As Victoria’s youth peak body, Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVic) works across the state in the best interests of young people and the youth sector.

Level 3, 180 Flinders Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Tel: 03 9267 3799
info@yacvic.org.au
www.yacvic.org.au

YACVic acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.
Youth work principles
Youth workers will work towards enabling and ensuring:
1. The empowerment of all young people
2. Young people's participation
3. Social justice for young people
4. The safety of young people
5. Respect for young people's human dignity and worth
6. Young people's connectedness to important people in their lives, such as family and community
7. Positive health and wellbeing outcomes for young people
8. The positive transitions and healthy development of young people

Youth work practice responsibilities
Youth workers accept the following practice responsibilities:

Recognition of Indigenous peoples
Youth workers will work towards enabling and ensuring: 

Open this booklet to see the youth work practice responsibilities in detail. Read on to learn what they mean in practice.

Anti-oppressive practice: non-discrimination, equity and self-awareness
Young people as the primary consideration
Transparency, honesty and integrity
Social context
Knowledge, skills and self-care
Boundaries
Duty of care

Privacy and confidentiality
This means you keep young people's personal information private, unless they say it's O.K. to share (ask them). Sometimes you might feel you need to break confidentiality if you believe young people are being abused or might harm themselves or someone else.

Tong's worried his girlfriend, Hana, is pregnant. He asks you not to tell anyone. You know your colleague works with Hanna. Do you share?

Transparency, honesty and integrity
This means you work in an open, truthful and sincere way. It means this in how you plan and carry out your work.

You have a professional relationship with young people you work with, young people can trust and rely on you.

This means thinking about, then doing, what is best for the young person. So even if an employee of the organisation works—like the young person's parents or another worker—you always make decisions in the best interest of the young person.

You work with Bea at her school. She's asked for confidential help with a relationship problem. The head teacher asks you for a report on Bea because her family is worried about her. What do you say?

Duty of care
A duty of care is a legal requirement to do your best to provide a safe environment for young people and protect them from possible risks of injury. For example, by carrying out risk assessments.

Emma wears a hijab to your centre. You see a young man who uses the centre flirt and intimate her. What is your duty of care?

Anti-oppressive practice: non-discrimination, equity and self-awareness

This means value difference and challenge prejudice and discrimination. It means you offer every young person the same opportunities, whatever their background or characteristics. It means you understand how your own privileges and prejudices affect your actions.

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) states it is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their race, age, disability or gender.

You overhear Thanu, a young member of your sports club, make a racist joke. Do you say anything?

Cooperation and collaboration
This means you work together with other people to get the best results for young people. For example, you might involve another service or the young person's family if it's appropriate (and the young person agrees).

You think Jayden could get extra support from another service. Your organisation doesn't have enough money to support him. What do you do?

Knowledge, skills and self-care
This means you commit to ongoing learning. For example, you might read new research or take special training. Self-care means you're taking care of yourself—by eating well, sleeping, exercising, spending time with friends, doing what you love.

This means you respect and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. For example, you could acknowledge traditional custodians at the start of meetings, display the Aboriginal flag, or offer every young person the same opportunities, whatever their culture—such as family and community.

You think you can support a young person to take an extra music lesson. What do you say?

Social context
This means you understand the many different social and cultural pressures on young people's lives. It means you include thinking about this in how you plan and carry out your work.

Clara uses the small rural youth service you provide. She tells you she's scared of coming out as a lesbian. How does social context affect her?

How to raise concerns about unethical behaviour
If you see something at work you think is unethical, there are ways to challenge it. Ask the person to explain their actions using the Code. Or tell them you're uncomfortable with their behaviour because you feel it's not in keeping with the Code. Be prepared to explain your point of view in a supportive way.

A graveyard is a peaceful place. But this graveyard has a mass grave. The gravestones are old and faded. There are shadows moving through the trees. Do you investigate?

Afterwards you should discuss your concerns with your supervisor or manager. If you feel the matter isn't addressed properly, follow your organisation's complaints procedure. If you need help, contact the Victorian Government's Complaints, Integrity and Privacy Unit.

How to make a complaint
If you want to make a complaint about unethical behaviour, follow your organisation's complaints procedure. If you continue to have concerns, the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Complaints, Integrity and Privacy Unit helps people make a complaint about projects or services that have received DHHS funding.

To know more about local youth work, visit the Victorian Youth Sector website.