



Guidelines for Good Practice for Working with Boys and Young Men

Foreword

The following guidelines are offered to organisations and individuals from different disciplines as a basis for good practice for working with boys and young men. They are intended as a framework for practice.

Introduction

Boys and young men require differentiated provision if they are to realise their full potential. Boys and young men are seen as a problem and often perceived as being a threat. This attitude ignores the fact that boys and young men have many qualities that go unrecognised and are often under developed.

Specialist work provision for boys and young men purposefully seeks to assist boys and young men to recognise and develop their emotional intelligence and well being, and address social and health inequalities.

In order for this specialist provision to be effective it needs to be established within a framework that fosters and supports it. These guidelines offer a model framework.

Organisations should:

Develop interagency approaches with all organisations who have a contribution to make to encouraging developmental work with boys and young men.

Actively promote and support single gender work where appropriate and where complementary to mixed gender work.

Recognise that staff profiles will impact on the development of single gender work.

Require all workers to model best practice in single gender work at all times, based on an equal opportunities policy with guidelines for its implementation.

Recognise that the work with boys and young men is complementary to work with girls and young women and should not be in competition for resources.

Allow the work to develop from boys and young men's realities and resist pressure to focus the work as a solution to boys and young men being perceived as a problem.

Managers should:

Create an environment in which workers undertaking specialist work with boys and young men can succeed by advocating on behalf of the work.

Create space in meetings and at conferences for workers engaged in specialist work with boys and young men to share current practice and to foster critical dialogue on the development of best practice.

Devote resources for the development of the work.

Devote resources to training managers and workers in work with boys and young men and ensure that it is part of the core of basic training.

Provide effective support and supervision.

Workers should:

Undertake training, where appropriate to the needs of the organisations they work for, to develop a flexible range of methodologies that supports, challenges and assists boys and young men to fulfil their potential and addresses the social and health inequalities they face.

Allow the work to develop from boys and young men's realities and resist pressure to focus the work as a solution to boys and young men being perceived as a problem.

Seek regular supervision or support as appropriate to the needs of the individual worker.

Demonstrate non-judgemental attitudes and provide possible role models.

Plan and prepare work with boys and young men that acknowledges local and national strategies. Monitor and evaluate the impact and outcomes.

Have high expectations of boys and young men, recognising different starter points.

Advocate on behalf of boys and young men.

Work cooperatively with workers from other agencies.

The outcomes of the work should be:

Boys and young men have a heightened awareness and appreciation of themselves their qualities and abilities and are motivated to develop these.

Boys and young men will have a heightened appreciation of others and will have the skills and understanding necessary to be sensitive of others and to be assertive in constructive and creative relationships.

Boys and young men have an appreciation of the diversity of masculinity and male roles.

Boys and young men's confidence and self-esteem are enhanced.

Work with boys and young men should be directed by national and local strategies that seek to improve their health, well-being and potential.

Innovative approaches to work with boys and young men not guided by local or national strategies that can be demonstrated to improve their health, well-being and potential should be encouraged, documented and disseminated.

Acknowledgement

These guidelines were adapted and developed in 2003 by the Gloucestershire Boys and Young Men Network from guidelines originally produced (2002) by the South West Boys and Young Men Curriculum Development Group.

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