Mental Health Services** provide support, counselling, programs and group activities for young people. Both migration and growing up are times of change in a young person's life, and mental health is about how we feel emotionally and how we are able to cope with the pressures that affect all of us. Mental Health Services have psychiatrists, social workers, and other professionals that can help with the stresses that young people feel at these times. Phone Transcultural Mental Health on 1800 648 911.

**Youth Accommodation Services** are supervised places where young people (usually 14-18 years) can stay if they cannot live at home and have nowhere else to stay, or if young people or families need a break from each other. Youth Accommodation Services have strict rules. Young people must help with cooking, cleaning and washing. Youth workers will also help young people to stay at school or find a job. The length of time a young person can stay varies from one to two nights or in long-term accommodation up to two years. For emergency youth accommodation call 02 9318 1531 or 1800 424 830.

**Community Legal Centres** have Children's solicitors who can help young people on a range of legal matters such as police charges, court appearances and tenancy. Ph. The Shop Front Legal Service (02) 9360 1847

## Special Programs that Assist Young People

**The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors - STARTTS** provide a holistic range of services to facilitate the healing process for refugees who have been exposed to torture and trauma. The service also provides support to newly arrived people from refugee-like backgrounds, and special programs for young people. Ph (02) 97941900.

**Police, Community and Youth Clubs - PCYCs** are staffed by Police Officers and volunteers. They offer sport and recreational activities such as self-defence, dance and basketball for a small cost. Ph (02) 9625 9111.

**Disability Services** work with people with an intellectual, physical or mental disability. They offer information, support and practical assistance. Some services have a youth worker or a youth program.

**Drug and Alcohol Services** provide counselling (emotional support) and practical support for those who are using drugs (including alcohol) and they want to stop or cut down the drug/alcohol use, or if they want to handle their problems better. They can also help a family member or parent who is having difficulties with another person's drug/alcohol use. They provide information, resources and education courses, and work with schools and youth centres to raise awareness of drugs (including alcohol).  
Ph ADIS Alcohol and Drug Information Service  
Ph (02) 9361 8000 or 1800 42 2599.

**Gay and Lesbian Services** offer support, information and activities to people who are same-sex attracted and/or gender questioning. Some services may have a youth worker or youth program. Services may also provide assistance and support around health issues such as sexual health, mental health and suicide. Some lesbian and gay services are especially for parents or family members to assist them support their children. PFLAG is for (Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays) Ph 9294 1002. Twenty10 youth and family service runs a number of support programs for same-sex attracted and gender questioning young people. Ph 02 8594 9555 or 1800 652 010 (outside Sydney).

**Sexual Assault Services** offer help to people who have been raped or sexually assaulted. Counselling, support and advice are provided by sensitive and experienced staff. All services are confidential. Call the Sexual Assault Hotline on 02 9819 7357 or for country callers, 1800 424 017.