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1.1 Introduction

This report focuses on the chosen role as a youth worker within the health & social care sector. The reason this role was chosen is because it offers early intervention, safeguarding, and supporting young people. The role is important because it promotes wellbeing, confidence building, positive outcomes, and it also helps to develop essential life skills. This report will include the responsibilities and duties of a youth worker, assessing three job specific skills required for the job role, and exploring ways of improving these skills in professional practice.

1.2 Description of, and background to, Youth Worker in Healthcare

A youth worker's duty is to support young people ranging from 11 to 25 years old with personal, social and educational development to help build confidence and life skills through advocacy, providing one to one support, planning activities such as workshops and providing guidance around topics such as mental health, bullying, education and safety National Youth Agency, (2024). The most important duty of this role is keeping records and safeguarding information, building trusting relationships with young individuals allowing a person-centred approach so that individuals can be supported based on their own experiences and feelings. This enables the youth worker to offer activities to suit the individual to help them reach their potential and empower them to make their own positive choices National Youth Agency, (2024). Another important duty is safeguarding young people from harm or educating them for example if they are in intimate relationships sex education can be provided for safety UK Youth, (2024).

To be a youth worker there are a few crucial skills needed for this role such as good communication, patience, problem-solving and the ability to build trusting voluntary relationships. This is an important role in healthcare as it provides early intervention reducing risk such as poor mental health, crime and exploitation UK Youth, (2024).

1.3 Evaluation of the skills needed for Youth Worker in Healthcare

Good communication skills, building trust and active listening are the most important skills in the role of a youth worker because these can aid in building confidence and self-esteem of these young individuals GOV.UK, (2025). According to Chauke and Kakuru (2025), not having these skills can be harmful as not having a voluntary trusting relationship causes mistrust between young people and youth workers, not giving the youth worker an opportunity to safeguard them from harm whether that's self inflicted or externally inflicted harm as they've been shut out.

These skills allow other members in the healthcare system to do their jobs efficiently as young people are more likely to attend appointments and improve communication. For example, medical information can be explained in a way that can be understood. Youth workers also support emotional wellbeing of individuals

making it easier for nurses and carers to focus on physical wellbeing (Marshall and Waring, 2021).

If a youth worker does not have these skills it will affect their ability to do their job effectively. Lack of good communication can lead to important information not being shared properly for example, other professionals in the health care team may not get accurate updates regarding the individual resulting in confusion and poor care Chauke and Kakuru, (2025). Lack of listening skills can result in poor relationships being made causing young people to not trust them resulting in behavioral challenges rising, without these skills providing support becomes difficult. Chauke and Kakuru, (2025).

Youth workers may experience conflicts and challenges on a regular basis whether it's behavioral issues or disagreements between other healthcare professionals. However, utilising these skills such as good communication will help issues to be resolved in a respectful way. Another example would be that if the individual is in a public setting and is experiencing anxiety, good communication and active listening skills would help to reassure them and build their confidence in that setting.

1.4 Strategies to improve the skills for Youth Worker

The first strategy proposed is training and continuing professional development (CPD) which consists of training courses, communication building sessions and safeguarding training, this strategy was chosen as it strengthens the skills that are most vital in raising professionalism in this role. Accessing training enables youth workers to develop stronger communication and relationship building skills. It also ensures they follow best practice as according to (Chauke & Kakuru, 2025) lack of continuous training demonstrates inconsistent youth work. As a result of the CPD workshop on communication, they should develop the skill of communicating calmly and clearly with young people, reducing misunderstandings with other healthcare professionals.

The second strategy proposed is reflective practice and supervision. This involves consistent meetings with supervisors, reflective journals and reviewing past interactions with young people. Reflective practice allows youth workers to learn from mistakes, developing self-awareness when communicating or how they handle complicating situations. According to (Marshall & Waring, 2021) it is a must for youth workers to reflect on the impact of their practice on young people and multi-disciplinary teams. For example, a supervisor and the youth worker can discuss an incident where a young person became unsettled, identifying a better approach to prevent escalation helping for future occurrences. This strategy was chosen as it develops empathy and building trust which is key when working in healthcare teams.

The last strategy proposed is shadowing, this consists of shadowing nurses, social

workers, mental health staff or meetings, Shadowing enables youth workers to see how healthcare professionals communicate clearly, this strategy was chosen as learning directly from other professionals improves, communication and trust UK Youth, (2024). According to (Ravalier et al., 2022) youth workers shadowing other healthcare professionals improves their clarity when sharing information across teams. For example, youth workers can observe how nurses explain medical information to service users teaching them how to communicate effectively with young people.

1.5 Conclusion

In summary, the role of a youth worker in healthcare provides early intervention, promoting emotional wellbeing and safeguarding young people. This report demonstrated the importance of key skills such as active listening, communication and the ability to build relationships and showcasing the impact of poor skills on healthcare teams and young people. This report also explored three strategies of training, reflective supervision and shadowing to strengthen the practice. Improving these core skills provides high quality support to these individuals ensuring they are empowered and fully understood in different settings like health and social care.

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