

Selecting Youth Development Workers

Sample Interview Questions

The following questions are based on suggestions from 130 surveys from youth workers and competencies for front-line youth workers developed by the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY). They begin with some general questions you may want to ask of candidates followed by questions that relate to the NCY competencies for Youth Workers (in bold).

Overview Questions

- Describe your ideal workday.
- What experience shaped you as a young person?
- What is the most important thing you think you would get from working here?

Understands and applies basic child and adolescent development principles.

- What age group would you like to work with the most and why?
- What do you see as key issues facing young people?
- Can you state some basic differences between a 10-year-old and a 15-year-old?
- How might you see yourself working with a 12-year-old?

Communicates and develops positive relationships with youth.

- How do you go about developing relationships with youth?

- What are your best memories as a young person working with an adult?
- How does this relate to how you might relate to young people?
- Finish the statement, "I relate to others by...."

Adapts, facilitates and evaluates age appropriate activities with and for the group.

- Describe a situation where you had to be flexible and/or improvise.
- Give an example of a time you led an activity with youth.
- If you had a group of 25 teens what would you do?

Respects and honors cultural and human diversity.

- What have been your experiences with cultures other than your own?
- Describe at least three strategies you would use for reaching and working with youth of a culture or background other than your own.

Involves and empowers youth.

- What are keys to successful partnerships with youth?
- What have been your experiences in involving youth in decision-making?
- What does leadership mean to you?
- How do you develop leadership?
- What do you think are the three key priorities in youth work?

Identifies potential risk factors (in a program environment) and takes measures to reduce those risks.

- Two young people are fighting, what would you do to insure everyone's safety?
- With child abuse and child sexual abuse in the news, those of us working with youth want to make sure we keep youth as well as ourselves safe. Any thoughts on how you can protect youth in our programs or protect yourself from unfounded accusations of abuse?
- Tell me what you think might be the potential risks when working with teens. What policies would you support or what might you do to keep them emotionally and physically safe in your program?

Cares for, involves and works with families and community.

- How do you see your interaction with parents and the community?
- How might you involve parents in the program and activities you have for their children?
- A parent come to you with a problem about something you have done – what do you do?

Works as part of a team and shows professionalism.

- Describe your experiences in working with others as a team. Or
- Describe a time when you have been a part of a team (professional or personal). Explain your role on the team and how conflict was handled.
- Why do you think this position would be a good fit for you? Or Why do you want to work for us?

Demonstrates the attributes and qualities of a positive role model.

- Who was your role model growing up and why?
- How are you a role model for youth?
- A teen comes to you with a personal problem, how do you handle it?
- What do you think should be the boundaries when working with youth and how would you role model them.
- Describe a time when your integrity was challenged and how you handled the situation.

Interacts with and relates to youth in ways that support asset building.

- What do you think are the greatest gifts young people bring to this world?

The National Youth Development Learning Network (NYDLN) is a project of the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) that collectively serves more than 40 million youth, employs over 100,000 paid staff and utilizes more than six million volunteers. NYDLN is designed to further attract, develop and retain high-quality youth development workers by leveraging existing information, resources and training to more youth workers in more communities.

For more information visit www.nydic.org