

SELF PACED LEARNING KIT



Young People & Rangers

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Acknowledgements

In 2004, Garner Clancey, Sally Doran and Michael Huggett developed a self-paced learning package for shopping centre security guards. This package was designed to partially address the lack of information developed specifically for shopping centre security personnel on dealing with young people. This original package has proven to be quite popular, receiving many thousands of hits on the Youth Action and Policy Association's website. In light of this success and the growing challenges for other professional groups in dealing with young people, it was decided that a series of similar packages would be developed for librarians, rangers (and similar local government regulatory personnel) and pool attendants. These specific sites / professions were selected based on feedback received that these were growing sites of conflict between young people and the associated personnel.

In developing these new self-paced learning packages, material from the original package has been coupled with new sections and updated information. Consequently, the original authors need to be acknowledged for their contribution and willingness to allow the original material to be re-worked. Furthermore, Pota Hatzopoulos contributed to the new cultural diversity section and Emma Farag contributed to the new section on managing intoxication.

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The Youth Action & Policy Association NSW (YAPA) is the peak community group working in the interests of young people and youth services in NSW.

YAPA strives to achieve social justice for young people, including the appropriate provision of services for young people. The role of YAPA is to:

- Monitor and respond to government policies and proposals affecting young people
- Promote and advocate on issues affecting young people and youth services
- Bring young people and youth workers together to act on issues affecting them
- Work to raise a positive profile of young people in the media and in the community
- Provide training, forums and conferences to young people and youth workers
- Provide information and referral
- Produce a range of resources, publications and newsletters.

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Caveats

Any information contained in this package is provided to assist practitioners in their work. No responsibility is accepted by the authors for actions arising from dealing with young people (or other patrons / clients) based on any information contained within this document. Furthermore, the information pertaining to legislation was current at the time of writing. Whilst every effort has been taken to ensure its accuracy, the information contained in this kit is intended to be used as a general guide only and should not be interpreted or taken as being specific advice, legal or otherwise. The reader should seek professional advice of a suitably qualified practitioner before relying upon any of the information contained herein. This article and the opinions contained in it represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Youth Action and Policy Association.

What is a self-paced learning kit?

A self-paced learning kit contains all of the necessary information to help you learn more about the topic (in this case the topic is young people). By reading and working your way through the kit, you can take your own time and go back to sections if problems arise in your work place that relate to the information provided.

Why a self-paced learning kit?

It is often difficult to get rangers staff released from work to attend training. While training is necessary, it can be expensive. A self-paced learning kit like this one can be completed in your own time, during quiet shifts or discussed as part of regular team meetings. By providing information in a self-paced learning kit, we can be confident that many more people get to access this information.

What are the limitations of a self-paced learning kit?

A self-paced learning kit is only one way to enhance skills, knowledge and attitudes of rangers. Attendance at training and quality supervision are still important in providing opportunities to learn and grow. Getting all personnel to complete packages can be a problem, especially for those who do not like to read or for whom English is a second language.

Why should rangers read this kit?

Rangers frequently come into contact with young people during their day-to-day patrols. In dealing with young people, rangers can get into conflict or experience problems. This might be because of how they have responded or it might be because of the young person involved. Whatever the reason, as adults and as representatives of a council, it is your responsibility to act in a lawful and appropriate way. Having skills and knowledge to deal effectively with young people will reduce the tension and conflict experienced, improve job satisfaction and improve relationships with young people.

How do I use this kit?

Each section has been written to provide a simple summary of the key issues and information. Following this summary, there will be a number of exercises for you to consider. Complete the exercises before moving to the next section.

Some exercises require you to talk with your colleagues, to talk with young people, gather some information from your supervisor or from the Internet. You might not be able to complete all of the exercises, but you should try your best.

What if I am having problems?

If you are having problems, you should speak with your supervisor, work colleagues or contact someone listed in the back of the package who might be able to help. Answers to all of your questions might not be able to be provided, but help and support can be found.

Common Scenarios – Young People and Rangers

Young people are frequent users of public space. ‘Hanging out’ in public space is a cheap or free form of entertainment; it provides opportunities to socialize with friends and peers; and it is an activity that is generally outside of the parental gaze. For many young people who are not yet old enough to get a driver’s licence or to enter licensed premises, hanging out in public space is a significant recreation and social activity. Groups of young people can however be a cause of fear or anxiety for other users of public space. Rangers can be called to respond to or deal with situations where large groups of young people gather, especially if they are noisy, intoxicated or affecting the use of particular facilities.

The following are some common scenarios in which young people and rangers come into contact. These scenarios provide the basis for the remainder of this self-paced learning kit and will help to provide suggestions and information about how these scenarios can be dealt with.

Scenario 1:

You are patrolling the local park on a Saturday afternoon and hear a lot of noise coming from the rear of the toilet block located in the car park. You stop your vehicle and commence a foot patrol and start walking towards the toilets. You then hear what you believe to be the noise of a bottle breaking on the ground. You also observe a clear notice in the area indicating that it is an ‘alcohol free zone’ which is current. As you walk around the corner you see a number of young people who you believe are under eighteen years of age, broken beer bottles on the ground and a number of full West Coast Cooler bottles sitting on the floor.

Scenario 2:

The local park is a place where young people frequently gather after school. On this particular afternoon, the number of young people has grown and there are 20-30 young people from different schools gathered near the park’s entrance. Council staff are concerned about the impact that the group is having on patrons wanting to enter and use the park. They do not intervene directly, but call the council rangers and request their attendance.

As the group of young people builds, the mood begins to change. Some words are exchanged between boys from two different schools. The taunts continue for a few minutes before the main protagonists confront each other physically. A small number of the boys from each school start fighting just as two rangers arrive on the scene.

Scenario 3:

Five young people have recently settled in the area, having been refugees from north-east Africa. They have quickly become friends, due to their similar experiences in fleeing their countries and arriving in Australia. They are finding it difficult to adjust to life in Australia due to cultural and language differences. Nonetheless, they enjoy the freedoms provided by their liberation from war.

The young people meet up after school. They decide to travel into the city to check out some of the music shops. They have individually been instructed to stay together, because their parents believe that they will be safer in a group.

Upon entering the mall, they are approached by a ranger. The ranger says that he is watching them and that they should split up, as groups of no more than three people are accepted in the mall. The group becomes agitated because of this direction.

Scenario 4:

A local park is a popular spot for young people. The skate park is an area that periodically attracts large numbers of young people and sometimes trouble arises between different groups wanting to dominate the use of the skate park.

On a patrol of the area you notice large numbers of young people gathering around the skate park and another large group on the football field. As you enter the park you have to make a decision about which area you will visit first. The group on the football field have golf sticks and have started hitting golf balls toward the skate park. Hitting golf balls in the park is contrary to the park rules.

- Each of these common scenarios poses various challenges for the ranger(s) involved. Responding to each scenario requires consideration of:
- Legislative powers and local policies
- An assessment of the situation
- An understanding of young people including cultural practices
- Consideration of intoxication

Effective management of these situations also requires good communication skills. This self-paced learning kit will provide some information about each of these areas.

Section 1: Law, Policies & Rules

The behaviour of young people (and others) in local parks, malls and facilities will generally be governed by various laws and regulations. Understanding these and knowing your powers as a ranger is critical to ensuring that you stay within the law when dealing with young people. The following are some of the critical powers that govern rangers in their dealings with young people:

- The Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002
- Summary Offences Act 1988
- Local Government Act 1993
- Protection of Environment Operations Act 1997

The Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002

Much of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 became effective on the 1 December 2005. The aim of the Act is to consolidate and restate the law relating to police and other law enforcement officers' powers and responsibilities. It also covers persons other than police. There are two sections that are applicable to law enforcement officers who are not 'Special Constables'. Section 100 replaces the powers of arrest that were covered under Section 352 of the Crimes Act and Section 231 now identifies the use of force.

Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 (NSW)

99 Power of police officers to arrest without warrant

(cf *Crimes Act 1900*, s 352, *Cth Act*, s 3W) (Applies to Special Constables only)

- (1) A police officer may, without a warrant, arrest a person if:
 - (a) the person is in the act of committing an offence under any Act or statutory instrument, or
 - (b) the person has just committed any such offence, or
 - (c) the person has committed a serious indictable offence for which the person has not been tried.
- (2) A police officer may, without a warrant, arrest a person if the police officer suspects on reasonable grounds that the person has committed an offence under any Act or statutory instrument.
- (3) A police officer must not arrest a person for the purpose of taking proceedings for an offence against the person unless the police officer suspects on reasonable grounds that it is necessary to arrest the person to achieve one or more of the following purposes:
 - (a) to ensure the appearance of the person before a court in respect of the offence,
 - (b) to prevent a repetition or continuation of the offence or the commission of another offence,
 - (c) to prevent the concealment, loss or destruction of evidence relating to the offence,

- (d) to prevent harassment of, or interference with, a person who may be required to give evidence in proceedings in respect of the offence,
 - (e) to prevent the fabrication of evidence in respect of the offence,
 - (f) to preserve the safety or welfare of the person.
- (4) A police officer who arrests a person under this section must, as soon as is reasonably practicable, take the person, and any property found on the person, before an authorised officer to be dealt with according to law.

100 Power of other persons to arrest without warrant

(cf *Crimes Act 1900*, s 352)

- (1) A person (other than a police officer) may, without a warrant, arrest a person if:
- (a) the person is in the act of committing an offence under any Act or statutory instrument, or
 - (b) the person has just committed any such offence, or
 - (c) the person has committed a serious indictable offence for which the person has not been tried.
- (2) A person who arrests another person under this section must, as soon as is reasonably practicable, take the person, and any property found on the person, before an authorised officer to be dealt with according to law.

231 Use of force in making an arrest

A police officer or other person who exercises a power to arrest another person may use such force as is reasonably necessary to make the arrest or to prevent the escape of the person after arrest.

Question: How well do you know your powers of arrest? It is critical that you are familiar with your powers and how they can be applied. Failure to act within your legislative powers places you at considerable risk of misconduct and potential prosecution. If you have not had refresher training on your legal powers, it is worth raising this with your manager.

Summary Offences Act 1988

The Summary Offences Act 1988 covers a range of behaviours in public places. Some of the key provisions have been copied below.

Summary Offences Act 1988

4 Offensive conduct

- (1) A person must not conduct himself or herself in an offensive manner in or near, or within view or hearing from, a public place or a school.
- (2) A person does not conduct himself or herself in an offensive manner as referred to in

subsection (1) merely by using offensive language.

- (3) It is a sufficient defence to a prosecution for an offence under this section if the defendant satisfies the court that the defendant had a reasonable excuse for conducting himself or herself in the manner alleged in the information for the offence.

4A Offensive language

- (1) A person must not use offensive language in or near, or within hearing from, a public place or a school.
- (2) It is a sufficient defence to a prosecution for an offence under this section if the defendant satisfies the court that the defendant had a reasonable excuse for conducting himself or herself in the manner alleged in the information for the offence.
- (3) Instead of imposing a fine on a person, the court:
- (a) may make an order under section 8 (1) of the *Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999* directing the person to perform community service work, or
 - (b) may make an order under section 5 (1) of the *Children (Community Service Orders) Act 1987* requiring the person to perform community service work, as the case requires.
- (4), (5) (Repealed)
- (6) However, the maximum number of hours of community service work that a person may be required to perform under an order in respect of an offence under this section is 100 hours.

5 Obscene exposure

A person shall not, in or within view from a public place or a school, wilfully and obscenely expose his or her person.

Local Government Act 1993

The Local Government Act 1993 is probably the most critical tool for rangers. This Act describes numerous powers relevant to common scenarios confronting rangers (as depicted earlier in this kit). Understanding the critical features of this Act is mandatory for any ranger.

Local Government Act 1993

The following section provides a definition of terms in the dictionary section of the Local Government Act 1993 (Section 3)

"enforcement officer", in Part 4 of Chapter 16, means an employee of a council authorised in writing by the Commissioner of Police to be an enforcement officer for the purposes of this Part in relation to a specified alcohol-free zone and for a specified period in relation to a specified special event.

"alcohol-free zone" means a zone operating under Part 4 of Chapter 16 as an alcohol-free zone and in which the drinking of alcohol is accordingly prohibited in the circumstances and to the extent provided by section 642.

"authorised person" means:

- (a) an employee of a council generally or specially authorised by the council in respect of or whose duty it is to deal with, or to act in regard to, any acts, matters or things in relation to which the expression is used, or
- (b) a police officer.

"function" includes a power, authority and duty.

"park", in relation to land, means an area of open space used for recreation, not being bushland.

"place of public entertainment" means:

- (a) a drive-in theatre, or
- (b) an open-air theatre, or
- (c) a theatre or public hall, or
- (d) licensed premises.

"public car park" means any premises used for the purpose of accommodating vehicles of members of the public on payment of a fee, but does not include a pay parking space under the *Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999* prescribed by the regulations.

public land means any land (including a public reserve) vested in or under the control of the council, but does not include:

- (a) a public road, or
- (b) land to which the *Crown Lands Act 1989* applies, or
- (c) a common, or
- (d) land subject to the *Trustees of Schools of Arts Enabling Act 1902*, or
- (e) a regional park under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

"public place" means:

- (a) a public reserve, public bathing reserve, public baths or public swimming pool, or
- (b) a public road, public bridge, public wharf or public road-ferry, or
- (c) a Crown reserve comprising land reserved for future public requirements, or
- (d) public land or Crown land that is not:
 - (i) a Crown reserve (other than a Crown reserve that is a public place because of paragraph (a), (b) or (c)), or
 - (ii) a common, or
 - (iii) land subject to the *Trustees of Schools of Arts Enabling Act 1902*, or
 - (iv) land that has been sold or leased or lawfully contracted to be sold or leased, or
- (e) land that is declared by the regulations to be a public place for the purposes of this definition.

"public reserve" means:

- (a) a public park, or
- (b) any land conveyed or transferred to the council under section 340A of the *Local Government Act 1919*, or
- (c) any land dedicated or taken to be dedicated as a public reserve under section 340C or 340D of the *Local Government Act 1919*, or

- (d) any land dedicated or taken to be dedicated under section 49 or 50, or
- (e) any land vested in the council, and declared to be a public reserve, under section 37AAA of the *Crown Lands Consolidation Act 1913*, or
- (f) any land vested in the council, and declared to be a public reserve, under section 76 of the *Crown Lands Act 1989*, or
- (g) a Crown reserve that is dedicated or reserved:
 - (i) for public recreation or for a public cemetery, or
 - (ii) for a purpose that is declared to be a purpose that falls within the scope of this definition by means of an order published in the Gazette by the Minister administering the *Crown Lands Act 1989*, being a Crown reserve in respect of which a council has been appointed as manager of a reserve trust for the reserve or for which no reserve trust has been established, or
- (h) land declared to be a public reserve and placed under the control of a council under section 52 of the *State Roads Act 1986*, or
- (i) land dedicated as a public reserve and placed under the control of a council under section 159 of the *Roads Act 1993*, and includes a public reserve of which a council has the control under section 344 of the *Local Government Act 1919* or section 48, but does not include a common.

public road" means a road which the public are entitled to use.

road" includes:

- (a) highway, street, lane, pathway, footpath, cycleway, thoroughfare, bridge, culvert, causeway, road-ferry, ford, crossing, by-pass and trackway, whether temporary or permanent, and
- (b) any part of a road and any part of any thing referred to in paragraph (a), and
- (c) any thing forming part of a road or any thing forming part of any thing referred to in paragraph (a).

629 Injuring or removing plants, animals, rocks and soil in or from public place

- (1) A person who, without lawful excuse, wilfully or negligently injures, damages or unnecessarily disturbs any plant, animal, rock or soil in a public place is guilty of an offence. Maximum penalty: 20 penalty units.
- (2) A person who, without lawful excuse, removes any plant, animal, rock or soil from a public place is guilty of an offence. Maximum penalty: 20 penalty units.

630 Breaking glass and other matter

- (1) A person who, without lawful excuse, wilfully breaks a bottle, glass, glass receptacle or syringe in a public place is guilty of an offence. Maximum penalty: 10 penalty units.
- (2) A person who, in a public place, throws, places or leaves any bottle, glass, glass receptacle, syringe, broken glass or other matter or thing likely to endanger the safety of or cause injury to any person or animal or damage to any vehicle or property is guilty of an offence. Maximum penalty: 10 penalty units.
- (3) A person who:
 - (a) breaks a bottle, glass, syringe or glass receptacle in a public bathing place under the control of the council, and
 - (b) does not collect and remove all portions of the bottle, glass, syringe or glass receptacle either to a receptacle (if any) provided by the council for that

purpose, or to a place beyond the public bathing place, is guilty of an offence.
Maximum penalty: 10 penalty units.

631 Damaging, defacing or polluting public bathing place

A person who, in a public bathing place under the control of the council does any act which damages, defaces or pollutes the public bathing place or which is likely to damage, deface or pollute the public bathing place or anything relating to the public bathing place is guilty of an offence. Maximum penalty: 10 penalty units.

632 Acting contrary to notices erected by councils

(1) A person who, in a public place within the area of a council, fails to comply with the terms of a notice erected by the council is guilty of an offence. Maximum penalty: 10 penalty units.

(2) The terms of any such notice may relate to any one or more of the following:

- (a) the payment of a fee for entry to or the use of the place,
- (b) the taking of a vehicle into the place,
- (b1) the driving, parking or use of a vehicle in the place,
- (c) the taking of any animal or thing into the place,
- (d) the use of any animal or thing in the place,
- (e) the doing of any thing in the place,
- (f) the use of the place or any part of the place.

(2A) However, a notice:

- (a) must not prohibit the drinking of alcohol in any public place that is a public road (or part of a public road) or car park, and
- (b) must not prohibit or regulate the taking of a vehicle into, or the driving, parking or use of any vehicle in, any public place that is a road or road related area within the meaning of the *Road Transport (General) Act 2005*.

Note: A council may establish an alcohol-free zone under Part 4 of this Chapter for a public place that is a public road (or part of a public road) or car park (or part of a car park).

(3) The terms of a notice referred to in this section may:

- (a) apply generally or be limited in their application by reference to specified exceptions or factors, or
- (b) apply differently according to different factors of a specified kind, or may do any combination of those things.

633A Use of skateboards, roller blades and roller skates

A person who, in a public place, uses skating equipment so as to obstruct, annoy, inconvenience or cause danger to any other person in that place is guilty of an offence. Maximum penalty: 10 penalty units.

By way of clarification, at this time of writing, a penalty unit is \$110 in NSW. This means that fines of \$220 can be issued for offences arising from breaches of the above legislative guidelines.

Question: How well do you believe young people understand these powers? Ponder this question. Speak to some young people throughout the course of your work to get a sense of how well they understand the powers of rangers.

Alcohol-Free Zones

Rangers are frequently called upon to respond to consumption of alcohol in public places. Many councils operate alcohol-free zones, which prohibits the consumption of alcohol in specified areas. The following information relates to alcohol-free zones.

What is an Alcohol-Free Zone?

The drinking of alcohol is prohibited in an alcohol-free zone that has been established by a council in New South Wales. Public places that are public roads or car parks (on public or Crown land) can be included in a zone. Private car parks (being on private land and not under the control of the council) cannot be included. Alcohol free zones promote the use of these roads, footpaths and carparks in safety and without interference from irresponsible street drinkers.¹

Police officers are responsible for enforcing alcohol-free zones. In the Dictionary to the Act a “police officer” is defined to exclude a special constable appointed under the Police Offences Act 1901.

It is important that the local Police Patrol Commander and the officer-in-charge of the local police station (if different) are involved in the establishment procedure so that the zone operates most effectively.

Where an alcohol-free zone is established in relation to a special event, the Commissioner of Police may authorise individual council officers, termed “enforcement officers” under the Act, to enforce that zone. The Commissioner will provide separate advice on the procedure for obtaining authorisation.

Council officers enforcing alcohol-free zones must ensure that their enforcement is consistent with that of the Police Service, particularly the warning, confiscation procedures and the keeping of enforcement statistics.²

642 Drinking of alcohol in alcohol-free zone

(1) It is the duty of a police officer or an enforcement officer who finds a person

¹ http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/adb/ll_adb.nsf/pages/adb_alcohol_free_zones

² Department of Local Government, 1995. Ministerial Guidelines on Alcohol - Free Zones
<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Community/documents/Safety/AFZMinisterialGuidelines.pdf>

drinking or about to drink, or who has recently been drinking, alcohol in an alcohol-free zone to warn the person that drinking of alcohol in the zone is prohibited and that alcohol in the person's possession may be confiscated if the person attempts to drink any of it in the zone.

(2) A person who has received a warning under subsection (1) but who, in the same alcohol-free zone in which the warning was given, and on the same day:

(a) commences to drink alcohol in the zone, or

(b) fails to stop drinking alcohol in the zone, or

(c) resumes drinking alcohol in the zone,

is guilty of an offence.

Maximum penalty: 0.2 penalty unit.

643 Confiscation of alcohol

(1) Alcohol in the immediate possession of a person in an alcohol-free zone who is committing, or has just committed, an offence under section 642, and any container in which the alcohol is packaged, may be seized by a police officer or an enforcement officer.

(2) Alcohol (and any container) seized under this section is, by virtue of the seizure, forfeited to the Crown and may be disposed of in accordance with directions given by the Commissioner of Police.

647 Penalty notices

(1) A police officer or an enforcement officer may serve a penalty notice on a person if it appears to the police officer or enforcement officer that the person has committed an offence under section 642.

(2) A penalty notice is a notice to the effect that, if the person served does not wish to have the matter determined by a court, the person may pay within the time and to the person specified in the notice, the maximum amount of the penalty for the offence.

(3) A penalty notice may be served personally or by post.

(4) If the maximum amount of the penalty for the offence is paid under this section, no person is liable to any further proceedings for the alleged offence.

(5) Payment under this section is not regarded as an admission of liability for the purpose of, and does not in any way affect or prejudice, any civil claim, action or

proceeding arising out of the same occurrence.

(6) This section does not limit the operation of any other provision of, or made under, this or any other Act relating to proceedings which may be taken in respect of offences.

Individual Exercise: Understanding these laws can be difficult for rangers, let alone young people. As part of your next series of shifts, try to consider how young people learn about what is expected of them in public spaces that are controlled or managed by councils. Contact the local Youth Development Officer or youth worker and ask them if they provide any education to young people on these powers and what is expected of young people in public places. Gaining an understanding of these issues might help you to develop ways of better communicating this information to young people.

Consistency and Rehearsal

Locations where rules are consistently applied and where rangers regularly rehearse how they will respond to particular behaviours are more likely to have fewer problems. Young people quickly learn the rules and quickly learn that they cannot divide and conquer the rangers. In locations where rangers haphazardly apply the rules, it is likely that some rangers will be singled out and tested. Young people will also claim that they were previously allowed to do certain things, creating a difficulty for the ranger trying to enforce the rules.

Consequently, it is important for ranger teams to periodically review how they handled previous situations and to rehearse responses to common scenarios. By doing this, you learn about how individual members respond and develop consistent practices. Through rehearsal, responses become instinctive, which demonstrates a level of confidence within and across staff teams.

Team Exercise: In staff meetings, consider the following scenarios and discuss how team members would individually respond. Review the level of consistency across team members and reflect on the adequacy of existing policies and procedures to deal with these scenarios.

Scenario: A ranger informs a young male that he cannot consume alcohol in this area. The young male responds by saying, 'what are you going to do about it, you plastic cop?' How should the ranger respond?

Scenario: A group of young people have gathered in the local park. They are swearing and disrupting parents with children in the adjacent playground. How should the ranger respond?

Scenario: On a foot patrol of the CBD area a ranger comes across two young people with spray cans and a recently completed picture on a council building. How should the ranger respond?

Scenario: Two rangers are working together. During the course of their work they are confronted by a large group of young people consuming alcohol in a park. The area is an alcohol-free zone. When the rangers move toward the group they receive some verbal abuse. One ranger moves toward a key protagonist and tells him to leave the park. How should the other ranger respond?

The purpose of these scenarios is to stimulate discussion amongst team members about how best to respond. Drawing out differences across team members is important, because the way that each ranger responds and deals with inappropriate behaviour has consequences for other team members. A staff member who is passive invariably places pressure on other team members to intervene. Conversely, an authoritarian staff member might create tension that causes difficulties for other team members. Understanding how team members respond and discussing preferred approaches will help prepare staff to address issues as they arise.

Youth Crime and the Law

In some circumstances, police will be called in to situations to deal with allegations of criminal activity. The following provides very basic information about the relevant legislation in NSW covering what happens to a young person arrested for an offence.

Young Offenders Act 1997

The *Young Offenders Act* (YOA) provides police with four options when considering how to deal with a young person (10-18 years old) who breaks the law. The options available are briefly described below:

- **Warning** – a warning will be used in less serious (or summary offences). The warning is issued on the spot and details of the young person are recorded and placed into the police computer database. Warnings are typically given for offensive behaviour, offensive language, riding bicycle without a helmet and riding on public transport without a ticket.
- **Caution** – a caution is a more serious intervention. A caution can only happen if the young person admits guilt in the presence of a parent, an adult nominated by a parent, a lawyer, or if the young person is over 16 years, in the presence of an adult that they select. A caution is then delivered by a police officer at the police station in the presence of the young person and his / her parents or guardian. The caution could take up to an hour and is designed to encourage the young person to take responsibility for their offending and to clearly alert them to the fact that further offending will be dealt with more seriously. A record is made on the police database of the caution. A criminal record does not result from a caution. Cautions are often delivered for stealing, common assault, break and enter and malicious damage (i.e. vandalism).
- **Youth Justice Conference** – this brings the victims, the young offender and his / her parents together to discuss the crime. The young person will be required to explain their actions and the victim has a chance to inform the young person how the offence has affected them. Together, the young person and the victim decide how the damage can be repaired, and this will generally involve one or a combination of the following: an apology, financial reparation, community work, direct reparation of the damage (e.g. fix the damage to the shed that the young person damaged) or entry into a program designed to stop further offending. A conference will be conducted for similar offences as a caution, but often the young person will have offended previously or the offence had a greater impact on the victim. The young person must have previously admitted guilt in the presence of an acceptable adult (i.e. lawyer, parent or adult nominated by parent) to be eligible for a youth justice conference or caution.
- **Court** – court is the last option for young people who have offended. Police have no option but to send a young person to court if they do not admit guilt or if they have committed a very serious offence (e.g. sexual offences, drug

supply or trafficking, armed robbery, offences resulting in death). Courts can impose periods of detention, fines, etc. as an outcome.

If you wish to learn more about the YOA, it is recommended that you contact the local police Youth Liaison Officer. These officers have specialist knowledge of the YOA and will be able to provide further explanation.

Summary

Rangers who are well versed in relevant laws and who are well drilled in responding to common problems will be in a good position to tackle inappropriate behaviour as it arises. Failure to understand the different tactics adopted by other rangers will negatively impact on the way that incidents are managed. Working as a team to rehearse and review responses to common problems will help to improve consistency and to reduce conflict created by differential responses.

Section 2: Building Rapport & Communicating with Young People

Building Rapport

Rapport simply means getting to know someone. If you say hello to a young person each time you see them, you will start to build a rapport. You will begin to learn more about them and to share things about yourself. Building a relationship this way with frequent patrons will make your work more enjoyable.

How can such a simple approach help? By gradually building a relationship with young people you see often you will get a better understanding of them as individuals. By knowing a young person well, you will be able to spot if they are not themselves (stressed, angry, intoxicated), you will be able to fall back on this relationship if there are problems (“Come on Andrew; it is me Tony; I can see you’re pissed off, but let’s talk about it”), people will be more willing to provide you with information and you will generally make people feel more welcome in the area.

Building rapport with everyone you see is impossible. Of the many thousands of people that you see, many will be infrequent visitors to the area. While this is true, there will be many who are regular visitors. There will be many young people who you can develop an understanding of, and with whom you can develop a relationship.

There is no mystery to building rapport or relationships. You will already have experience in building rapport, through your social and work lives. While you will have experience in this area, the following are some tips that might be helpful.

Tips and Hints – Building Rapport

- **Honesty** – be honest; don’t pretend to be interested if you are not. Try to be natural in the way that you start conversations.
- **Learn** – try and learn something new about the person that can give you a future connection (interests, hobbies, school attended or employment, friends, etc.) Take care that you don’t make this an interrogation.
- **Listen** – listen to what is being said.
- **Watch** – watch how the person behaves, as a way of learning how they behave normally.
- **Value** – value their opinions, particularly about matters that relate to the area.

Observation and building rapport are important preventative or proactive techniques. Building relationships with young people can help to prevent problems. Through observation and building rapport, you gain invaluable

information. You might learn about illegal activity in the area (or surrounding areas), you might learn about a problem that could be prevented and you might learn how best to communicate with and relate to particular young people, which will be useful if there is ever an incident requiring your intervention.

Rapport building requires communication skills. We will now look at communication skills in greater detail.

Communicating with Young People

Many, many books have been written about communication. Often, these books assume a relationship between the people speaking with each other. While some of the information from these books is helpful, much is not directly relevant to your experience working as a ranger. We have tried to make the following information directly relevant to dealing with young people in public places.

What affects communication in your role?

Each role that you carry out requires different communication and each situation will change and influence the way you need to respond. Some of the factors that will influence how you communicate include:

- **Situation** – a crisis situation will need a swift, directive response (“Stop smashing bottles!”), whereas providing directions will require simple, clear explanation of a particular location (“The train station is just up there on your left hand side”).
- **Audience composition** – the receivers of the message or the audience will determine how you will communicate. If you are talking to a hearing impaired person, you will have to speak more clearly and possibly more loudly; if you are talking to small child, you will have to use simple language; if you are talking with a group, you will have to speak loud enough for all to hear; etc. Also, the size of the audience watching you will affect how you communicate – some conversations will be better had in private. Giving someone wanting attention or someone who is getting angry an audience might make them even angrier.
- **Needs and wants** – what the receiver or audience needs or wants will dictate how you communicate. Trying to establish what the person or persons want will help you communicate with them. If they want to make a complaint, then listening to their concerns will often be helpful; if they want to know why they are being issued with an infringement notice, then clear information about the reasons and process will be important; if they want to show off to their friends, then not being drawn into conflict will be important.
- **Previous experiences** – if the young person has had negative experiences with rangers previously, then they might be more guarded than if they have had good experiences. If you have had conflict with that individual, then you might be expecting further troubles. Considering how previous experiences impact on communication will be helpful.
- **Relationship** – if you have a relationship with the person or persons, then you will have a better idea about how to communicate with them. You will have

better understanding of their behaviour and be better able to read their behaviour as a cue to whether they are calm, agitated or angry, intoxicated, upset, etc.

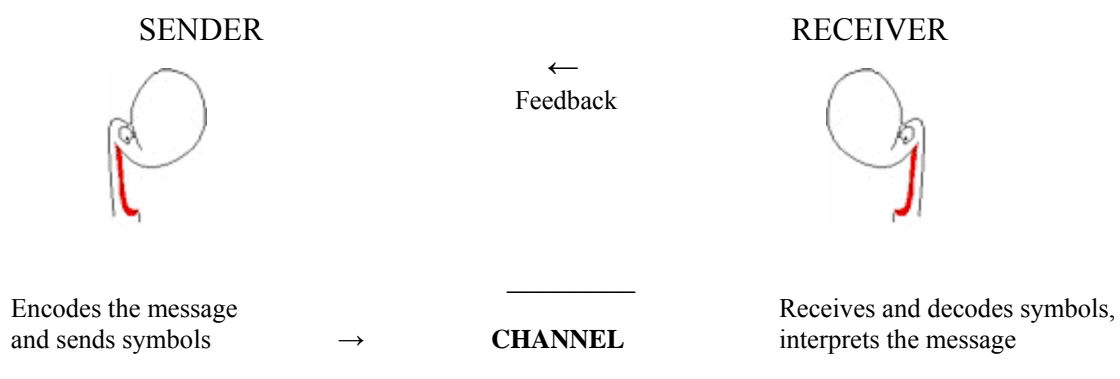
- **Communication skills** – each person can have different communication skills. Some young people will be very confident, while others will be shy; some will be aggressive, while others will be calm.
- **Background** – different cultures and religions can have (sometimes very subtle) differences in the “rules” for appropriate communication. For example, for some cultures it is a sign of respect to avoid eye contact with an adult or superior, while for other cultures, a person who avoids eye contact can be perceived as shy or dishonest. Age and gender can impact on the way a person communicates. Trying to learn and understand these differences will help to respond appropriately to each individual.

These are just some of the factors that will influence communication. You could think of many more from your experiences. Reflecting on exchanges, particularly those that result in an outcome that you are unhappy with, will help to improve your understanding of the way you communicate and how your communication can improve.

In order to improve your communication skills, you might find it useful first to learn a bit about how communication works, and some of the barriers to effective communication.

What is communication?

The simple diagram below, serves as an introduction to the basic elements of the communication process.



The *sender* is the person who has an idea, opinion, feeling, instruction etc that s/he wants to convey (a *message*). Before sending the message, it needs to be *encoded*, that is, translated into *symbols*, to which certain meanings are attached. These symbols can be *verbal* (words) and / or *non- verbal* (the written word,

graphics, gestures, expressions, tone of voice etc). The message is then sent using one, or a combination of, *channels* of communication, for example, in writing, by telephone, face to face. Having received the message, the *receiver* then needs to *decode*, or make sense of, the *symbols* received. The *receiver's* response to the message is known as *feedback*. Feedback tells the sender whether the message was received as the sender intended. In providing feedback, the process is repeated: encode, send, receive, decode...

It is important to remember that communication is a dynamic on-going process: at the same time as participants in the process are sending a message, they will also be receiving and decoding messages. Similarly, at the same time as a participant receives messages, s/he will also be sending messages, often of a non-verbal nature (for example, facial expressions, posture etc). Clearly, the process can become more complicated when the interaction is occurring between more than two people, or when two people are trying to interact when there are other people or distractions around. This could often be the case for your interactions with young people.

Communication is not just the words that you say. Communication includes your facial expression, your body language (how you position yourself, how you stand, etc), the tone of your voice and the words that you use.

Non-verbal communication

An important component of the communication process is non-verbal communication. It has been said that in a two person interaction, as much as 65 per cent of the “social meaning of the situation” will be conveyed non-verbally.³ Thus, for you to effectively communicate you need to be just as aware of what you are saying non-verbally as you are of the words you use. Furthermore, an awareness of non-verbal communication can help you to more accurately receive a message, particularly the feeling component of the message. Non-verbal communication is however, somewhat more complicated than it appears.

Different behaviours can have different meanings in different contexts. How often have you jumped to a conclusion about a person because of what you see them doing?

Be aware of how you position your body, your size (particularly if you are much taller than the people you have most contact with), your facial expression and the tone of your voice will often be more important than the words that you say.

Individual Exercise: The following table lists some common examples of behaviour. Take the time to consider what messages might be sent in the following situations.

³ Johnson DW (1981) *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualisation* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, p 132.

Scenario	Message Sent / Impact
Yawning while you are saying that you are really interested in what they have to say.	<i>Bored, disinterested. You won't be believed.</i>
Being six foot tall and standing looking down at a child while you are talking to them.	
Standing very close with your chest puffed out while talking to a young man.	
Constantly watching other people, while talking with a group of young people.	
Sitting down next to a group of young people and asking them about their day.	
Yelling at a young person who has just walked into the mall.	

Being aware of your posture, your size, your voice, your facial expressions and the way that you speak is crucial to understanding how other people see you and how you communicate with others.

Remember, 65% of a social exchange will be conveyed non-verbally. If you get the body language right, then you will be about half way there.

Verbal Communication

While non-verbal communication will often convey the greatest amount, the words that you say will also be important. There will be some obvious guidelines in the language and words that you use as a ranger. Below are some dos and don'ts.

DO	DON'T
Speak slowly and clearly	Mumble
Use language appropriate to the person you are speaking to	Use jargon or complicated language when talking to children
Use calming words and tones when someone is agitated	Talk fast to someone who is agitated
Shout if you need to get someone's immediate attention who might be in danger	Shout if it is unnecessary, because it is likely to result in them raising their voice
Speak quietly about matters that a person would not want shared	Talk about something important in a busy area, instead of finding a quiet location

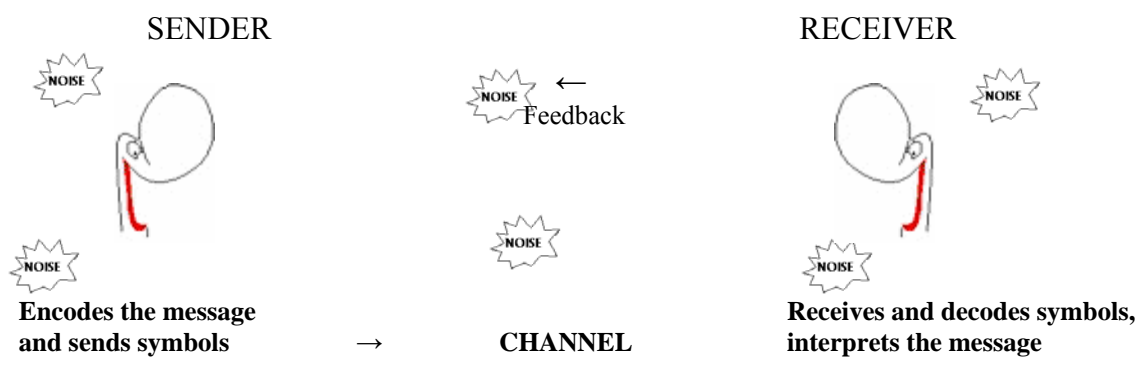
Many of these tips are very obvious and you are likely to do this as a matter of course. Reflecting and thinking about the words you use, the tone you use and how each situation calls for a different approach will help you improve your communication skills.

Barriers to Effective Communication

Communication does not occur in a vacuum, and as such, is subject to interference. Writers in the field of communication will often refer to this as *noise*.

“Noise is any element that interferes with the communication process. In the sender, noise refers to such things as attitudes, prejudices, frame of reference of the sender, and the appropriateness of their language or other expression of the message. In the receiver, noise refers to such things as their attitudes, backgrounds and experiences that affect the decoding process. In the channel, noise refers to (1) environmental sounds, such as static or traffic, (2) speech problems such as stammering, and (3) annoying or distracting mannerisms, such as a tendency to mumble”.⁴

Thus, “noise” can interfere at any point in the communication process.



Common barriers to effective communication include:

- Trust
- Power
- Differences
- Emotions
- Assumptions
- Inattention / Lack of interest
- Lack of feedback
- Poor expression
- Inconsistency
- Environmental “noise”
- Intercultural communication
- Other “Blockers”

A short description of each of these barriers to effective communication is contained below.

⁴ Johnson DW (1981) *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualisation* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, p 76.

Trust

Lack of trust can get in the way of good communication. Where parties in the interaction do not trust each other (for any number of reasons), communication can be affected. A lack of trust can result in one party not accepting what is being said or causing a requirement to confirm with others the veracity of what has been stated. Either way, communication, or the exchange of information, is hampered by the absence of trust.

Power

The nature of the power relationship between a ranger and a young person can impact on the interaction. Some research studies (cited by Drury et al) have found that where the young person perceives an imbalance of power in the relationship,

- a) they may approach the interaction with a belief that they won't be given a fair hearing and give up before the conversation even starts ;
- b) communication in these types of relationships can be difficult for young people if they are not familiar with the "rules" or etiquette that applies to these sorts of interactions, which can be the case for many young people.⁵

Differences

Individual differences between the parties to the interaction may impact on the communication process (e.g. age, sex, differing confidence levels, educational differences, ethnic and cultural differences, and differences in personal beliefs, past experiences, attitudes, and intellectual abilities). Language differences can go beyond differences in the actual language itself, to include differences in pronunciations of certain words, differences in feelings about the tone used (some people find sarcasm funny, others can feel put down by sarcasm), differences in vocabulary and differences in understandings of certain expressions (e.g "get off the grass" or "fair crack of the whip"). Different cultures or individuals may attribute different meanings to certain non-verbal cues. We saw earlier that when young people present or behave in ways that are "different", such as in their dress, their tendency to gather in groups etc., these "differences" may engender fear or apprehension in others.

One Australian study found that "young people's perceptions of adults' beliefs about them made an important contribution to the explanation of problem behaviour involvement".⁶ That is, if the young person thinks the adult believes their behaviour will be problematic, then this perception can lead to problematic behaviour. The implication of this is that the attitudes you bring to your interactions with young people (or more importantly, what the young person thinks

⁵ Drury J, Catan L, Dennison C, Brody R (1998) "Exploring Teenagers' Accounts Of Bad Communication: A New Basis For Intervention" *Journal Of Adolescence* 1998, **21**, 177–196.

⁶ Stankey ME (2000) *Stereotypic Beliefs About Young People: Nature, Sources, And Consequences*. PhD thesis, School of Psychology, University of New South Wales August, 2000.

might be your attitude) may impact on the outcome of the interaction (bearing in mind that a whole lot of other factors may also be operating).

Emotions

Highly charged emotions (anger, fear, etc.) can interfere with the communication process. It can be very difficult to gather your thoughts, focus on the message being given, or speak clearly and logically when you are feeling highly emotional.

Assumptions

While there are times when assumptions can be important keys to understanding a situation, there are also times where assumptions can get in the way of the communication process. Assuming you know what a person is going to say or do before they have spoken or acted, responding to stereotypical beliefs about certain groups of people, thinking you know best without consulting with others involved and assuming you know the intentions of the person with whom you are interacting can all lead to misunderstandings, mistakes or conflict.

Inattention / Lack of interest

Communication can fail when participant(s) fail to show any interest or pay attention to what is being said, as the participant is not open to receiving the message.

Lack of feedback

Lack of feedback during the process is another potential inhibitor of communication. Without feedback from the receiver, the sender does not know whether “the receiver interpret[ed] the sender’s message the way the sender intended it...”⁷ This barrier can be seen in the “Chinese whispers” game, where a single message is passed in one direction through a number of channels, with each receiver not being able to provide feedback. Inevitably (even without intentional miscommunication), the final message received is different to the one originally sent.

Poor expression

The message may not be received correctly if it is not stated clearly, in language the receiver can understand. Giving too much information can result in the receiver not taking in all that was said.

Inconsistency

Messages need to be consistent for communication to be effective. If the sender has given conflicting messages at different times in the past, or even during this exchange, the receiver may not trust the integrity of, or the sender’s commitment to, the message now being sent. Sometimes the inconsistency can come about

⁷ Johnson DW (1981) *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualisation* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, pp 76-77.

because of the words used, sometimes it can be because the verbal message is inconsistent with the non-verbal message (e.g. the actions of the sender).

Environmental “noise”

External noises, competing sounds, distractions, poor hearing or eyesight, physical discomforts and poor ventilation are among some of the many physical factors that can impede the communication process. Most of these should not be a major problem, but will be in some situations.

Intercultural communication

There is every likelihood that at least a small proportion of the young people you deal with will come from a culture different from your own. There may be times where cultural differences can cause misunderstandings in the communication process. It may be that you and the young person do not share the same first language, or do not have the same level of English language skills. Rules of communication and etiquette, or non-verbal cues, may differ between cultures. An often cited example is that of eye contact. In Western cultures, eye contact is considered a positive trait, indicating honesty and openness (and indeed you will see that eye contact is generally recommended as one means of showing respect and genuine interest in the speaker) and therefore a person who avoids eye contact can be perceived as dishonest or shy. In some cultures, however, it is considered a mark of respect to lower the eyes and avoid eye contact.

Intercultural communication training goes beyond the limits of this manual. For now, we can only point out that cultural differences may impact on the communication process. If you think that you could benefit from more information on intercultural communication, you could ask your supervisor or employer about the possibility of organising a training session on this topic. Alternatively, you could contact a community organisation in your area that represents the culture you are seeking more information about.

Other “Blockers”

Responses that criticise, blame, are judgemental, distract, analyse or diagnose can get in the way of a person expressing themselves.

Individual Exercise: Identify “noises” or barriers to communication that have affected you in the past and suggest ways of overcoming these barriers.

Noise / Barrier	Example	How to Overcome
Power - example	<i>A young person was intimidated by my presence and wanted to test my authority</i>	<i>Maintain boundaries, but give power to young person – “tell me how we can work together”</i>
Power		
Trust		
Inconsistency		
Emotions		
Lack of Interest		

Given all this, it is little wonder that the communication process can sometimes go wrong. If you keep working at it, reflecting on what happened and how it can be improved and keep talking with your colleagues about how they manage situations, then you will learn from the times when it does not go exactly right.

Before we move on to consider some communication skills, it is worth noting that the way you communicate with young people will influence the way they respond. Being in a position of power and authority, you should set the example for young people. If you are inappropriate in the way that you communicate, then you can hardly expect or demand good treatment in return. The following quote sums up this notion:

“In helping other people learn more effective interpersonal skills, it is often helpful to model or demonstrate the skill and then reinforce the other person for engaging in it. Nothing teaches like a good example. Learning new behaviours by imitating others is a major means of acquiring new skills. By engaging in the needed skills you can encourage others to do likewise, and then you can reinforce them for doing so”.⁸

⁸ Johnson DW (1981) *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualisation* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, p 187.

“Base” Skills for effective communication

Several specific skills, knowledge and attitudes have been identified as integral to effective communication. These include:

- Genuineness
- Acceptance
- Empathy
- Active listening skills
- Speaking skills

We cannot stress enough the importance of these *base* attitudes in your communications with young people.

Genuineness

Young people are good at detecting whether you are genuine or not. They will have had practice at school and at home in determining who really cares and who is faking it. Being aware of how you feel toward someone and being genuine will be important.

For example, in your encounter with a young person you might find that you are becoming increasingly angry or frustrated. To express this anger unreservedly may have the potential to increase the young person's defiance or resistance. However, if you are able to recognise and acknowledge to yourself that you are becoming angry, you are in a better position to control that anger and focus on strategies to resolve the issue appropriately.

Below are some tips (adapted from James and Gilliland) for communicating genuineness in your interactions with young people:

1. Be spontaneous, communicating freely with tact and diplomacy.
2. Be confident.
3. Be non-defensive. To be non-defensive it is important to have an understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses. This enables you to be open to hostile or negative messages from the young person without feeling attacked or defensive. In many cases, when a young person directs their anger or frustration at you, it will not be you *personally* who will be the target, you just happen to be the person who is in the line of fire. In these circumstances the attacks will be saying more about the young person and how s/he is feeling than it is about you. If, on the other hand, there is some truth in the attack or criticism (“That is so unfair!!”), your non-defensiveness will help you to control your feelings, leave room for you to rationally consider whether that is the case, and deal with the issue rather than get caught up in inappropriate argument
4. Being consistent. Genuine people have less discrepancies between what they say, think, feel and do

5. Being a sharer of self. When appropriate, a genuine person will allow others to see them and their feelings through their verbal and non-verbal communications.⁹

Acceptance

The key attitude here is acceptance of the young person regardless of their views, opinions or behaviours. This is a useful adage for dealing with specific unacceptable behaviours from young people. The message you need to convey is “I reject your behaviour but not you as a person”. In communicating acceptance, you put aside your personal needs, values and desires and do not demand specific responses from the person for them to be accepted.¹⁰ “Acceptance is best defined as an attitude of *neutrality* toward another person or persons. When a person is accepting he offers an atmosphere largely uncontaminated by evaluations of the other’s thoughts feelings or behaviours”.¹¹

One other important point that Bolton makes is that acceptance does not mean approval. **“I can accept another person’s feelings and still not approve of his behaviours. It is possible to be accepting and confrontative at the same time”.**¹² This is a useful piece of information to keep in mind when you are having to speak to a young person about unacceptable behaviour. It fits well with a rule of conflict resolution: “reject the behaviour, not the person”.

Empathy

Empathy is both an attitude and a skill. It tells the person that you want to hear and understand what it is like to be “in their shoes”. It tells the person that you are interested and prepared to put some effort into hearing what they have to say.

Empathy is not the same as sympathy. Empathy is “feeling with” another person, while “sympathy” is “feeling for” the person. Sympathy can be patronising. When you have an attitude of empathy, you acknowledge and “hear” the other person’s feeling, but you do not lose your separateness from that person. Empathy is a “kind of detached involvement with the feeling world of another person”.¹³

Here, Bolton’s table showing the continuum from apathy to sympathy is particularly useful:

⁹ James RK and Gilliland BE (2001) *Crisis Intervention Strategies* Belmont CA: Wadsworth, pp 52-57.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Bolton, R (2003) *People Skills: how to assert yourself, listen to others, and resolve conflicts*. New York: Simon and Schuster, p. 265.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 267.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 272.

Apathy	Empathy	Sympathy
"I don't care"	"Looks like you're really feeling down today"	"You poor thing"
"That's your problem"	"Sounds as if you were really hurt by that"	"I feel just <i>dreadful</i> for you!"

Source: Bolton 2003: 270

To communicate empathy is to a) accurately pick up on the sender's thoughts and feelings, and b) communicate back to the speaker what the receiver understands it to be like for the speaker. The strategy for communicating empathy is often called "active listening".

Active listening

As the term implies, active listening requires that the listener show that s/he is listening, by sending out appropriate verbal and non-verbal cues.

Active listening serves three purposes:

- It sends a message to the young person that you are interested in what they have to say
- It is a means for checking that the message you are receiving is the message the young person intended to send.
- It is also a means of communicating empathy: "I want to understand what it is like for you".

"When you listen accurately and respond relevantly, you communicate to the sender, 'I care about what you are saying and I want to understand it'. When you fail to listen and respond irrelevantly, you communicate to the sender, 'I don't care about what you are saying, and I don't want to understand it'".¹⁴

When you are listening actively you will indicate that you are doing so by both verbal and non-verbal means: by your *attending behaviour* and your *reflective responses*. Attending behaviour is appropriate to any of the goals of your interactions with young people. Paraphrasing and reflective responses will be more appropriate for circumstances in which the message the young person is trying to convey is complex, or is becoming muddled (they are strategies for ensuring you are receiving the message correctly). These two types of responses are also appropriate when the young person is expressing an emotional component to the message (they provide you with strategies for letting the young person know that you are hearing how things are for them).

¹⁴ Johnson DW (1981) *Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualisation* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, p 90.

Attending¹⁵

For the most part, these are the non-verbal signs you give that you are being attentive to the speaker. You focus fully on the young person, you put aside your concerns. It is “both an attitude and a skill”. Failure to attend to what is being said or conveyed can give the impression that you are not interested, or can cause you to misunderstand the message. The following non-verbal cues can convey that you are involved, committed, concerned and trustworthy. At the same time, they can help you focus on the person and reduce the chances of you being distracted:

- Nodding
- Maintaining eye contact (but not staring or glaring)
- Smiling when appropriate, keeping a serious expression when appropriate
- Leaning forward if sitting, or having an open stance if standing
- Being close enough to the young person, but taking care not to invade the young person’s personal space
- Your tone of voice can also tell the young person whether you are attending or not
- Responses such as “I see”, “uh huh”, “OK”, “Go on”, etc., verbalised appropriately can also show that you are listening and encourage the young person to continue talking (responses such as this as sometimes called “door openers”).

Achieving the balance as to what is appropriate takes practice, self-awareness and an awareness of how the young person is reacting to the signs you are conveying. To look too concerned, to stare instead of maintaining appropriate eye contact, to be too close to the young person, can be just as inappropriate as looking anywhere at all but at the young person, or standing with your back to the young person. Attending is an on-going process throughout the interaction. While you are attending to the young person’s verbal and non-verbal messages, you will also be able to pick up cues from the young person which will give you clues as to whether you are building rapport with the young person, or whether you are doing or saying something that could negatively affect the interaction or cause the young person to become fearful, defensive or to lose confidence in the interaction.

Silence

Sometimes, we can overlook the power of silence. “Remaining silent but attending closely...can convey deep empathic understanding”.¹⁶ Appropriately used, silence can also give the young person time to think without pressure of questions or lectures from you. Silence can give you time to digest what the young person is saying and formulate a response that is more likely to be helpful and on target.

¹⁵ James RK and Gilliland BE (2001) *Crisis Intervention Strategies* Belmont CA: Wadsworth.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 55.

Paraphrasing / reflective responses

Paraphrasing is also known in the literature as giving understanding responses or reflective responses. It is a strategy for expressing *empathic understanding*. Some writers in the field of communication will distinguish between paraphrasing the verbal content of a message (the words the person uses) and reflecting back the feeling component of the message (which could be communicated both verbally and non-verbally).

A natural tendency for many of us is to respond to what another person is saying by giving *evaluative, judgemental, blaming or approval* responses. That is, we say things like “I agree with you”; “I think you are wrong”; “that’s not how you should feel”, “don’t be so angry”. These types of responses don’t tell the speaker what it is you heard them say, rather they tell them what you think about what they said. Paraphrasing takes a step back. Before you present your own point of view, you first try to “get into the other person’s shoes” and understand the message he is sending so well that you are able to restate that message in your own words.

It should be noted here that the message the young person is sending will often be communicated both verbally and non-verbally. According to James and Gilliland, to show empathic understanding, you also need to accurately pick up on non-verbal as well as verbal messages, which can be transmitted in any number of ways. For example, facial expression, body movements or posture, gestures, voice tone. Non-verbal messages can show any number of emotions: anger, sadness, puzzlement, fear, stress and hopelessness, for example. You need to be aware of whether the non-verbal messages being sent are congruent with the verbal messages.

James and Gilliland stress that it is important not to read more into the non-verbal than is actually there: “Communicating empathy in the non-verbal realm is no place for fishing expeditions or long-shot hunches”.¹⁷

In addition, it is also important to remember that paraphrasing is just that: a restatement of the message the young person is sending. Just as it is inappropriate to read more into the non-verbal messages, it would also be inappropriate in these circumstances to enter into the realm of interpreting the message “you are feeling angry because of a deep-seated problem with your parents...”

The non-verbal messages you send during the exchange will also be important. Are your verbal messages congruent with your non-verbal messages? It is not very helpful to the communication process if you say you are interested in what the young person is saying, but your non-verbal messages (facial expressions, posture, tone of voice, etc.) show you are not interested. If you can communicate non-verbally and verbally that you are tuned in to what is being said, you have a better chance of making the young person feel that you are willing to hear his / her side of the story.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 54.

In summary, a good listener:

1. Lets others finish what they are saying without interrupting them;
2. Asks questions, if they are confused;
3. Pays attention to what others are saying and shows they are paying attention by keeping comfortable eye contact. They don't let their eyes wander around the room;
4. Remains open-minded, ready to revise their opinion;
5. Uses feedback and paraphrasing skills;
6. Pays attention to non-verbal signals, such as the speaker's body language; and
7. Doesn't "tune out" inappropriately when others are speaking¹⁸

Speaking Skills

We saw earlier in the section on barriers to communication that there are a number of "noises" that can interfere with effectively sending a message, such as lack of clarity of the message, poor expression, or inconsistency of the message.

We list here some strategies for speaking effectively:

1. Before you say or do anything, think about the purpose of your communication with the young person. If you are clear in your own mind about the purpose of your interaction, then you are less likely to send *inconsistent* messages about that purpose. Sometimes it may be helpful to verbalise your purpose, for example, "my job is to sort out this problem". At other times it will not be necessary and may even be unhelpful, for example "I'm talking to you today so we build trust and rapport".
2. Think about what it is you want to say before you say it.
3. Use language and concepts the young person will understand. This involves taking into account, for example, the young person's age, cognitive ability, English language skills.
4. Make your verbal and non-verbal messages consistent. When people communicate face-to-face, they send both verbal and non-verbal messages. When you ask the question "Can I help you?" with a smile or an inquiring look, and / or a pleasant tone of voice, both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication are saying the same thing – you are willing to help. The same question with a sneer, and / or a gruff tone of voice can give a mixed or inconsistent message. The young person may be left with the thought, "I don't really know whether you want to help me or not".
5. If you are giving a complex message, or a message that it is very important the young person understands, ask for feedback about how your message was received. For example, if you are telling the young person what the

¹⁸ Cava, R (1990) *Dealing with Difficult People: Proven Strategies for handling stressful situations and defusing tension*. London: Platkus, p. 52.

consequences of his / her inappropriate behaviour might be, don't just ask "do you understand?" (you will most likely get a nod). You could ask instead, "just so we don't misunderstand each other, can you tell me what will happen if you keep doing [this behaviour]" (or anything similar that feels comfortable for you and appropriate to situation, the age etc of the young person). Your non-verbal communications will be important here: if your tone of voice or facial expressions are threatening, the young person will likely feel intimidated, may not be able to answer your question adequately, or may even become defiant or defensive. The message you want to convey both verbally and non-verbally is simply that you want to be sure that the message you sent is the message the young person received.

6. If you are giving information, state the information clearly. If there is a lot of information to give, you may need to break it down and ask for **feedback** as you go. Include all the information the young person needs to understand the message.

Much of this information is likely to merely clarify or reinforce how you already communicate with young people. By reading through this information you might have identified a few areas of your practice that require closer inspection. Communication skills need to be worked at. Try to find ways of practicing and reviewing how you communicate with young people. Monitor your attitude and your tone; review the outcomes of your communication with young people; observe people that you think are effective communicators and isolate the strategies that they use effectively and try them yourself.

Section 3: Understanding Young People

Throughout this package we have focused on young people without actually defining who we mean. This section will focus on young people in an attempt to give you some insight into who we have been talking about and how this will help you in your work.

There are many different terms used to describe people between 12-24 years, which is the age group generally defined by the term and concept “youth”. Terms such as adolescent, youth, teenager and young person are often used to describe persons between 12 and 24 years, although the group between 12 and 18 will often be the group who you would have most contact with. This is the age span in which parents generally start to allow their children to go to public places unsupervised.

Young People – Some Facts

New South Wales

According to the 2006 Census¹⁹, there are 1,141,199 young people aged between 12 and 24 years in New South Wales, which is 17.4% of the total population in the State. Of these young people, 36,613 identified as Indigenous, while 1,035,705 stated that they were not Indigenous. A further 68,881 did not declare if they were or were not Indigenous. Therefore, approximately 3.2% of the young people aged between 12 and 24 in New South Wales identify as Indigenous.

Australia²⁰

The following is a collection of statistics covering an array of indices. These statistics are presented here to provide some insight into the experiences of young people.

- In 2004/05, the proportions of young males and females aged 18-24 years reporting high or very high levels of distress were 12% and 19% respectively. This represents an increase from 1997 when the corresponding proportions were 7% and 13% respectively.
- In 2004, 272 young people aged 12-24 committed suicide.
- Patterns of injury in young people are distinct from other age groups, showing the strong influence that stage of life has on susceptibility to certain types of injury. Greater responsibility for decision-making creates more opportunity for young people to engage in risky behaviours.
- The ABS 2004/05 National Health Survey estimated that 845,310 injury events occurred among young people in the four weeks preceding the survey. Of these:

¹⁹ Cat. No. 2068.0 – 2006 Census Tables New South Wales, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

²⁰ The following information is from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2007) *Young Australians Health and Wellbeing*, Canberra.

- 34% were due to being cut with a knife, tool or other implement
 - 20% were due to hitting something or being hit by something
 - 20% were due to low falls
- In 2004/05, the most common external cause of injury leading to hospitalisation among young people was transport accidents.
- In 2004, the leading cause of death for young Australians was land transport accidents (442 deaths), followed by intentional self harm (suicide – 272 deaths) and accidental poisoning (74 deaths).
- According to the ABS 2004/05 National Health Survey, 25% of the young people aged 15-24 years were overweight or obese.
- In 2006, there were 9,276 young people aged 12-17 years on care and protection orders and 8,332 in out-of-home care.
- Indigenous young people were 6 times as likely as other Australians to be on care and protection orders and to be placed in out-of-home care.
- In 2004, 17% of 12-24 year olds were current smokers.
- According to the 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, 31% of 12-24 year olds drank once or more a month, at levels that put them at risk or high risk of alcohol related harm in the short term. Furthermore, this survey indicated that 23% of young people aged 12-24 years had used an illicit drug in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- In 2004, the mean age of initiation for first drug use for young people aged between 12 and 24 years was:
 - 14.5 years for tobacco
 - 14.7 years for alcohol
 - 15.7 years for marijuana
 - 18 years for meth/amphetamines
 - 18.4 years for ecstasy
- In the 12 months prior to the 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, 31% of young people aged 14-24 years were the victim of drug-related violence (including alcohol-related violence)
- In 2005, 14% of 18-24 year olds were the victims of physical assault, 10% of physical threats and 2% of sexual assault.
- The rate of Indigenous 12-17 year olds in juvenile justice supervision was 13 times the non-Indigenous rate.

Individual Exercise: The Department of Local Government requires Councils in NSW to develop social or community plans for their areas. These social plans provide a detailed analysis of the demographic profile of the area and identify the services available to specific population groups. To better understand the needs of young people in your area, locate the social plan for your area and review the

sections relating to young people. Does this information reflect what you experience in your work?

Improving your understanding of young people, how they behave and what is important to them will help in knowing how best to deal with them. Adolescence is a time of growth; a time of growing independence and increasing understanding of the way the world operates. Getting older does not necessarily mean that you will learn everything you need to know, but for the majority of young people, learning through mistakes or trial and error will be a critical feature of adolescence. Remembering that young people are learning and that they will make mistakes can help in responding to them.

Adolescence

Adolescence as a concept is said by some to have a relative short history. While some historical texts describe adolescence, it is generally believed that the concept of adolescence emerged after the industrial revolution. The abolition of child labour, the evolution of school as an institution, the emergence of separate institutions for young delinquents and extended reliance on the family emerged after the industrial revolution. Prior to this time, it was not uncommon for children to work, to be indentured as apprentices and leave the family home for work or marriage. Now, while the exact period of adolescence is debated, it is apparent that the period known as adolescence has increased. Financial independence might not be achieved until the mid-twenties after extended periods of education and reliance on the family for financial and other support.

Adolescence is a time of physical, emotional and cognitive development. This means that bodies are changing, identities are being formed and thinking is becoming less concrete. Young people are more able to understand what it is like from another perspective than children and are starting to develop greater insight into their own behaviour. The following provides some simple insights into the critical changes and issues facing young people as they mature through adolescence.

Physical Development

Adolescence is clearly a period of physical development. The key physical developments include:

- **Rapid gains** - In height and weight.
- **Development of secondary sex characteristics** - During puberty, changing hormonal levels play a role in activating the development of secondary sex characteristics.
- **Continued brain development** - Recent research suggests that young people's brains are not completely developed until late in adolescence. Specifically, studies suggest that the connections between neurons affecting emotional, physical and mental abilities are incomplete. This could explain why some

teens seem to be inconsistent in controlling their emotions, impulses, and judgments.²¹

Many of these physical changes will have social consequences. Concerns about body image, worries about weight gain and changing appearance, and clumsiness associated with growth spurts are just some of the potential issues emerging during this period.

Cognitive Development

Adolescence is a time of cognitive development. This means that there are developments in advanced reasoning and thinking skills. For example, the following are common cognitive developments occurring in adolescence:

- Developing advanced reasoning skills which include the ability to think about multiple options and possibilities. It includes a more logical thought process and the ability to think about things hypothetically. It involves asking and answering the question, “what if...?”.
- Developing abstract thinking skills, which enables thinking about things that cannot be seen, heard, or touched. Examples include things like faith, trust, beliefs and spirituality.
- Developing the ability to think about thinking in a process known as "meta-cognition." Meta-cognition allows individuals to think about how they feel and what they are thinking. It involves being able to think about how one is perceived by others.²²

Apart from these cognitive developments, some commentators have suggested that there are certain tasks that we must achieve in adolescence. These tasks relate to maturity and growth.

“Havinghurst (1953) identifies 10 developmental tasks during adolescence:

1. Achieving newer and more mature relations with members of both sexes
2. Achieving a masculine or feminine role
3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively
4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults
5. Achieving some assurance of economic independence
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation
7. Preparing for marriage and family life
8. Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence
9. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour

²¹ Huebner, A. (2000) ‘Adolescent Growth and Development’, Virginia State University.

²² Huebner, A. (2000) ‘Adolescent Growth and Development’, Virginia State University.

10. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour”.²³

“Selverstone (1989) believes that the 10 developmental tasks during adolescence may be clustered into 4 main categories:

1. **Identity** - which involves the determination of the question “who am I?”
2. **Connectedness** - which includes establishing relationships with peers
3. **Power** – the development of a sense of control and power
4. **Hope / joy** - which is achieved via the accomplishment of the previous three tasks”.²⁴

Recent research is shedding light on adolescent brain development, which has important implications for our understanding of adolescent cognitive development. Due to improvements in relevant brain imaging technology, it is now possible to better map brain development throughout life stages or development. The findings from this research suggest that brain development does not cease nearly as early as previously predicted. Rather, considerable brain development continues into early adulthood.

A recent article in YAPA’s monthly newsletter highlighted some of the key issues and implications of this research. It has been reproduced below.

²³ Slee, P. (2002) *Child, Adolescent and Family Development*, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 425.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 426.

Adolescent development & risk-taking

By Clinical Associate Professor David Bennett, The Children's Hospital*

Recent research from the field of neuroscience is shedding new light on the question of why teenagers engage in reckless risk taking behaviours. In the past we've blamed raging hormones and peer pressure, but some neuroscientists believe there may be more to it...

Life is a risky business. We all take chances, and there are risks involved in practically everything we do. Taking risks is certainly a natural part of growing up. Teenagers have a special thirst for new experiences. They experiment with new activities, test their limits, explore new skills, and enjoy the often exhilarating sense of freedom involved.

Our understanding of adolescent risk taking has been greatly enhanced by recent findings from neuroscience - research using *magnetic resonance imaging* (MRI) on the brains of children at two year intervals. While some areas of the human brain are mature by the end of childhood, the *prefrontal cortex* - responsible for such things as impulse control and strategic planning (anticipating the likely consequences of one's actions) - continue maturing through the teenage years.

In other words, the adolescent brain is still developing and the highest-level areas may not be completely mature until kids hit their twenties. This also means that teenage brains may be constructed in a way that makes their owners more open to ideas, more amenable to change (a time of heightened opportunity), but also makes young people *more likely to experiment and take risks* (a time of heightened risk). An immature brain, together with the hormones that stir them up and drive them to be thrill-seekers (especially for boys), is a potentially dangerous mix.

What are the implications of this research?

The prefrontal cortex has been called 'the area of sober second thought' because, as this part of the brain matures, teenagers can reason better, develop more self control and make better judgements. This is a helpful insight for those who may be struggling to understand an early adolescent's erratic and otherwise 'infuriatingly normal behaviour'. Since adolescence tends to be a time of increased freedoms and decreased parental monitoring - what most teenagers seem to want - these research findings also suggest we may sometimes be giving young people more freedoms than they can handle.

Research into parenting styles over the past quarter century or so shows that the most effective approach, so-called 'authoritative parenting', has three main characteristics:

- Parenting that is warm, involved and responsive
- Parenting that is firm and strict (with developmentally appropriate expectations)
- Parenting that fosters and encourages psychological autonomy.

Adolescents from authoritative (warm and firm) homes achieve more in school; have better self-reliance & self-esteem; report less depression and anxiety; show more positive social behaviour, self-control, cheerfulness & confidence; and (most importantly) are *less likely to engage in anti-social and risk-taking behaviour*.

These outcomes confirm that teenagers are safer when their parents take a close and caring interest in what they're getting up to and set appropriate ground-rules in advance. In the light of the MRI brain research, better monitoring, negotiated boundaries and predictable consequences are needed to better protect young people!

What are the implications for those working in youth injury prevention?

The MRI brain researchers caution us not to 'jump to conclusions' in regard to drawing too close a link between structure and function; they say there is more work to be done in terms of understanding human behaviour. But there are potential implications for safety related to what we now know about adolescent brain development. For example:

- Should we consider raising the driving age to 18 years (as in some areas of the United States) to allow time for young drivers to acquire better impulse control?
- Should we establish passenger limits for teenagers with P1 licences to lessen distractions and enable better concentration while driving?
- Should we (an even more draconian idea) create curfews for adolescent drivers, because of the special risks of late night/early morning accidents, especially after parties?

There are no simple answers to these questions, but if our goal is the avoidance of unintended injury and premature death in young people, then neuroscience may be pointing the way to new ways of thinking about protective factors in this area.

More information

Here are some short and longer articles in plain English about this research.

- This article is a bit outdated but it provides a good summary in plain English: www.actforyouth.net/documents/may02factsheetadolbraindev.pdf
- This targets parents but is a useful 1 page summary (108KB PDF): <http://wwwstatic.kern.org/gems/schcom/EyeonPreventBrain.Dev.1.pdf> (Note there is no dot in wwwstatic)
- TIME magazine article: "What Makes Teens Tick" May 10, 2004 www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,994126,00.html
- Written from the point of view of mental health workers (775KB PDF): http://youngminds.org.uk/sos/SOS_YM_AdolescentBrain.pdf
- Spano, S (2003) "Adolescent brain development" Youth Studies Australia Vol 22 (1):36-38

Notes

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Youth Participation

While information about adolescent brain development increases and our understanding of neuropsychology improves, it is important that we don't lose sight of the abilities of young people and what they contribute to the community and to society at large. In recent decades there has been considerable focus on the benefits of involving young people in decision-making, especially those decisions that directly affect their lives.

Models of Youth Participation

Youth participation can take numerous forms. The establishment of youth advisory councils and the appointment of young people to government boards are perhaps two of the most obvious methods of enhancing youth participation.

The United Nations' World Youth Report (2003) identifies the following methods of youth participation:

- Research – many examples exist of young people being provided with training as researchers and then undertaking independent investigations focusing on issues of direct concern to them
- Programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Peer support, representation and advocacy.
- Policy analysis and development.
- Campaigning and lobbying.
- Development and management of their own organisations.
- Participation in and use of the media.
- Conference participation.
- Youth councils and parliaments.²⁵

Not all attempts at engaging or involving young people in decision-making provide the same opportunities for participation. Rather, some methods might give the appearance of participation, when in fact they remain adult-centric or adult-owned, with little or no power being afforded to young people. As participatory measures have increased, more attention has been paid to notions of power sharing, ownership, roles assumed by young people and adults, initiation of ideas / concepts and effectiveness. Various models have been developed to illustrate some of the relationships operating within particular youth participation approaches.

Perhaps the most familiar model is that developed by Roger Hart. Hart's ladder of participation attempts to demonstrate the level of power, influence and ownership shared by children, young people and adults in decision-making.

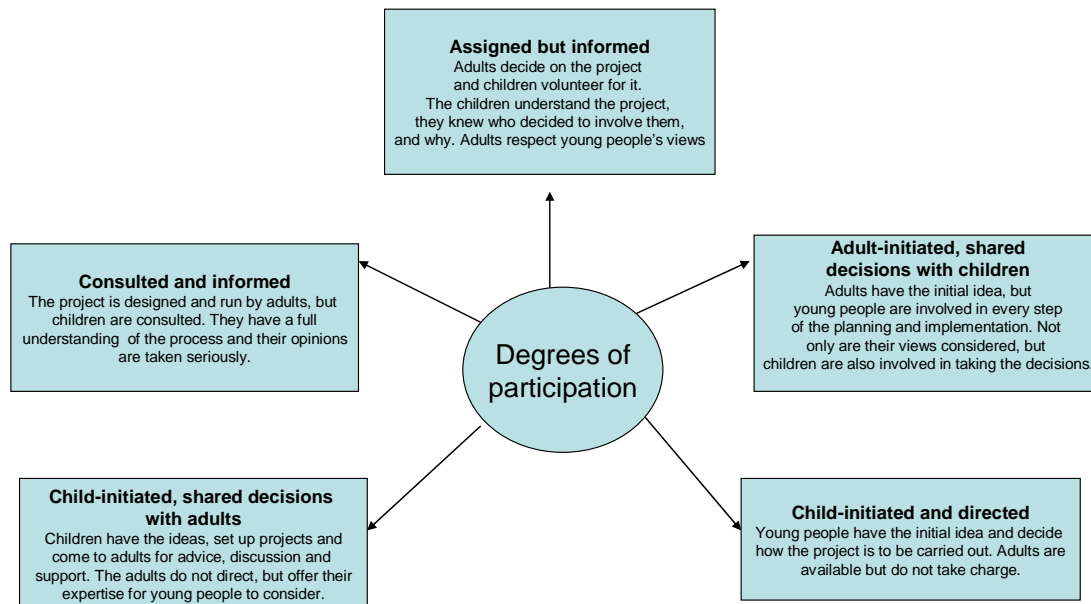
²⁵ United Nations (2003) *World Youth Report*, at 280.

Table 1: Hart's Ladder of Participation²⁶

8. Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults	Children and young people have the ideas, set-up the project, and invite adults to join them in making decisions.
7. Child-initiated and directed	Children and young people have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available but do not take charge.
6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children	Adults have the initial ideas but children and young people are involved in every step of the planning and implementation. Their views are not only considered but they are also involved in making the decisions.
5. Consulted and informed	The project is designed and run by adults but children and young people are consulted. They have full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.
4. Assigned but informed	Adults decide on the project but children and young people volunteer for it. The children and young people understand the project and know who decided they should be involved and why. Adults respect their views.
3. Tokenism	Children and young people are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express.
2. Decoration	Children and young people take part in an event, e.g. by singing, dancing or wearing t-shirts with logos on, but they really do not understand the issues.
1. Manipulation	Children and young people do or say what adults suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issues, OR children and young people are asked about what they think and adults use some of their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have on the final decision.

²⁶ As depicted by Keenan, P. (2005) *Turning up the sound: The feasibility of establishing a consortium to support the involvement of children and young people in public decision-making processes*, at 11.

Hart's model has been criticised for, amongst other things, failing to consider the political features of decision-making.²⁷ Treseder, concerned that Hart's model places too little importance in the lower rungs of the ladder, devised a non-hierarchical model. According to Cutler (2003), Treseder's model "recognises that different types of involvement are valid for different young people at different times, according to their own wishes as well as what is possible for an organisation".²⁸



Treseder's Model of Participation

A critical factor throughout any analysis of youth participation is the impact of age. The wide age span covered by definitions of young people reveal the potential challenges of effectively engaging all young people between 12 and 25 years of age. The competencies and needs of a 12 year-old will be distinct from a young adult who has entered employment, left the parental home and is married with children. In this context, youth participation requires sensitivity to age and the different demands, needs and competencies often associated with life course development.

Individual Exercise: Young people's involvement in decision-making can help them to better understand the need for rules and to appreciate the challenges of maintaining environments such as parks. Spend some time thinking about how much young people have participated in decisions about the way that public

²⁷ Burfoot, D. (2003) 'Children and young people's participation: arguing for a better future', *Youth Studies Australia*, Vol. 22, no. 3, 2003.

²⁸ Cutler, D. (2003) *Standards – Organisational Standards and Young People's Participation in Public Decision-Making*, at 7.

spaces are regulated and managed. Now consider the structures that exist in your Council to involve young people in such decisions. The Youth Development Officer (or other staff in the relevant section of council) might be able to provide some assistance.

Peers and Public Behaviour

It is accepted that our behaviour will be shaped by the behaviour of others. As we grow, the behaviour of adults will be particularly important. It has been shown that the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of our parents will be especially crucial to the formation of beliefs, attitudes and behaviours in young people.

Public spaces are key areas where people congregate. It is an environment that is easy to be seen and to see others. Catching up with friends, checking out the girls and boys and meeting new friends are common experiences / practices of young people in public spaces. These are important features of adolescence. One theorist (Elkind, 1967 and 1970) has “stressed the importance of the imaginary audience as one form of adolescent egocentrism. This concept accounts for adolescents’ concerns that they are the focus of other people’s attention. With this preoccupation, adolescents are then continually constructing or reacting to an audience”.²⁹ This concept of the imaginary audience can be very useful in understanding the behaviour of young people in public spaces. The presence of peers and the imaginary audience combine to make public places important theatres for young people. The way they are seen to behave might have significant consequences for their relationships with their peers. Getting into trouble with a ranger might have greater kudos than the fear of the consequences.

Individual Exercise: Think about the following:

- You approach a group of young males and ask them to soften their voices because they are causing fear in other people. One of the young men refuses to calm down and puts on quite a display in front of his peers.
- A young woman is out with friends when one of her parents comes over. She says “shame” and tries to hurry them away.
- You have got to know a young man over numerous weeks. He comes to the CBD mall on Thursday afternoons with a small group of friends. They are always well behaved. On this one afternoon, the young man is with a different group. They are playing up – shouting, having mock fights and generally disturbing other people. You approach the group and he steps forward. He is aggressive in his approach. He wants to know why they are being picked on.

In these situations try to interpret and understand the behaviours and consider the importance of the peer group.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 428.

Based on this information, how will it affect the way that you deal with groups of young people? How will you try to remove the audience when you are dealing with an individual young person? How will you use the potential influence of peers to help control behaviour?

Managing Challenging Behaviour

Developing an understanding of the young people in your area will help inform how you manage their behaviour. Building rapport, having clear policies regarding behavioural expectations and working as a team to developing responses to common problems will all assist in maintaining appropriate standards of behaviour. The following information will specifically help in setting standards of behaviour and in responding to particular incidents involving young people (and in fact all people).

The following checklist has been adapted from **A Package of Information for Managing Challenging Behaviour**, developed by the Department of Community Services. While the original checklist was designed for children's services, it has relevance to maintaining appropriate standards of behaviour in other areas.

- ☒ Set rules (state them positively) and display them
- ☒ Set limits and define boundaries
- ☒ Be alert to warning signs of escalating inappropriate behaviour
- ☒ Establish consistency in behaviour management between staff
- ☒ Only state a consequence you are prepared / able to follow through
- ☒ Work with strengths and interests to promote and reinforce desired behaviour
- ☒ Comment frequently and specifically to reinforce desired behaviour
- ☒ Use language consistent with the developmental level of the young person
- ☒ When behaviour is clearly non-compliant, give the child responsibility for their actions

Individual Exercise: Audit the arrangements regarding behavioural standards in your key public spaces against the above checklist. Consider whether you and your colleagues routinely comply with the above guidelines.

The above checklist is useful in the overall context of managing behaviour. However, it provides little assistance when you are directly confronted by a young person who is challenging you. The following model provides some guidance about how to respond during such an incident. This model should not be a substitute for in-depth conflict resolution training that provides opportunities to practice and rehearse methods of responding to conflict and challenging behaviour.

The TRUCE model is based on research undertaken into police-citizen interactions. During observations of such interactions, qualities were identified that appeared to be associated with the peaceful resolution of conflict. The researchers recommended that police should be trained in methods such as TRUCE, as a means of reducing conflict and increasing opportunities to de-escalate situations.

While the model has been developed specifically in relation to police-citizen interactions, it is believed that the model has direct relevance to other personnel in different circumstances.

Individual Exercise: Review this model and consider its relevance to your work.

1. **Topic:** tell the person why you're there or why you are intervening
2. **Resolution:** discuss what you hope to achieve and negotiate
3. **Under control:** stay cool and focused in the face of escalating hostility.
4. **Communicate:** maintain the dialogue – avoid physical contact.
5. **Evaluate:** monitor the outcomes and be prepared to adapt (Wilson and Braithwaite, 1996: 34).

Topic	"Are you aware that alcohol consumption is prohibited here?"
Resolution	"I need you to dispose of the alcohol or leave this area".
Under control	Self-talk – "Stay calm. Let them ventilate and we can keep working through this when they have calmed down".
Communicate	"It is obvious that you aren't happy with the rule, but I do need you to obey the rules. Thank you for agreeing to leave this area with your alcohol".
Evaluate	Self-talk – "They seem to be responding. They have moved outside the alcohol-free zone area, so it looks like this has been resolved".

The above table lists a few scripts consistent with the TRUCE model. Note that two stages (under control and evaluate) will involve self-talk. By talking to yourself, especially if you are confronted by aggressive or insulting behaviour, it can help to keep you focused on your outcome and not to be dragged into a fight. Keep telling yourself what your role is and what your goal is and this can help maintain control rather than reacting to what is being said.

Individual Exercise: Apply the TRUCE model to the following scenarios:

- A young person calls you an idiot after you speak with them about swearing in a public place.
- A small group of young people are damaging football posts on a council sporting oval. You politely ask them to stop what they are doing. A member of the group tells you to "piss off".
- A young person who has been in previous trouble for consuming alcohol in an alcohol-free zone is seen again sitting with alcohol at an outdoor table in the mall. As you approach him, he stands up from the table and looks ready to fight.

There is no single right way to respond to any situation. Rather, practicing and reviewing performance will build confidence and improve your behaviour management techniques.

Summary:

Young people aged between 12 and 24 represent approximately 17% of the population of NSW. Many of these young people will experience diverse challenges during their adolescent years. Rising mental illness, extended periods of education, longer periods in the family home and changing labour markets mean that for many young people there are many challenges to entering the adult world.

Peers tend to have a greater influence on young people through adolescence than in any other life stage or period. Personalities and behaviours are frequently tested in the peer group context. Acceptance and belonging are two significant needs of young people that can be met by the peer group. Consequently, behaviour in front of and with peers will be directly inscribed by peer relationships. Avoiding putting young people “on show” in front of their peers is one way to demonstrate an understanding of the powerful influence of peers.

Working toward consistent application of rules and use of the TRUCE model when confronted with an incident can help to better manage young people in public places.

Section 4: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

Before reviewing some key considerations in relation to young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, it is worth reflecting for a moment upon what life might be like for some young people in Australia. Consider the following questions:

- How do you think that experiences of refugee camps might impact on a young person?
- Having been displaced, lost family members and been separated from others, you arrive in a foreign country with a foreign language and foreign customs. You grew up in a small farming community and are suddenly placed in medium density housing in a Sydney suburb. It is also unlikely you have had much schooling or had any experience of public parks.
- How do you think parents cope with raising their children in a country many thousands of miles from their birthplace?
- Parenting in your country of origin was regarded as a somewhat communal activity. Children were known throughout the town. Any misbehaviour was quickly brought to the attention of the relevant parents. Many people stayed in the same area as their parents, whereby multiple generations mingled and looked out for each other. When you left your country of origin, you travelled to Australia with just a handful of friends. These friends are dotted all across the country. You feel quite isolated raising your children.
- How might simple things like diet and opportunities to practice religion be different in Australia?
- One of your first memories of arriving in Australia was how the food wasn't the same as home. It didn't seem to matter how much care was taken in preparing a meal, it never tasted the same. Going to church was also different. At home, the church was in walking distance. In Sydney, your family had to travel across the city to find the right church.

Discussing issues of culture, ethnicity, religion, customs and language are complicated by personal and individual experiences. One person might navigate issues outlined above more easily than another; one might draw strength from cultural heritage, while another will feel shame; one might gravitate to people from a similar cultural background, while another will reject such friends. Despite the importance of considering individual experiences, it is also beneficial to review wider issues in relation to young people from CALD backgrounds.

Individual Exercise: The following text is from Aarushi Sahore (13 years, NSW). This essay was short-listed in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Human Writes Essay Competition. Read this essay and then visit the HREOC

website (www.hreoc.gov.au) to review other essays submitted by young people from across Australia.

Human Rights

By Aarushi Sahore, 13, NSW

Aarushi's essay is a mature narration of what human rights mean to her and how the idea integrates into everyday life.

I belong to an Australian community, speak Hindi and English, am Hindu and was born in India. Different rights are relevant to my existence; rights for children, education, freedom and liberty. The right to practise my chosen religion and speak a chosen language, without anybody trying to stop me or making incorrect assumptions about me. Rights as a female, to be respected as an equal gender, with equal potential. It is my duty to make sure that my rights are respected and stand up for my beliefs and freedoms when they are violated or potentially violated.

Another extremely important thing is to respect everyone else's rights. To look at each person as an individual and respect every one of their characteristics, all their beliefs and chosen ways of life. If discrimination occurs, I should try and make people put all differences aside and respect one another. I should support people and organisations that work to protect everyone's rights. I need to learn to look at individuals singularly and not make judgements or segregate them. I should work towards accepting and learning about other people and their cultures. 'Rights' are everybody's and no one should be treated or regarded as different, as all divisions made on perceptions are deficient.

Each and every person was born into this world as a complete equal to every other being with whom they co-exist. But as the world advances, we are slowly creating gaps between 'types' of people and such gaps will take time to bridge. These ideas are the perceived differences between disabled and healthy, black and white, male and female, young and old, rich and poor, weak and powerful etc. But in essence, we are all exactly the same and there's no reason for such concepts to be in our minds at all.

I think human rights are completely natural, and it's not the existence of laws and policies that stop discrimination, it's the ability to feel empathy. It's about realising how to treat people the way you want them to treat you in return. Sometimes these ideas are played with and some unfortunate people make the mistake of breaching other people's human rights and their freedoms. Here it is important for people who aren't involved to try and step in and work to protect other people and strengthen from within - others and themselves.

But each person, young or old, will probably interpret each human rights issue

or concept differently. And maybe living in a relatively safe and secure environment, my ideas might not give an accurate impression of the world and human rights. But the truth probably lies in a joint view of this world, pieced together from each individual thought - indispensable.

This essay provides eloquent insight into issues critical to working with CALD young people: empathy, respect, understanding, plurality and agency.

Culture

Culture is often very difficult to explain, as one word cannot capture its entirety. Francesco and Gold (2005:18) state it is a “set of socially constructed meanings that shape the behaviour of people in a particular society”. Others have described it as a “way of life” of a group of people.

Culture therefore comes in many forms. At the core of culture are what are known as basic assumptions. These may include:

- Shared beliefs
- Shared ideas

Visibility of culture

Culture can be visible through the style and colour of clothing, particular mannerisms employed, and the language used. A study by Thomas and Butcher (2001) focuses on the way in which CALD youth identify each other through clothing, with one respondent stating:

“Well, if you see any Adidas pants walking 500 metres away, you can always tell it’s an Arab. If you see someone wearing microfibre clothes, it’s an Asian”.

This is known as manifest culture, and provides a certain level of insight into another’s culture. However, the extra visibility of CALD young people has assisted in creating a range of racist stereotypes, simply based on a young person’s physical appearance or the language they may use. As has been stated previously, stereotypes are unhelpful as they can result in important information being missed or excluded based on pre-conceived ideas about a CALD young person.

Language

Language is a key part of culture, described as a cultural system. The Collins Dictionary (1998: 474) states, “language is a system for the expression of thoughts, feelings...by the use of spoken sounds or conventional symbols” or simply “the language of a particular nation or people”. Gibbs (2002 cited in Francesco and Gold 2005: 71) estimates that there are between 5,000 to 7,000 languages in the world!

Language both affects and reflects the way a culture thinks. People who therefore speak the same language belong to the same speech community. English is by far

the most common auxiliary language in the world, yet as Australia becomes more multicultural and ethnic diversity flourishes, other languages have begun to be more widely utilised.

In some situations, you might be called upon to utilise an interpreter to communicate with CALD background young people or community members. The following is a list of when an interpreter should be utilised:

- The young person is communicating to you in a language other than English
- You do not understand what the young person is saying to you
- A young person's English is unclear
- A young person refuses to communicate with you in English
- You need to intervene in an altercation between young people who do not speak English or do not speak it well
- To provide proper access to appropriate services

Not using an interpreter may lead to:

- Miscommunication between you and the young person
- Frustration experienced by the young person who may think he / she is not being heard
- Unnecessary escalation of the issue / event

Contact **Translating and Interpreting Service** (TIS) if you require the use of an interpreter:

www.immi.gov.au/tis/

Telephone: 131 450

Young People from CALD Backgrounds

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001, Census of Population and Housing, Australia's Youth (2059.0) states that:

- In 2001, 15% of 15-24 year olds (or 390,300 persons) were born overseas.
- Australian youth collectively speak in excess of 200 different languages.
- Nearly 16% (417,300) of young people spoke another language apart from English at home.
- Among young people who had both parents born overseas, 19% nominated English as their ancestry, 16% Chinese and 5% Italian.
- Young people who spoke a European language rated their proficiency in English more highly than did those who spoke an Asian or Aboriginal language.

Individual Exercise: Gaining an understanding of the size of the cultural and linguistically diverse background communities in your area will help in understanding the changing demands on local services. Undertake some basic research in your local area to establish the size of the different communities, the percentage of young people (as many new and emerging communities have much younger age structures than the dominant Anglo-Australian community) and the nature of settlement practices.

Challenges facing CALD Young People

Guerra and White (1995: 7-8, 234) have identified a list of challenges that face CALD young people. These include:

- Full participation in wider community affairs
- Access to appropriate services and essential information
- Freedom to express themselves and their identity
- Ethnocentrism (the belief that one's own culture is better than another)
- Racist attitudes and behaviours
- Unequal social and economic distribution of societal resources (which manifest in poverty and unemployment).

Furthermore, research by Butcher and Thomas highlights the social and racial divide evident in public places in Sydney. Results from the study showed that Middle Eastern background youth have become a focal area for security guards and police. Many youth feel that they have been “hassled by security guards and...banned from the mall”.³⁰ Furthermore, they feel segregated and “looked at as if we are shoplifting” and “the object of racialised fears”.³¹ Some suggest that media generated moral panics serve to further these racialised fears, resulting in even greater scrutiny from public and private police.

Groups of CALD young people are most prone to levels of police attention. Young CALD people have reported feeling particularly singled out if they are in groups. Perhaps ironically, for many communities, young people are encouraged to socialise together for their own safety. This is likely to be particularly true for new and emerging communities, where there is no familiarity with the geographical layout of the area in which they have settled, nor a good understanding of safe locations. Consequently, the strategy of encouraging young people from new and emerging communities to stay in groups for safety and protection can be incorrectly perceived by others as being for the purposes of participating in criminal activity. It is in this way that groups of young people are quickly perceived as criminal gangs.

³⁰ Butcher, M, Thomas, M (2003) *Ingenious, emerging youth cultures in urban Australia*, Pluto Press Australia, Melbourne, p. 117.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 111.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes of CALD young people are not uncommon. Many stereotypes abound. Some have little consequence while others will have considerable repercussions for the young people labelled by the stereotype. Some common stereotypes include:

- All Muslim girls wear headscarfs (Guerra and White 1998: 4)
- Vietnamese students are all good at maths
- African youth are all into dancing
- People from a particular cultural background are all trouble makers
- Youth in groups are gang members and therefore involved in illegal activity, such as drugs etc.
- Young people exhibiting certain behaviours and choices of clothing are thieves

Individual Exercise: To learn more about the experiences of young CALD people, visit the following websites:

- The Migrant Information Centre – www.miceastmelb.com.au/
- The Refugee Council of Australia – www.refugeecouncil.org.au/
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship – www.immi.gov.au/
- The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) – www.startts.org/
- NSW Ethnic Communities Council – www.eccnsw.org.au/

Summary

Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will be frequent users of public space in many areas. Learning as much as you can about common cultural backgrounds can help to provide a deeper understanding of ways of providing for the needs of young people in your area. There are many resources and services available to assist you in working with young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Section 5: Dealing with Alcohol & Other Drug Intoxication

It is likely that at some stage you will come across young people who are under the influence of an intoxicating substance, which may present a number of challenging behaviours. This section provides some background information on drug and alcohol issues and identifies strategies to effectively respond to and manage young people who are intoxicated.

Young People and Alcohol and other Drugs

Contrary to popular belief, only a very small percentage of young people aged 12-19 have ever used an illicit drug and an even smaller percentage use illicit drugs on a regular basis. On the other hand a very high percentage of young people aged 12 – 17 have used alcohol and approximately 20% are regular users of alcohol (AIHW 2002).

It is important to understand why young people might choose to use drugs, and to consider this in the context of youth and youth culture. Many people think that young people engage in drug use only if they are experiencing problems and trying to cope with life, however this is not always true. As with many adults, young people associate drinking alcohol and taking drugs with being social, celebrating and having fun. Adolescence is a time of experimentation, looking for belonging, acceptance and identity and being intoxicated can heighten the feeling of belonging to a group whilst having fun.

Other reasons why alcohol and other drugs are used could be that young people:

- Are curious about the effects
- Enjoy the intoxicating effects
- See their peers use drugs
- See their parents and other close relatives consuming alcohol
- Are involved in youth “dance / party scene” where alcohol and other drugs are prevalent
- See alcohol and other drugs as part of the local youth culture
- Are naturally rebellious
- Find there is a lack of recreational attractions that are accessible for them in the local area

There is no one single reason why all young people will use alcohol and other drugs. Individual motivations, situational determinants and previous experience will contribute to episodes of alcohol and other drug use.

Problems Associated with Alcohol and other Drug Use

Drug and alcohol use presents a number of issues for individuals, their families and for society. There are a range of harms associated with using alcohol and other drugs, including:

- Increased risk of contracting blood borne disease such as HIV and Hepatitis B & C through shared needles and unprotected sex
- Other consequences of being involved in unprotected sexual activity, including unwanted pregnancy
- Increased risk of overdose or death
- Drug / alcohol dependence
- Increased mental health problems
- Increased involvement in crime
- Increased risk to violence
- Increased risk of driving under the influence

In the contexts of young people and adolescent development, the added dimension of risk taking and adventurous behaviour elevates young people's potential to other harms considerably. When under the influence of an intoxicating substance, young people tend to be more involved in higher risk taking activity (e.g. driving a car, swimming at night, being involved in crime), which increases the risk of death or serious injury due to accidents.

What drugs do young people use?

In Australia, significant research goes into identifying which substances are being used by school students aged 12-17 years of age. They found that alcohol and tobacco were the most commonly used drugs among this group. The research showed that 78% of students aged 12 and 96% of students aged 17 who were surveyed had ever consumed an alcoholic drink. The research also found that 35% of those aged 16-17 years of age had consumed between 6-8 alcoholic drinks in one episode in the last week.

Other drugs of concern when discussing young people are cannabis, inhalants and amphetamines (speed, ecstasy).

Young people will often use two or three types of drugs at the same time. This is known as poly-drug use. People mix drugs or use more than one drug at the same time because they sometimes balance the effects of one substance by using the other. For example to overcome the stimulating effects of some substances such as MDMA (ecstasy) some people may chose to take a depressant (alcohol) to bring down their mood or energy level to help them sleep.

There are all sorts of issues regarding poly drug use one of which is that the effects of the drugs are less predictable. Also, certain substances increase the effects of others, sometimes resulting in higher or quicker intoxication. In fact death by heroin overdose is more likely when a person has also been drinking heavily and / or using MDMA.

What is Intoxication?

Intoxication is a term used to describe when the consumption of alcohol exceeds a person's level of intoxication resulting in changes in perception, mood, thinking process or motor skills.

At toxic (poison) levels, depending on the substance taken, individuals may become extremely agitated, irrational, impulsive and acutely paranoid, which may lead the person to behave in an aggressive and / or violent manner. At toxic level an individual's behaviour may pose a significant threat to themselves, you and other bystanders.

When dealing with toxic levels of intoxication, the situation and the individual should be viewed as a medical emergency and special precaution should be observed to safely manage the individual. Medical intervention should be considered the first priority for managing these situations.

Intoxication and the associated problems in parks

Intoxication presents a number of challenges for rangers, these may include:

- Underage drinking
- Intoxication in a public space
- Engage in more adventurous and risk taking behaviour
- Increased risk of accidents, injury, even death
- Increased risk of overdose / death
- Increased level of aggression or violence
- Increased impulsive crime
- Threatening behaviours due to toxicity

Recognising Intoxication

Intoxication may vary from person to person, depending on the substance/s used, the amount and purity of the drug taken, the person's experience with alcohol and other drugs as well as the overall health of the person.

It is very important to keep in mind that intoxication and the associated symptoms can be confused with other medical conditions such as:

- Brain injury
- Mental health illness
- Shock
- Blood poisoning

It is therefore important to manage all situations presenting with these behaviours as a medical emergency as these conditions could also be life threatening. The best way to deal with this is to call an ambulance.

The following table provides a general list of symptoms associated with common drugs used:

Drug	Effects of Low Dose	Effects of Toxic levels
Depressants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol • Benzodiazapines (valium, Serapax, Tamazepam) • Opiates (heroin, morphine, methadone) • Inhalants (solvents, petrol, glue) • Cannabis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxation, feeling of wellbeing • Less inhibition • Intense mood • Excitability • Euphoria or depression • Quick to anger • Impulsive • Loss of coordination • Slow reflex • Low attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slurred speech • Aggression • Unstable / unsteady on feet • Drowsiness • Nausea / vomiting • Unconsciousness • Possible death
Psychostimulants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amphetamines • Methylamphetamine (Ice, base) • Cocaine • MDMA (ecstasy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arousal • High alertness • Mild paranoia • Talkative • Excitable • Euphoria • Insomnia • Anxiety / agitation • Delusional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute paranoia • Aggression • Agitation violence • Seizures (fits) • Severe muscle spasms • Life threatening temperature increase • Stroke • Death

Physical signs may include:

- Increased pupil size
- Hot flushed sweaty skin
- Rapid breathing
- Jerky movements of limbs
- Shaking lower limbs
- Racing pulse
- Jaw clenching
- Body stiffness and rigid limbs

Dealing with Intoxication

As established earlier, managing acute behavioural disturbance due to intoxication is a medical emergency and should be treated as such. Therefore calling an ambulance is your first priority. In situations where a great threat is present, the police should also be called to contain the situation.

However, containing the situation is critical until police or the ambulance arrive. The first thing is the assessment of risk to the individual, bystanders and yourself. Remember, exercising an appropriate duty of care for all involved is critical.

Where there are visible signs that the young person is highly intoxicated or has consumed toxic levels of alcohol or drugs, calling an ambulance is your highest priority. Containing the situation until medical assistance or police arrive is essential.

Managing the situation until the ambulance arrives

Rangers have two main ways to manage intoxicated persons until medical assistance arrives:

1. Calling the ambulance and or police
2. Use calming communication

When initiating communication, it is important to remember the state of mind the affected person is currently experiencing. Intoxicated individuals will be experiencing acute paranoia, hallucinations, agitation and generally will be physically unwell. Therefore it is important to use calming, non-threatening verbal and non-verbal communication. Ask simple, open ended questions, for example:

- Have you taken any drugs like speed, ice, coke or have you had too much to drink?

If yes, what did you take? Have you taken any other drugs? When did you take them?

If you have the opportunity, it might be valuable to gain information from the young person's friends or other bystanders. Ask for example:

- What has the individual taken? How much? When did he / she take it?
- Does the individual suffer from a mental illness?

This is important information to relay to ambulance officers when they arrive.

Other things to consider:

- Do not invade "personal space". It is very easy to feel threatened and to misinterpret situations when intoxicated.
- Be calm and speak slowly and clearly while keeping communications short, simple and to the point. Avoid long-winded explanations. Concentration spans are short when people are intoxicated and memory is impaired.

- Personalise your communications. Be on a first name basis with the young person if you can. Acknowledge their feelings and needs, and try to satisfy any reasonable desires the young person may have.
- Explain that an ambulance is on its way, as this may de-escalate the situation. The young person may be more cooperative if they believe the situation will be dealt with in a medical context.

Individuals under the effect of alcohol and other drugs may not respond to commanding or calming communication techniques. The threat of physical injury to the individual, to bystanders or to yourself may still be an issue despite all efforts at verbal communication. In such situations, it may be attractive to physically handle the intoxicated young person. This is **not recommended**, as restraint may pose serious health risks to the individual, particularly for those who have consumed toxic levels of psychostimulants (speed, ecstasy, ice) and inhalants.

Even where a crime has been committed and you are required to detain the individual until police attend, physical contact should be your last resort and calming, non-threatening communication should be used. If it comes down to physically handling the intoxicated person, special precautions should be observed.

Psychostimulants and inhalants have been linked as a possible risk factor for sudden death for being restrained. It is important to keep in mind that an individual under the influence of psychostimulants or inhalants may be aggressive or violent. They are also at greater risk of adverse health risks including seizures, stroke and heart attack, and restraint or physical contact may exacerbate these conditions (Commonwealth of Australia 2004).

Individual Exercise: The table on the following page lists a number of useful websites that provide enormous amounts of information about alcohol and other drugs. Workers in many areas often feel that they have insufficient knowledge about alcohol and other drugs and therefore feel ill-equipped to deal with situations involving alcohol and other drugs. It is suggested that you review at least a couple of these websites and then periodically refresh your knowledge about these issues.

National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC)

<http://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au>

Australian Drug Information Network (ADIN)

http://www.adin.com.au/content.asp?Document_ID=39

Register of Australian Drug and Alcohol Research (RADAR)

<http://www.radar.org.au/displayNode.aspx?nodePrefix=00000000000007&index=4>

Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies (ACYS)

<http://www.youthfacts.com.au/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=211&op=page>

National Drug Research Institute

<http://www.ndri.curtin.edu.au/index.html>

DrugInfo Clearinghouse

<http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au/?gclid=COScwcf1rloCFQdZYQodkgOlrg>

NSW Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy

<http://www.druginfo.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Health

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/living/drug.html>

The Australian Drug Foundation (ADF)

www.adf.org.au/index.htm

Centre for Youth Drug Studies – within the ADF

www.adf.org.au/cyds/index.html

The Alcohol and Other Drug Council of Australia (ADCA)

www.adca.org.au/

The Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies (NADA)

www.nada.org.au

Drug Arm (This site is particularly focused on youth issues)

www.drugarm.org.au

Summary

The behaviour of young people can be directly influenced by alcohol and other drugs. By being able to differentiate the different effects of drugs, you will be able to better watch for signs of intoxication in your area. Keeping abreast of developments in the alcohol and other drug field will help to prepare you to deal with any relevant issues that emerge in your area.

Section 6: Where to Get Help

The following information on key relevant agencies and services has been provided. Each of these agencies should be able to provide some assistance on specific relevant issues:

Youth Action and Policy Association (YAPA)

YAPA is the peak community group working in the interests of young people and youth services in NSW. YAPA has had extensive involvement in public space issues and have wide networks within the youth sector. YAPA can provide advice about strategies to adopt, suggest people to contact for support or assistance or can provide ideas that might have been successful in other locations.

Telephone: (02) 9319 1100

Freecall: 1800 627 323

Website: www.yapa.org.au

Email: info@yapa.org.au

NSW Commission for Children and Young People

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) develops policy, advises government, undertakes research and educates people about the needs of children and young people. CCYP has developed a number of useful resources, including *Taking PARTicipation Seriously*, a guide to involving young people in making decisions that affect their lives.

Telephone: (02) 9286 7276

Website: www.kids.nsw.gov.au

Foundation for Young Australians

The Foundation for Young Australians is an independent national grant-making organisation, funding and working in partnership with youth-led initiatives which aim to positively contribute to young people and their communities. The Foundation's website is a great source of information about young people across Australia.

Telephone: (03) 9670 5436

Website: www.youngaustralians.org/

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Young People

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) was founded by a group of eminent experts and organisations in reaction to increasingly worrying trends in the wellbeing of Australia's young people. By using the latest information technology to span the distances of the nation ARACY has become a broker of collaborations, a disseminator of ideas and an advocate for Australia's future generation.

Website: www.aracy.org.au/

Children's Legal Service, NSW Legal Aid Commission

The Children's Legal Service operates across NSW. The Service employs solicitors who work in Children's Courts and represent young people in other courts. The Service also operates a legal advice helpline, which enables young people to receive legal advice from appropriately trained solicitors most hours of the day / week / year.

Helpline Phone Number: 1800 101810

Ethnic Communities Council of NSW

The Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECC) is a non-government peak body representing many organisations and people from the multicultural community in NSW. The ECC's primary roles are advocacy, education and community development. The ECC actively promotes the principles of multiculturalism, and lobbies for the development of culturally inclusive society.

Telephone: (02) 9319 0288

Website: www.eccnsw.org.au

Y-Space Website

The Queensland University of Technology created and maintains the Y-Space website, which is a clearinghouse of publications, articles and information about public space projects. The website is an excellent resource and the information contained on the website can promote thinking about different, innovative ways to tackle public space problems.

Website: www.yspace.net/

Youth.NSW

Youth.NSW is the NSW Government's website for young people and workers in the youth field. The site aims to provide people aged 12 to 25 with links to New South Wales Government, community services and information. It also contains a range of information for young people about getting involved in their community through programs and events. The site is a forum for youth participation and for government to hear young people's ideas on a range of issues.

Website: www.youth.nsw.gov.au/

The Source

The Source is a Commonwealth government youth website which provides information on a range of issues relevant to young people. The Source is a good website to stay in touch with latest programs and developments affecting young people. It provides regular updates on Youth Week activities and other relevant initiatives.

Website: www.thesource.gov.au/

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