

Unit 8

Understand how to support
positive outcomes for children
and young people

1.1 Describe the social, economic and cultural factors that will impact on the lives of children and young people

There are many factors that can contribute to the development of young people and some of these factors are listed below that impacts young people's lives.

Social

- Family setting: Strict, conservative, liberal, one parent or absent parent
- Parents: Making all the decisions on what is right for their children, subject choices for GCSE's, preference in clothing items, career plan, running the family business or a specific trade passed on
- Religion: Religious beliefs, dress code and dietary requirement, feeling accepted or rejected
- Culture and gender: Men and women's role in society, who stays at home
- Educational achievements: Academic status of family members or the push and pressure to succeed
- The area in which you live: Social deprivation, crime, anti social behaviour and negative peer groups like postcode rivalry
- Language and ethnicity: lack of resources to support ESOL classes, Gypsies & travelling communities, refugees & asylum seekers unwanted communities
- Local politics and their vision of the community
- Addiction to drugs and alcohol as well as gambling issues
- Friends: Living in isolation, bullied, peer pressure and not being able to fit in

Economic

- Economic status: high unemployment especially amongst the youths
- Overcrowding: lack of privacy and space
- Unemployed: resulting in poor health from eating low quality budget foods
- Living on benefits: Poor health, diet, unskilled, low motivation
- Restriction on employment choices: unskilled, manual labour jobs
- Lack of clothes or clean clothes: dirty collar, rips, patches and stitches
- Committing crime: Individually or through organised gangs, attraction to making easy money or a fast buck

Cultural

- Religious beliefs, traditions and customs: going to a different faith school, dress code, food, language and conflicts
- Interaction: Rejection outcaste and refused friendship e.g. gypsies and travellers
- Ethnic background: being bullied, teased, name called resulting in confusion in the clash of identity
- Heritage: The fight to hold on or to let go

You will find that many of these factors are interrelated with each other and have a contributory factor which results in people being disadvantaged.

1.2 Explain the importance and impact of poverty on outcomes and life chances for children and young people

It is important that we understand poverty and the impact it has on the life chances of young people, as this can have an effect on the cognitive and behavioural development of a young person. As youth workers we must be able to understand poverty at different levels and see signs on our young people when they attend our sessions or are absent for long periods. We should observe signs of malnourishment, status of mental or ill health, continuous use of the same clothing, dirty clothes and dry peeling skin. We should also be aware of them being identified by their peers either through name calling and comments being made. We must therefore ensure that our programme enables them to attend a safe and secure environment where they are accepted as individuals not bullied and can positively participate in all the organised activities and offer advice and support where possible.

3.9 million children live in poverty that's almost one third of children in the UK. Poverty is the single greatest threat to the well-being of children and families. Growing up in poverty can affect every area of a child's development - social, educational and personal¹.

We know that a lack of income and household resources damages the life chances of young people, but those young people coming from low income families are more likely to suffer from behavioural difficulties, engage in risky activities (become pregnant, commit crime, regularly drink alcohol and/or are drug dependent and are absent in relationships). Young people from these types of households are less likely to do well in school, are more likely to play truant, fall into the social care system, spend time in Youth Offenders Institution and follow on in the cycle of not working and grow up to remain in poverty.

Paul Gregg, Carol Propper and Elizabeth Washbrook stated in a 2008 paper

“whilst our results clearly show that lack of income is only one of a host of disadvantages faced by low income children, it would be misleading to conclude that income plays no role in parents’ ability to foster positive developmental outcomes. Indeed, if the income gradient does reflect causality, then in comparative terms low household income must be considered one of the primary drivers behind the deficits – broadly defined - of poor children.”²

When it comes to determine a young person's life chances, household income and resources are the main driving factor for progression. However if society wishes to improve young people's life chances there needs to be investment in resources to assist in the learning process and poverty will be reduced at a faster rate.

¹http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/turn_around/child_poverty_claire.htm?gclid=COeT9t6AILACFUUhtAodNhVfrg

² Paul Gregg, Carol Propper and Elizabeth Washbrook (2008) *Understanding the relationship between parental income and multiple child outcomes: a decomposition analysis* CMPO Working Paper Series No 08/193

1.3 Explain the role of children and young people's personal choices and experiences on their outcomes and life chances

Young people should be given the chance to influence their own outcomes and life chances. This will help them to be more confident and understand the choices they have made for themselves. Young people understand themselves better and will want to achieve their targeted aim, however there needs to be in place people (youth workers, careers advisors, Personal assistants, transition workers, etc) that will assist them to analyze their decision which in turn will help their development and that is a healthier option. It will not only help with their social and communication skills but improve their general health and well being in the long run.

We find that when young people make their choices for GCSE's majority of the parents intervene and choose what they think is the right course of direction for them, not taking into account what their child prefers e.g. Arts, Music and Drama subjects which have the lowest number of pupil intake in UK schools. Even those with SEN and have disabilities most of the time their prospective of achieving in life can be limited because of their physical and medical conditions and this needs addressing at all levels of the professional care system.

We find in some religions, cultures, traditions and the activities that happen in an area can have an effect on a young person making personal choices to determine their life chances and to improve their conditions in life. As we have seen in section 1.1 the three main contributing factors Social, Economical and Cultural factors plays a significant role in allowing young people to gain experiences to make positive personal choices and improve their life chances.

2.1 Identify the positive outcomes for children and young people that practitioners should be striving to achieve

As practitioners we should be striving to help, assist, guide and most importantly give young people the best possible experience to help them through their journey to adulthood. We can do this by providing positive activities that young people can participate in designing, planning and delivering the project, to actively participating and evaluating the programme. Tackling issues like drugs and alcohol misuse and providing support where possible. Deal with sexual health and teenage pregnancies, healthy eating and healthy living, personal hygiene and cleanliness, individual and competitive play, mural art, and creative arts, employment advice and guidance to trips and residential.

We should also be striving to increase the number of young people back into education, finding ways to get them into employment and looking for suitable training that interests them. We should address issues around crime and the consequences of crime and take them away by offering alternative positive options.

2.2 Explain the importance of designing services around the needs of children and young people

The design of the youth work programme needs to be based around the young people as it not only attracts young people from all walks of life to the project but can help increase and identify the skills and knowledge of the center staff to be able to deliver it effectively. It helps generate new ideas and ventures that may have not been tried out before. It also allows you to identify a young person's learning and development and provide the support to their needs especially with disabilities. Thus ensuring that your programme is inclusive and compliant with current laws and legislation.

Under Article 12 (UN convention on the Rights of the Child) it is important that young people's rights to be heard are implemented. As this also gives an opportunity for young people to give their views and express their opinions. The process allows young people to be consulted on matters related to them for their development and growth through adolescence and it goes in line with the government's agenda of community involvement the "Big Society".

This also allows youth workers to gain a deeper understanding of the young people's wants, needs and abilities and it aids projects to be more responsive around their user groups and the community. It is also a tool to assist in not putting in place activities that young people do not want to engage in and cannot engage in.

The end result of designing services around the needs of young people would be far more positive than if the programme was not design around young people's needs and wants. It will allow youth workers to increase their relationship and rapport with young people so that in the future other elements of the curriculum can be implemented allowing young people to experience more to life than just play.

2.3 Explain the importance of active participation of children and young people in decisions affecting their lives

Active participation should be sought and respected as it allows young people to exercise their right to engage in activities and relationships in everyday life as independently as possible.

It encourages discussion and debate, creates a sense of ownerships and respect for the space they use. It values young people's thoughts, views and opinions to give them a sense of belonging and control on their life and wellbeing. It gives young people the opportunity to engage in the decision making process (youth democracy, Youth Mayor, Youth Parliament, etc.) and understand the consequences on dealing with their decision. Most importantly it builds a better rapport with staff, other participants and the community.

This active participation of individuals should be taken onto a personal level as it motivates young people, it enables them to do something better than what currently exists, it helps in designing better youth work programmes and most importantly it allows them to say in how they live their life and what matters to them.

The long term benefit of active participation it that it encourages young people to be involved, especially within their community, to be heard, increase social contacts and network opportunities, improve developmental skills, like increase in knowledge, education, employment opportunities, build self-confidence, self-esteem and self-belief.

2.4 Explain how to support children and young people according to their age, needs and abilities to make personal choices and experiences that have a positive impact on their lives

When designing a youth work programme we must take into account all the needs, wants, age, abilities and disability factors to ensure that a safe, healthy and productive environment is created for all. Below is a list of activities that can be organised, put into place to deliver the varied needs within a community.

- Intermediate club to cater for the younger members 13-16
- Senior club 16-19
- Girls/women's only club 16-19 to cater for cultural sensitivity issues
- Post 16 Employment and career's advice
- Workshops and seminars on different issues affecting young people
- Mentoring scheme
- Intensive support programme to help those most at risk of not fulfilling their potential
- Taster sessions on different job opportunities
- Volunteering

As practitioner we must do our best to provide the best possible service for our young people to enable them to progress, improve, achieve and attain as well as experience to be able to make personal choices that can have a positive impact for the rest of their lives.

3.1 Explain the potential impact of disability on the outcomes and life chances of children and young people

When I am faced with people that have disabilities, special needs and illnesses I tend to look at them as having some sort of disadvantage over the normal able bodied young people and I may be right and wrong in some circumstances. I should not look at them because of their condition but rather focus more on what they can do and contribute to the sessions. However, because of their physical disabilities and illness I believe this may hamper their development and disrupt their wellbeing to reaching their full potential and increasing their life chances.

I can also identify this because of their physical limitations they may suffer financial difficulties in the future and that their opportunities for work especially in this current climate will be even more restricted. I also discovered that unless they have good relationships when they are young this factor may be missing when they reach adulthood or the stage of independence, they may want to remain dependent on their carers for a longer period. They may come to the stage where they might find it difficult to find someone that accepts them for who they are and not of their disabilities and this may result to suffering from long term stress and depression.

As youth workers I believe that it is our responsibility to work alongside them offering the same opportunities and if possible cater for the various needs to enable them to participate freely and actively, to feel safe and accepted. We should commit ourselves to building a strong rapport and encourage others to build positive relationships with them. We must also ensure that the centre is accessible for disabled users and that furniture is appropriate for the various activities.

3.2 Explain the importance of positive attitudes towards disability and specific requirements

I believe that by having a positive attitude towards disability it makes the person feel valued, wanted, needed and avoids themselves being isolated, unwanted, undesired and a burden on others. Having this attitude makes your centre a true open door access facility complying not only with the mandatory legislations that surrounds good practice but builds a positive relationship with individuals, their families, and society.

3.3 Explain the social and medical models of disability and the impact of each on practice

The Social model of disability is when society creates a barrier purposely or unintentionally with negative attitudes and exclusion, thus society becomes the main contributory factor in disabling people and not the person.

The medical model of disability aims to diagnose individuals and focuses on how to treat the person to make them as normal as possible.

The impact of both these models I believe is for youth workers to be trained to deal with young people's physical and their medical needs. Ensuring that there are equipments, facilities like disabled and wheel chair access toilet, shower room, lifts to accommodate wheel chairs, ramps not too steep, support bars and other safety elements. To equip the centre will various games, tools and furniture to allow them to engage in the activities.

On the medical part specific training is required, we need to be very aware of the different allergies that exist especially nut allergy, young people with asthma, severe eczema, epileptic, etc. and be able to put in place a plan and how to deal with them if an emergency occurs.

3.4 Explain the different types of support that are available for disabled children and young people and those with specific requirements.

1. SENCO – to put in place a support mechanism to assist in learning
2. Outside agency for the blind and deaf to deal with sensory learning difficulties
3. Physiotherapist - to assist in physical mobilisation
4. Trained medical staff – to deal with severe allergies, medical conditions, injuries and wounds
5. Disabled educational projects that deal with only disabled young people

4.1 Explain the meaning of equality, diversity and inclusion in the context of positive outcomes for children and young people

Equality is the stipulation that everyone should be treated similarly, without prejudice. Here I believe we need to engage all venerable young people towards activities that will support their developmental needs by breaking down barriers. We can do this by involving them in the planning stage and enable them to engage and contribute in the delivery programme to meeting their needs or interest. It is also a legal obligation when we have legislations like the Race relation Act 2000, Children's Act 2004, the Equalities Act 2010 and Help Children Achieve More 2010.

Diversity consists of individuals that come from different backgrounds, cultures, traditions, religious beliefs and values they hold. When we plan our programme we need to celebrate diversity, by encouraging participation from all walks of life to enter our centres. Where they feel safe, secure and can positively participate without feeling threatened or intimidated in the organised activities. Workers need to be aware and confront issues and attitudes towards other cultures, beliefs and traditions and where possible challenge young people.

Inclusion is to accommodate people without any restrictions or limitations of any kind. To ensure that young people from all background have the opportunity to participate, engage and belong, even if it means to invest in upgrading your centre to accommodate people with disabilities.

4.2 Compare, giving examples, ways in which services for children, young people and their carers take account of and promote equality, diversity and inclusion to promote positive outcomes

When we open our centres to young people I expect all staff members to treat each young person as an individual, I expect everyone to engage in our organised activities without any difficulties, barriers or obstacles and that staff are there to assist, support and guide young people. In our plans we promote equalities and celebrate different cultures by displaying poster and displaying leaflets on World Aids Day, Anti bullying week, Black history month and the Annual Faith Calendar displayed on the wall.

I ensure that staff are not neglectful of bullying, sexist and racist comments and challenge these attitudes of young people. I have organised a 20-30 minute discussion during the following session to re-address the ground rules set and go over what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. Here I have reiterated the equal opportunities statement stating that this club is for all regardless of gender, race, colour, nationality, age or disability.

We have transitional support workers that attend our club sessions and they can link up young people to the education support services, careers guidance officers and provide personal support to assist themselves in doing better for themselves. This opportunity is open for everyone and not just those that fall in the NEET category.