

THE

SASY WAY

Succeed
At School,
Your Way.

YOUTH WORK
GUIDEBOOK



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WHAT IS A SASY YOUTH WORKER?

At SASY, Youth Workers play a vital role in building and maintaining the relational fabric of the school. They create safe, respectful, and empowering connections with young people who have experienced previous disengagement from education.



Youth Workers walk alongside young people with empathy and consistency. They offer co-regulation, advocacy, and practical support, helping students navigate their school day and broader life challenges.

At SASY, Youth Workers collaborate with teaching staff to provide holistic, educational experiences to young people that improve their wellbeing and reignite their interest in learning.

At SASY,

**Wellbeing
+ Education
= Learning**

Youth Workers Are

- Consistent, calm adult presences with strong professional boundaries.
- Practitioners of trauma-informed and inclusive care.
- Responsive practitioners, who adapt their approach to meet each young person's circumstances, and emotional state.
- Connectors between young people, educators, caregivers, and external services.
- Skilled in de-escalation and co-regulation.
- Relational advocates who support safety, engagement, and dignity in every interaction.

SASY Youth Workers do not take on clinical roles, but they are integral to wrap-around support. They often notice the first signs of change in a young person's emotional state or engagement.

THE SCOPE OF A YOUTH WORKER

Clear boundaries make youth work more sustainable and effective.

At SASY, it is important to clarify the role of a Youth Worker when working alongside young people who are vulnerable and disengaged.



YOUTH WORKERS

Listen, support, and refer, but do not
provide counselling or diagnosis.

Are impactful, positive, adult role models
but are not friends.

Support engagement and wellbeing,
but don't plan or deliver curriculum.

Empower choice and agency in young people,
not doing things 'for' the young person and fixing problems
even if it is with the best of intentions.



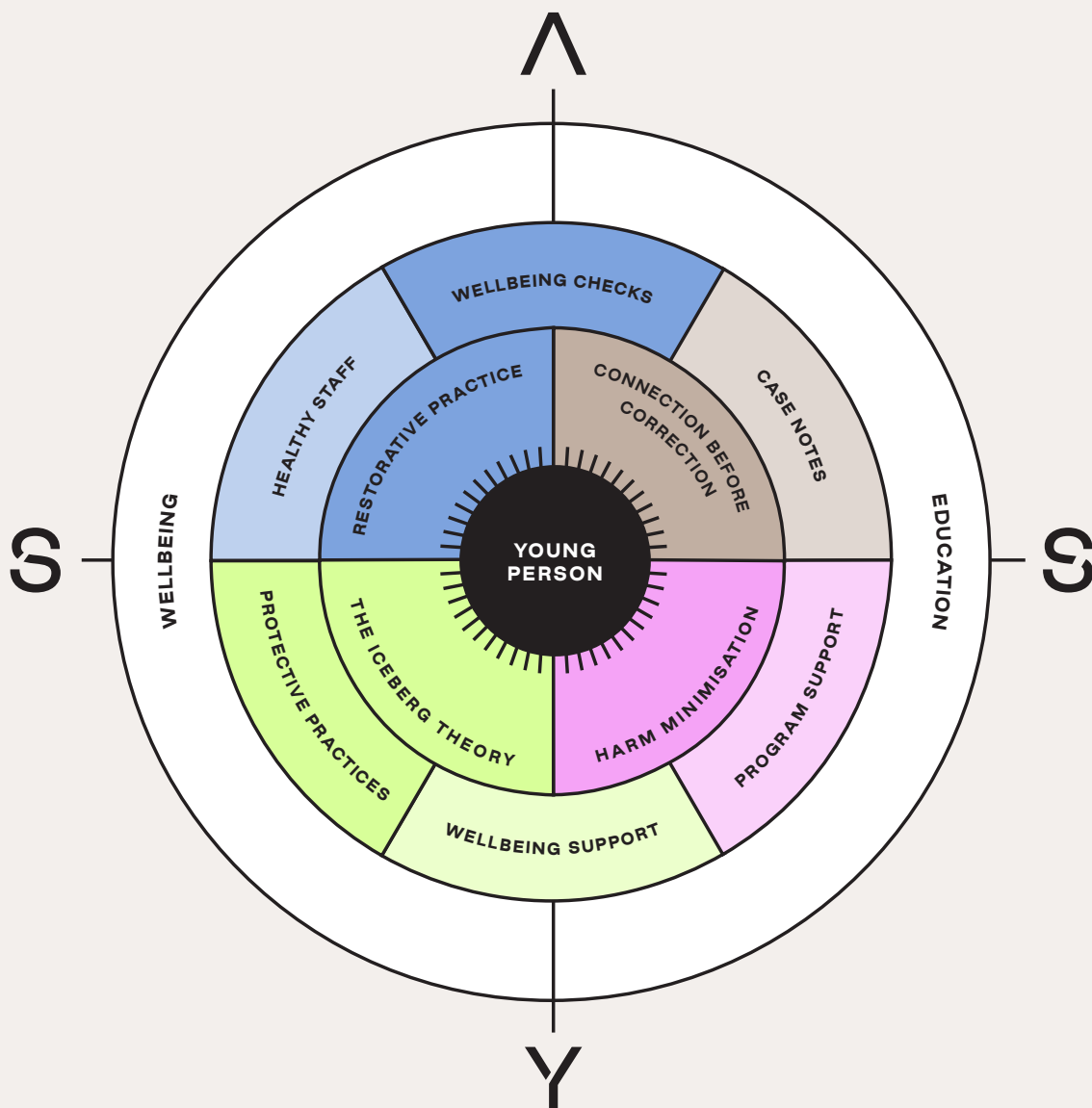
Youth Workers build trust
through consistency, presence,
and respectful relationships.

Our Practice Foundations



YOUTHWORK AT SASY

OUR APPROACH



At SASY, youth work is grounded in approaches that guide how we understand behaviour, respond to challenges, and create opportunities for growth. They provide a shared language and an evidenced based, consistent foundation for our practice.

Our Practice Foundations



Connection Before Correction

This approach emphasises the importance of building trusting relationships with young people before attempting to guide their behaviour.

WHY IT MATTERS AT SASY

Young people at SASY often face complex challenges. Jumping straight to correction can feel judgmental or alienating.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

Show up consistently and with genuine interest, create safe and welcoming spaces, take time to understand what's happening beneath the behaviour, and frame guidance as support rather than discipline.

The Iceberg Theory

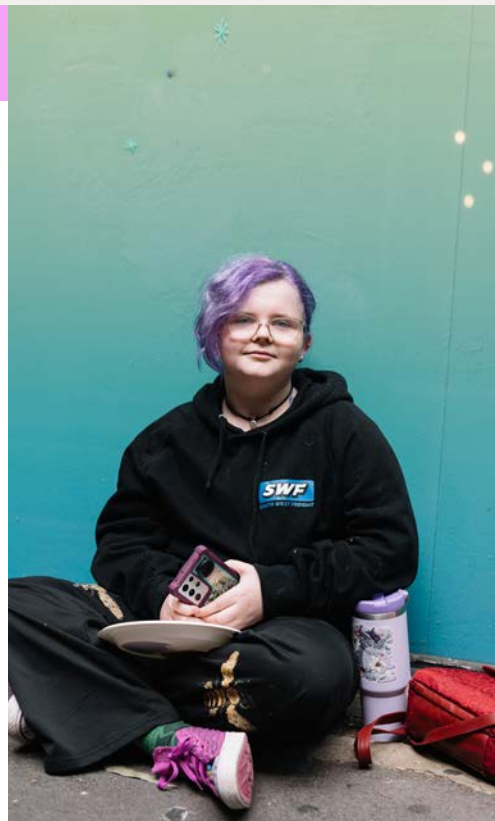
Much of a young person's behaviour is shaped by what lies beneath the surface. What we see, whether it be anger, withdrawal, or defiance, is often just the visible tip of a much deeper set of needs, or emotions.

WHY IT MATTERS AT SASY

By staying curious and non-judgemental, Youth Workers can help respond to what is driving a young person's actions, rather than reacting to the behaviour alone.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

If a young person isn't attending a learning program, it's important to begin by connecting with them, asking open-ended questions and showing genuine interest in their wellbeing. Through building rapport and a trusting relationship, you create a safe space where they feel comfortable sharing their feelings and the reasons behind their non-attendance or behaviour.





Restorative Practice

Is a relationship-focused model that encourages accountability, empathy, and healing after harm or conflict. It supports young people in understanding the impact of their actions and improving things in a safe and respectful way.

WHY IT MATTERS AT SASY

This approach helps build trust and emotional safety, which are essential for re-engaging young people who have experienced trauma or disconnection from education.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

After an incident between two young people at SASY, a Youth Worker invites them to a restorative conversation. Instead of focusing on punishment, the Youth Worker helps them reflect on what happened, how it affected others, and what can be done to repair the harm. Through empathy and guided dialogue, both take accountability and agree on steps to move forward respectfully.

Harm Minimisation

SASY uses a harm minimisation approach to reduce risk and promote safety around behaviours such as substance use, or self-harm.

WHY IT MATTERS AT SASY

A harm minimisation approach allows Youth Workers to address risky behaviours without shame or exclusion, focusing instead on safety, and education to support informed choices.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

Instead of punishing or excluding, a Youth Worker takes a harm minimisation approach by having a calm, non-judgmental conversation to understand the reasons behind the behaviour. They provide education on risks and safer alternatives, while also exploring coping strategies and offering support if stress or peer pressure is involved.



BUILD. GROW. CELEBRATE. CREATE.



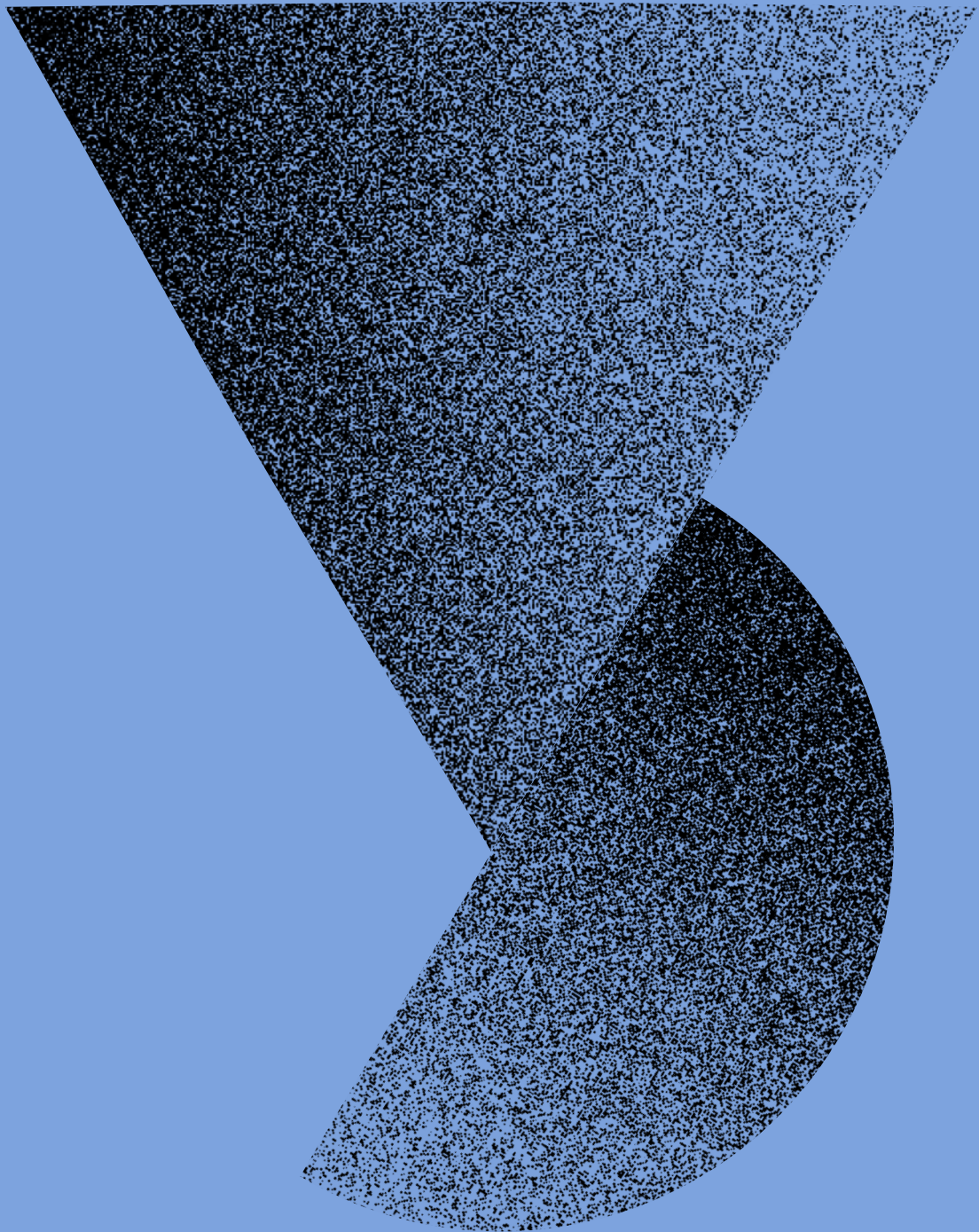
EXPLORE.



SASY

Working With Young People

Youth Workers are integral to the SASY Way; they support young people to improve their wellbeing, reignite their interest in learning, and connect with community.



Working With Young People

WELLBEING CHECKS & CASE MANAGEMENT

1

Each Youth Worker is assigned a group of young people with whom they work closely throughout the year. These ongoing relationships form the foundation for support, trust, and early intervention. The majority of young people at SASY receive regular wellbeing support through informal check-ins, while a smaller percentage require more structured case management due to complex or ongoing needs.

WELLBEING CHECKS

- Informal and relational.
- Focused on how a young person is going emotionally, mentally, or physically.
- Responsive and preventative.

CASE MANAGEMENT

- Structured and ongoing support for complex needs.
- Coordinated across caregivers, wellbeing teams, and external services.
- A space where Youth Workers provide follow-through, and advocacy.

CASE NOTES

2

Youth Workers contribute to case notes and documentation, providing essential insight from their daily engagement with young people. Notes should be factual, timely, and respectful, maintaining a young person's dignity while accurately capturing actions and concerns.

CASE NOTE TEMPLATE

A standard case note template is used to guide documentation. This structure ensures clarity, accountability, and consistency in Youth Work documentation and supports collaboration across the team.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

3

Youth Workers play a vital role in supporting both teachers and young people within educational programs by developing a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environment.

Youth Workers collaborate with teachers through open communication and shared planning and adapt their support depending on the needs of the young people.

YOUR ROLE AS YOUTH WORKER

- Provide emotional and general wellbeing support, helping young people navigate challenges and build resilience.
- Encourage participation and engagement, by reframing and explaining content in accessible ways.
- Support teachers with program set-up, and organisation.
- Attend meetings and contribute to discussions about young person needs, goals, and progress.
- Maintain presence on excursions or off-site activities to support safety and connection.
- Co-create a respectful culture by modelling positive behaviour and communication.



WELLBEING SUPPORT

4

Wellbeing Support at SASY is a dedicated space within the school where young people can connect with Youth Workers in a safe, calm, and non-judgemental environment. It provides an immediate response for those facing challenges, helps young people navigate access to external services, and acts as a bridge for re-engagement with learning programs.

YOUR ROLE AS YOUTH WORKER

- Respond to young people facing challenges with calm, trauma-informed care.
- Assist in accessing and coordinating external services when needed.
- Provide a safe space for regulation, reflection, and emotional support.
- Support transitions from disengagement back into program participation.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

5

Outside of programs and Wellbeing Support, Youth Workers participate in ad hoc duties that contribute to the positive wellbeing of SASY's young people. These duties vary between young people and are dependent on need.

YOUR ROLE MAY INCLUDE

- Case conferences with stakeholders involved in a young person's care such as medical professionals, organisations and families.
- Reciprocal communication with families regarding the young person's wellbeing both at home and at SASY including changes and updates (medications, diagnoses, symptoms, feelings, behaviour etc)
- Connecting with relevant external organisations to provide targeted support for the young people (e.g. Streetlink)
- Outreach visits to young people after a period of extended disengagement from SASY – details are per the Outreach Policy.





Protective Practices & Safety

To work safely and effectively, Youth Workers must follow protective practices. These are clear professional guidelines and boundaries that protect everyone and ensure support is delivered respectfully and ethically.

REMEMBER

● Professional Boundaries

Keep interactions respectful and role appropriate.
No gifts, private messaging, or personal relationships.

● Digital Use

Don't add students on personal social media.
Use only approved platforms for communication.

● One-to-One Interactions

Must be visible, approved, purposeful, and within work hours.

● Physical Contact

Keep it minimal and appropriate.
Seek consent when possible.

● Responding to Behaviour

Report any sexualised or concerning behaviour immediately.
Document, follow-up and report any concerns to CARL.

Youth Workers are a mandated notifier under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*.

Please refer to the Staff Code of Conduct and policies for further information regarding SASY's expectations.



Youth Work can be emotionally taxing. SASY offers both regular supervision and informal debriefing opportunities. Debriefing is a space to reflect and process tough moments with a trusted peer. It is a professional practice that strengthens your capacity to show up well.

WHEN TO DEBRIEF

- After a challenging incident or disclosure
- When feeling emotionally impacted by a young person's story
- When unsure about how to proceed in a complex situation
- Or simply when you need space to process your day

HOW TO ACCESS DEBRIEFING

Speak to your Senior Youth Worker, or leader. Don't wait until you're overwhelmed, early reflection can prevent long-term stress.

You matter, and your wellbeing is a vital part of SASY's caring environment.

REMEMBER



Ask for Backup

You are never expected to handle complex or high-risk issues alone. Reach out for backup, perspective, or just someone to talk it through with.



Boundaries & Workload

Your role is relational, not unlimited. You are not responsible for fixing everything. Prioritise your wellbeing by setting boundaries, sharing the load, and advocating for your needs.



Self Care

Prioritise rest, connection, and regulation. Your own wellbeing is crucial to your practice; it is foundational to your ability to build trust, respond calmly, and stay grounded.

Looking After Yourself



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We acknowledge the Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of the Adelaide region and we pay respect to Elders past and present.



SASY

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