

Young People's Well- Being and Resilience

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Introduction

The focus of this assignment will be to draw on the author's theory and experience within her own Youth Work practice, where she feels that she has supported young people to enhance their well-being and resilience.

The author will draw on two different types of well-being: objective well-being, which refers to measurable factors such as physical health and education, and subjective well-being, which involves personal feelings and understanding of joy and satisfaction in life, as explained by Thrive (2020). The author believes these differences are important for understanding and supporting young people's needs, as explained by Soffia & Turner (2021), to understand this can support us, as Youth Workers, to gain a good understanding of how a young person is really doing in life. They go on to discuss how often when policy is written on behalf of children and young people, in relation to their well- being, it is often written by adults who tend to forget that what is important to an adult, is often not important to a young person.

Whitworth (2023) agrees and continues to discuss how engaging and building positive relationships with young people and allowing them to have a voice would be a better way forward for any policymaker. The author believes this is where Youth

Work is vital, because as outlined in the Youth Work National Occupational Standards Functional Map (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019), Youth Work bases its foundations on building professional and meaningful relationships, providing a commitment to ensuring that young people are included with a focus on their interests, health and wellbeing.

The author will explore three examples from her own work experience within the field of Youth Work, where she believes she has successfully helped young people improve their well-being.

This is an important aspect of Youth Work because as Opie and Williams (no date) highlight, when a young person forms positive and trusting relationships within a Youth Work environment, this normally becomes the foundation not only for enhanced well-being and resilience, but also it becomes a staple for the young person being included in a fun yet educational environment, where they are encouraged to participate and be expressive.

They go on to discuss the five ways to wellbeing and how encouraging these steps through Youth Work activities can be beneficial to encourage sleeping well, feeling well and being happy.

The author will also explore two types of happiness: hedonism, which is a short-term form of happiness which comes from pleasure and being quickly pleased, and eudaimonia, which is long-term happiness that comes from living a good and positive life, as explained by Vinney (2024).

The author will critically explore well-being and the ways in which Youth Work can promote and enhance a young person's well-being, while taking into consideration

the development of risk and resilience factors. The author will discuss how Youth Work can be a risk or protective factor when considering well-being.

Case Study 1

The author had the experience of leading a programme that was aimed at young people, within a Pembrokeshire community, whereby the young people would attend the local youth club during the school day with their teachers. Simply Stakeholders (2023) describe this as a community collaboration, where two or more teams or groups join to develop and deliver a project. YEDA (2023) agree and explain that collective teamwork within Youth Work can show young people that they are valued, their development is important along with their future.

The programme supported young people who struggled in a normal classroom environment but would attend the youth club once a week and enjoy engaging in arts and craft, cooking, playing pool or simply having a chat.

Robinson (2006) challenges the way in which children and young people are educated, explaining that everyone is expected to conform and be the same because there is more focus on subjects like literature and maths, in comparison to subjects like drama and dance which are not delivered as often. His message is that young people should be encouraged to be creative, which is what this programme was all about.

Thompson and Woodger (2020) conducted a report analysing the needs of young people in one area of London, where it was discovered that Youth Clubs were the most required Youth Provision, with mental health and wellbeing listed as one of the highest issues that young people face. They discuss how most of the stakeholders

voiced the need for Youth Workers, explaining that this was the service that was requested more in comparison to more targeted services. They show an understanding to the difference a Youth Worker can have on young people and the resilience that they can instil.

One of the reasons for the project was to enable the young people to engage in educative activities that they could also help to plan. This giving them a sense of responsibility, at the end of each session, the author would sit down with the young people and discuss what they had enjoyed and what they would like to do the following week, for example, if it was cooking, a plan would be discussed. The teachers that would attend with the young people, were often surprised at the change in them, because they engaged well in activities that they enjoyed doing, but it also gave them something to look forward to the following week.

Taquet et al. (2016) discuss how theorists suggest that when individuals make choices that are less likely to cause negative feelings, they are in a hedonic state whereby they will choose to do things that will have a positive effect for them.

By planning with the young people what they would be doing in the next session, it would provide them with a sense of hedonic happiness, while they would still be happy from the activity they had just completed, they would now have the next one to look forward to.

In giving the young people, the opportunity to discuss and plan the next session, the author believes there was an element of what Freire (1970) discussed, whereby he believes that teachers should give young people an opportunity to learn through talking and asking questions. He believed that young people should be allowed to be curious and creative, suggesting that they should be engaged in project work that

allows them to learn. Freire also discussed how teachers should also be open to learning. The author participated in sessions during this project, whereby the young people would lead, as a result the author learnt a lot in the form of arts and crafts.

However, Ord (2007) argues that Freire's philosophy is not totally true, while he understands the concept of what is being said he argues that a teacher will always have a sense of power and authority because they are the ones with the experience and knowledge. The author believes this makes the difference between a teacher and a Youth Worker; a Youth Worker can very much engage with young people in the way that Freire suggests.

Afzal (2024) describes this as the foundations for informal education and explains that this is when learning happens outside of a normal classroom setting, where young people can learn new skills based on their interests and needs. It can become a means of experiential learning where they get a sense of enjoyment out of doing something new.

Jeffs and Smith (2010) would argue and describe this experience as being a means of non-formal education, whereby learning processes have been developed and are delivered away from the normal school or college setting. They are often delivered in a way that learning is interesting and fun. They go on to explain that formal education is linked to educational settings where a curriculum is followed. Informal education is when an individual learns through conversation or everyday challenges, they explain how people can learn by exploration.

While this experience was often, an educational opportunity, the young people knew that they did not have to engage if they did not want to, in accordance with Youth

Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2022) (YWWRG).

There was very much a holistic approach to the work that was carried out, and the young people reported that they felt included in the activities that they did, from the planning all the way through. The programme also provided a sense of community and belonging, which was crucial for the young people's emotional and social development, as explained by Clarke- Drayson (2023) who explains that giving young people a sense of belonging, a community that they can be a part of can enhance their well- being. This is why a Youth Worker is important in a young person's life; they can provide a young person with a community where they are accepted and included at a time in their life where they are experiencing so many changes.

Hoddinott and Davies (2024) argue that young people who are happy to par- take in Youth Work provisions are generally found to be happier and more confident individuals with less health issues, they often are more successful in adulthood. In research that they conducted, this was evident in comparison to young people who had grown up in similar circumstances but without any Youth Work involvement.

Additionally, the teachers observed a positive change in the young people's behaviour and attitude because of their participation in the programme. Overall, this initiative proved to be a valuable and effective way to support and nurture young people with specific needs, in turn the experience enhanced the young people's well- being, so much, that although the programme would only run once a week, it was a part of their week that they would often say they looked forward to.

The author believes that this programme catered for the young people participating and their happiness, the Children's Society (2022) explain how subjective well-being looks at a young person's thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the world around them.

Williams (2021) discusses Bronfenbrenner's ecological model whereby his theory shows how certain aspects of a young person's life can affect their well-being. It looks at the young person as an individual as the inner circle and then delves deeper into the microsystem which looks at family life, school life and religion for example, then it goes on to explore the mesosystem and so on. Williams understands the criticism that this model has been subject to, however acknowledges that the model simply explores the experiences and relationships that a young person holds and how these can affect them going forward.

The author notes how this experience would have been a positive one for the young people involved, because it gave them an opportunity to learn new skills and participate in activities that they wanted to be a part of. While feedback was collected during a discussion at the end of each session, none of the young people gave negative feedback, and always seemed to be looking forward to the next session.

The Education Endowment Foundation (2021) understands the importance of gathering feedback, this can be crucial to a young person's development and understanding, as well as to their well-being and resilience. The author believes that if a young person is not happy with certain aspects of a programme that is being conducted, they will be less likely to take part, if the Youth Worker listens to the young person and considers their opinions in decisions that are being made, they young person will feel valued and listened to.

Harvard University (2025) describes one of the ways that objective well-being might be measured in, is how a young person might view their education, in this circumstance the author believes that she has enhanced objective well-being for the individuals that participated in this programme, because they were able to learn new skills while enjoying themselves.

Case Study 2

The author was able to put her Youth Work skills to good use while supporting a young person from the local area who had been referred to a specialist team due to experiencing mental health issues. The National Youth Agency (2019) discuss how common it is for young people to experience poor mental health and understand that this can be caused by many factors, to include the transitions that they are experiencing both mentally and physically, exam pressures, peer pressures and family life.

Charraighe and Reynolds (2024) explore how Youth Work is a good intervention for young people with poor mental health, they describe how Youth Work's voluntary basis appeals to young people, the fact that Youth Work can only begin where the young person is, this meaning that a Youth Worker does not dictate to a young person, but rather discusses with them, exploring with them different ways to view something that may be affecting them, giving them a wider understanding of the situation that they may find themselves in. This approach shows a young person that a Youth Worker will learn with them as opposed to teaching them.

The National Youth Agency (2019) argue that while the Youth Service is a great way to support poor mental health in young people, the Youth Service are often

understaffed and often do not have the relevant training to be able to support young people under these circumstances.

The author believes that if a Youth Worker has built a good relationship with the young person, and they have the relevant skill set, this could be a good way to introduce positive well-being strategies, which will show the young person how resilient they are.

While the young person was very reluctant to engage in the first meeting, the author built a good rapport with them and discovered that they quite enjoyed playing board games. The author pulled out a game of Jenga and challenged the young person to a game, It was whilst playing the game that the young person started to relax and started to engage better. Bandpass (2024) explain that playing board games has many benefits, some of which include relieving stress, this is because playing games serves as a good distraction, but more so, it can leave individuals feeling as if they have achieved something, in particular if they win.

Towards the end of the session the young person had agreed for the team to conduct a home visit over the next few days, requesting that the author was present.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [NICE] (2019) underpin in their quality statement how a continuity of care and support can have a very positive impact on a young person's health and well-being. The author agrees with this and believes this is the same within Youth Work practice, sometimes it is very apparent that a young person prefers to engage with a certain Youth Worker, while this is not always possible, it can certainly help the individual, in particular if the Youth Worker is someone that they have built a good rapport with and can relate to.

The author and a colleague conducted the home visit a few days later and it was very apparent that the family were living in poverty, the young person was living in a single parent home with two siblings, the home was very unkempt, and the parent said that while they had a car, they had no money to purchase fuel. Cameron and Moss (2011) understand that when families live in poverty, it can, for some young people, be the foundations for how they will live their lives. They describe how this really does affect a young person's well-being. The author feels that this is more reason for Youth Workers to work with young people living in poverty, because having a Youth Work provision can provide individuals with experiences that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. It would also give the young person an opportunity to talk to a trusted adult about any worries or issues they may be facing. Masraff (2023) explains how Youth Workers can even support young people with schoolwork and by giving them the confidence to attend their exams, support that young people may not otherwise have access to.

While the young person was prescribed vitamin supplements to enhance their mood, the author believes that it was the Youth Work approach that made a big difference to the young person and their family.

Gray and Wood (2017) explain how often when a young person is prescribed supplements or medication, it can have great benefits and helps to regulate their mood which in turn has a positive effect on their mental health and well-being. The team ensured that they received a large food parcel from the food bank, which helped them a great deal.

Elsen and Ord (2021) argue that Youth Work is much more effective than a prescription, they explain that to give a young person a prescription can leave them

feeling deflated and often reliant on medical intervention. They go on to suggest that when a young person engages in Youth Work, it can educate them to focus on their strengths, giving them a sense of achievement, it also encourages them to talk through the issues that may be affecting them, with someone that they are familiar with.

Ben- Arie et al (2014) explore how living in poverty can be the reason why a young person's subjective well- being may be low, but explain that this is one contribution and normally there would be several factors why someone may not have a good sense of well- being, just as they explain how it is possible to live a comfortable lifestyle which make it appear as though individuals have a good sense of well-being, however this won't necessarily make them happy.

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2021) argue that in fact people living in poverty are more likely to encounter mental health issues, along with a shorter life expectancy and are at a greater chance of being diagnosed with chronic disease. They go on to explain that the majority of people living in poverty are children at higher risk of having developmental delays, chronic sickness, nutritional deficiencies and toxic stress.

The author built a positive relationship with the young person, enough that they were able to disclose to the author that all they really wanted was a bike of their own so that they could go out with friends. The author recognised how challenging this must have been for this young person, especially at a time when friendship groups are so important. Newport Academy (2024) explain how it is normal for young people to prefer to spend time with their friends rather than family, they also explain how being

rejected by a peer group can be compared to that of physical pain for a young person.

The author gained permission to fundraise so that the team could buy the young person a bike. The young person was overjoyed with the bike and was happy for one of the team to sit with them and show them how to change a tyre and make minor repairs and adjustments if they needed to. The author feels that it is due to the Youth Work approach that the young person has not needed to access the service again.

Carr (2022) understands that when a Youth Worker works with a young person, following Roger's (1957) three core conditions is very important and can help the young person to build resilience. The three core conditions are empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard, whereby a Youth Worker should be understanding, supportive and non-judgemental.

Ungar (no date) explains that resilience, regardless of what an individual has already overcome, if they are given the right tools and the right support, they will build resilience which will also have a positive impact on their well-being.

Llorca et al (2020) suggest that poverty can play a big part in a person's decline in objective well-being, explaining that being deprived of material objects, living in poor housing conditions and having a lack of income can also have a negative effect on a person's health. The author believes that on this occasion the team worked well together to ensure that they enhanced the young person's objective well-being by providing a bike, she also believes they have enhanced the objective well-being for the family too by providing a food parcel to save them a little bit of money.

One of the risks of a young person living in poverty is that they are more likely to experience adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), The Robertson Trust (2023)

explain that they are more likely to experience social isolation along with shame and stigma. This can have a lasting effect on young people, many of whom will carry this through to adulthood. By introducing young people who live in poverty to Youth Work Services, this can ensure that they receive the support they need to move forward in a healthy and positive manner.

Case Study 3

The author worked as part of a work placement on a children's ward in West Wales, the author was placed within the therapeutic play team, a team who specialise in making a child or young person's stay in hospital more relaxed and at ease, often they do this through the medium of therapeutic play, in accordance with The NICE (2001) guidelines.

The author was looking after a young person on the ward, the young person was anxious about an operation that they were awaiting, and it seemed to be that they couldn't relax. Marshall and Waring (2021) understand that Youth Workers in a healthcare setting are valuable beyond measure because of the positive impact they can have on young people who are facing difficult times. They report that Youth Workers can make their time in hospital much easier.

Young Minds (2025) suggest that in fact it is a good idea to support young people with a 'resilience check in', they explain that this kind of activity can remind young people about things that would normally help to boost their confidence, they also suggest supporting them to recognise their inner strength.

The author spent time with the young person, getting to know them better and finding out what sort of things they enjoyed doing.

Meunier (2025) explains how often it can be difficult for Youth Workers to build a positive relationship with a young person, but if a Youth Worker listens and observes and takes interest in what the young person enjoys, then naturally they build a rapport.

The young person said that they enjoyed playing on the PlayStation, the author suggested that there was a gaming console on the ward for young people to use and offered to go and get the console, to which the young person agreed.

Stealth (2024) explain how gaming can be positive for a young person's well-being and has been proven to enhance emotional development. They go on to explain that certain games have proven to be therapeutic and can support young people to open up about how they are feeling.

The author played a few games with the young person which helped them to relax. While playing games, the young person shared stories with the author about home life and school and what career they would like to go into. The author recognises how giving the young person that little bit of time enhanced their well-being, they became more relaxed and much more talkative.

The National Children's Bureau (2021) conducted research with children and young people to find out what was important to them when visiting a healthcare setting, they discovered that young people prefer to be in a homely environment that is comfortable and warm. They value having technology close to hand, as they would at home. It was also discussed how comforting it can be when staff are welcoming, kind and take an interest, reporting that this can help to put them at ease.

The author believes that offering the young person this little bit of support will have helped the young person to build resilience, because the next time they are anxious

about a hospital visit, they will know that they can ask for a gaming console, they will also understand that the children's ward have teams in place to support young people when their emotions are heightened.

The Children's Society (2025) describe the steps that a young person can take to build and develop their emotional resilience, they suggest considering how your issue will affect you in a week, month or year from now. Even when your issue seems negative now, try and consider at least one positive that will come out of it. Remember your worth.

Youth Link Scotland (2025) recognises how Youth Work adopts a person- centred and holistic approach to health, which supports positive well- being along with physical activity and emotional resilience, among other factors that affect well- being.

The author believes that she has also demonstrated counselling skills by chatting with this young person and by allowing them to engage and speak openly about the way they were feeling and about the things that matter the most to them.

Young Gloucestershire (no date) explain that Youth Workers can provide good counselling skills by empowering young people and by allowing them to talk openly about whatever it may be that they need to discuss. They understand that this needs to be done in a safe environment where they will not be judged. This underpins the CLD Standards Council Scotland (2019) standards and guidelines that they provide for all Youth Work provisions.

Alzahrani and Res (2021) say that being in a hospital setting can negatively impact on a young person's subjective well- being, suggesting that it can be emotionally distressing where illness or injury is concerned, it can also mean that young people

are unable to go about their day as they normally would, meaning that the lack of their normal routine can have a negative effect on them.

Nurseline Community Services (2023) say that being in hospital can also have a negative effect on a young person's objective well-being, this is because it can cause feelings of depression and anxiety. A lack of sleep is another factor that may contribute towards this.

Conclusion

To conclude, the author believes that she is an effective youth worker because through being active in her role and engaging in this module, she has learnt that a good Youth Worker needs to be resilient and well to be able to enhance wellbeing in young people. As explained by the Children's Society (2022) it's vital that everyone can experience good well-being, it measures how an individual, community or nation is doing in the present and how this can be positively sustained going into the future.

Young Minds (2025) explain how young people experiencing ACE's can be supported by being encouraged to build healthy relationships with both Youth Workers and their peers. They explain that while a young person may not necessarily want to openly talk about any trauma that they may be facing, having the opportunity to experience new things and having a sense of achievement can have a positive impact.

It is also important to remember how the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC] (no date) promote rights for children and young people, these rights include article 12 where they feel heard and what they say is taken seriously

and article 24 where they can access the best possible healthcare and know where they can access information on how to be safe and healthy.

As a Youth Worker, the author feels that she has a responsibility to promote young people's rights as a means of enhancing their well-being, by knowing their rights they will have better knowledge of when something is not as it should be, which puts them in a position where they can access support should they need it, or ask questions if they don't know the answer.

When considering the rights of young people, their education should be taken into consideration-

Force is used not by those who have become weak under the preponderance of the strong, but by the strong who have emasculated them. Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferals of information. Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is a commitment to others (Freire, 1970).

Gowman (2024) agrees and argues that while knowledge is power, and certainly in a sense where the world is changing and people question things that they would never think to question before, yet children and young people in educational settings are still expected to conform, they are still expected to listen and follow curriculum instead of being encouraged to ask questions that may lead to topics that they want to learn about and may be more interested in.

On an end note, the author believes that Youth Workers should also be open to learning, in particular where they can learn from the young people in which they work with, it gives young people a sense of achievement and the Youth Worker a sense of meaning.

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