EPYC

ESTEVAN PUBLIC
YOUTH CENTRE INC.

VOLUNTEER GUIDE

ESTEVAN PUBLIC YOUTH CENTRE INC.

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EPYC
ESTEVAN PUBLIC YOUTH CENTRE INC.

WHAT IS EPYC?

The Estevan Public Youth Centre is a brand-new, youth focused, non-profit in Estevan, SK. EPYC's vision is to collectively help youth discover and grow their purpose, passion and potential through innovative and inclusive ways. Our goal is to provide a safe and supportive place for youth in grades 7-12 to experience new opportunities, overcome barriers, build positive relationships and develop confidence and skills for life, all of which promote a successful transition into adulthood. EPYC strives to lay a solid foundation for a sustainable centre where youth can be themselves, create lasting relationships and be surrounded by positive influences for years to come.

EPYC'S MISSION: To connect, engage, and empower youth.

EPYC'S VISION: To be the place in our community where youth explore their passion, purpose, and potential.

EPYC'S VALUES: Inclusive – A safe place to be yourself. Connected – To yourself, others, and your community. Creative – Open to change, growth, and opportunity. Fun – Sharing new experiences.

HOW DID EPYC START?

A group of passionate individuals formed a committee in November 2019 to explore the possibility of having a youth centre in Estevan. Over the following year, the committee consulted youth, local community organizations, and other provincial youth centres and found a strong desire and need for a local youth centre. In December 2020, the committee officially formed a Board of Directors and was fully incorporated as a non-profit.

EPYC VOLUNTEERING

As an EPYC volunteer, you have a role in guiding future generations and growing our community in a positive way. EPYC volunteers are responsible for acting in alignment with EPYC's mission, vision and values, and creating a safe and supportive environment for all youth in Estevan both inside and outside of EPYC.

ESTEVAN PUBLIC YOUTH CENTRE INC.

VOLUNTEER YOUTH WORKER EXPECTATIONS

1. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. To create a warm, welcome atmosphere for all youth attending.

b. To assist in the provision of indoor/outdoor activities which are innovative and motivational, and set good standards of sportsmanship and acceptable behaviour.

c. To be available as a support person for emotional, spiritual, physical, and social issues, while being sensitive to one's own personal limits.

d. Monitor discussions among the youth. The use of profanity and racial, sexist or homophobic comments are infractions of EPYC rules.

e. Record keeping – general statistics of numbers attending. Writing of incident reports. Writing in communication book.

f. To perform other EPYC related duties as required.

g. Volunteers must act consistently when dealing with the youth.

h. **MOST IMPORTANT!** Circulate, interact with youth who come in, making them feel welcome, and continue interacting throughout your shift.

2. DEPENDABILITY, RELIABILITY, AND PUNCTUALITY

EPYC requires that volunteers remain dependable and reliable regarding their commitment to EPYC. Arriving on time and prepared helps programming run efficiently.

3. TEAMWORK

An understanding of, and agreement with EPYC's mission, vision, and values enables volunteers to deliver programming in alignment with the philosophy and practices of EPYC.

4. STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

Good communication skills must be maintained to fulfill and accomplish the responsibilities and duties of this position. Attention to appropriate role modelling, dress and behaviour, and language and terminology employed when dealing with youth is necessary. Be honest, courteous, and punctual.

5. FEEDBACK

Volunteers are an important source of information about the positive and negative aspects of the program in which they are involved. Feedback to EPYC will help clear problems and concerns which volunteers may encounter.

6. SAFETY AND SUPERVISION

Volunteers are expected to supervise the youth they are working with by circulating throughout EPYC. Ensuring that the youth are always in a safe and secure environment during the program.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers must always maintain confidentiality, in all matters as relating to youth, staff, volunteers, and EPYC. At no time are the names or circumstances of the youth to be discussed with any outside sources. Volunteers are not to share information about EPYC with other agencies, or the media.

8. SETTING BOUNDARIES

Volunteers are NOT allowed:

- To give out any personal information about other volunteers, staff, or youth to any person (i.e. home/work phone numbers, email addresses)
- To take youth out to social or recreational activities that are family or peer-related
- To have any contact with youth outside of EPYC without requesting approval from the Executive Director
- To drive youth anywhere in a vehicle.
- To engage in physical activities such as play fighting, etc.
- To punish youth physically or emotionally
- To exchange money between themselves and youth

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Youth engagement is the concept and practice of meaningfully engaging youth in decisions that affect them, their peers and their communities. Youth engagement ensures that young people become an integral part of the work of organizations and communities and that their voices help shape the future. (Source: Youth Engagement Toolkit Resource Guide)

Key characteristics of youth engagement include:

1. Opportunities for skill development and capacity-building
   Youth engagement provides many opportunities for youth to learn new skills and abilities. These can include the development of academic, intellectual, civic, emotional, physical, employment, social, and cultural competence.

2. Opportunities for leadership
   Young people are given opportunities to lead and assume some decision-making power. Youth help make decisions about the design and direction of programs and services geared towards them. For example, this could include youth participation on adult-led boards and committees.
3. Reflection on identity
   Youth are supported to develop a critical and political analysis of identity. This can be achieved through anti-oppression training, discussion, and creative expression. Identity reflection allows youth to see how systems affect their lives and how they affect their community and society as a whole.
4. Development of social awareness
   Youth are encouraged to look beyond what impacts them personally to see what impacts others. The process can be described as going from self to social awareness, learning the responsibilities of citizenship, and recognizing their ability to be agents of change in their communities.
5. Mutual ownership
   Youth and adults jointly identify areas of need and connect with a shared sense of purpose. This is often represented by the selection of issues and activities that are relevant to both youth and adults.
6. Positive youth adult partnerships

   Relationships are characterized by:
   - supportive and caring adults;
   - mutual trust and respect:
   - good communication;
   - democratic processes; and
   - communication of results.
7. Organizational support
   Youth engagement is often characterized by collaboration between youth serving agencies, communities, and organizations. Knowledge is shared and applied to avoid duplication of services and to fill service gaps.
8. Achievable goals are celebrated
   Goals identified in developmental plans are clearly laid out and celebrated upon completion. This shows young people that progress is being made, skills are being developed, and they can be successful.

Benefits of Youth Engagement and Participation:

Youth engagement helps young people to:	Adults benefit through:
• Recognize that everyone has value. Youth, like everyone else, have rights that should be respected. • Understand that youth have a significant role in creating a better system for all young people. • Know that their voice is important, regardless of their successes, challenges, strengths or limitations. • Give back to their community. • Develop resilience, and a sense of pride and accountability. • Build self-esteem. • Develop leadership and problem-solving skills. • Become connected to other youth and their community. • Break down generational barriers between youth and adults. • Develop a sense of belonging and reconciliation with the system. • Develop skills and knowledge that support transitions to adulthood and independence.	• A greater balance between positive experiences with youth and crisis intervention. • Skill development and career enhancement. • A more rounded and honest service assessment. • Greater job satisfaction and workplace health • Greater understanding between youth and adults from working side by side. This can contribute to respectful and positive working relationships. • Additional access to resources.

Organizations benefit from:	Communities benefit from:
• Greater knowledge, skills, and creativity available during planning and decision-making. • Improved quality and effectiveness of policies, programs and services. • The ability to make more informed decisions that will help meet the needs of children and youth. • Better ability to make changes that promote the growth and development of young people. • Greater transparency and accountability to youth receiving services.	• Generating a pool of knowledgeable, active citizens with exposure to addressing issues and challenges through collaboration. • Greater understanding between generations by allowing youth and adults to work together towards a common goal. • Increased understanding and consideration for others who reside in their community. • The opportunity to challenge stereotypes held about a diverse group of individuals (different ages, gender religions, ethnicity, etc.). • Encouraging democracy and social responsibility, and increasing social capital

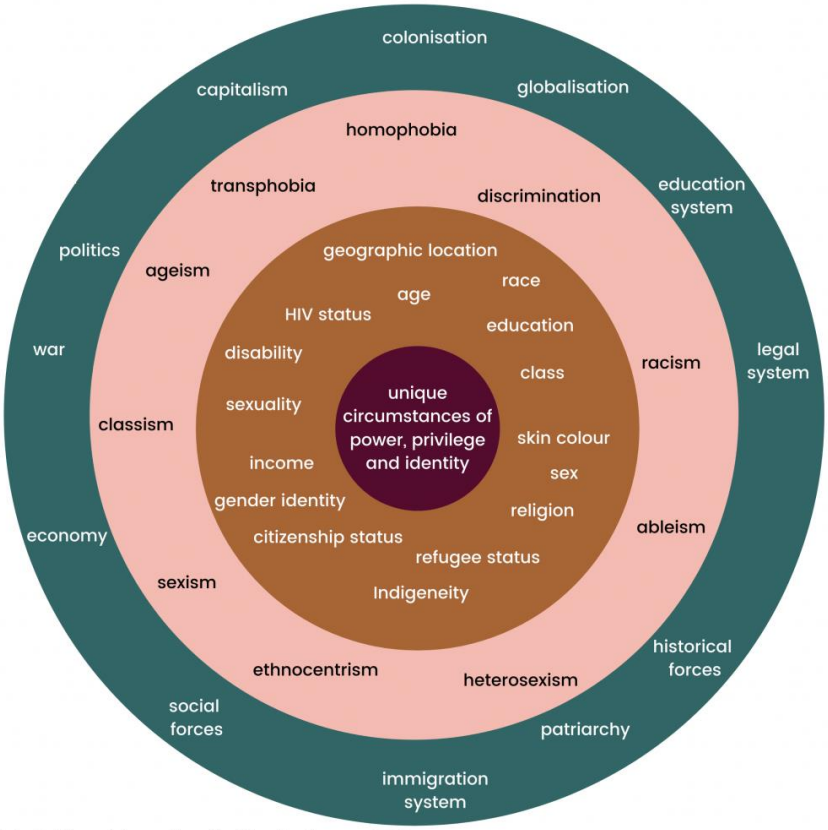
INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality – the complex, cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, overlap or intersect.

Intersectionality first appeared in an article by Kimberlé Crenshaw, published in 1991. Crenshaw defined the theory of intersectionality as follows:

> *"Intersectionality promotes an understanding of different social locations (race/ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability/ability, migration status, religion).*
>
> *These interactions occur within a context of connected systems and structures shaped by colonialism, imperialism, racism, homophobia, ableism and patriarchy are created."*

It is important to note that each of us brings our own experiences and identities to every interaction we face. These experiences are often seen as privileges and oppressions. This background colours or shapes the way we handle situations and how we interact with others. When working with youth, it is important to be mindful of our own biases and experiences as well as those of the youth you are working with.



Adapted from Intersectionality Wheel - Simpson 2009.

- Innermost circle represents a person's unique circumstances.
- Second circle from the inside represents aspects of identity.
- Third circle from the inside represents different types of discriminations/isms/attitudes that impact identity.
- Outermost circle represents larger forces and structures that work togethers to reinforce exclusion.

Note: It is impossible to name every discrimination, identity or structure. These are just examples to help form a sense f what intersectionality is.