

## CORNERSTONES

### OF YOUTH WORK

**Youth come first.** We put the needs and interests of young people at the heart of everything we do. That's not always easy as we often grapple with competing interests. We continuously adjust to find a balance that is receptive and responsive to the needs, concerns, and hopes of young people.

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**We stand up for equity for all young people.** Our work is grounded in social justice. We live that truth by ending inequities in systems and opportunities. We recognize that young people experience different barriers based on class, race, gender, ability, sexual identity and more. We have a responsibility to spearhead change.

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**We support young people's positive identity development.** We know that identity is grounded in community, family and culture, and encourage young people as they explore their place in the world. We provide opportunities for them to formulate their own positive sense of self, to build healthy relationships with others, to find a place where they are valued and give value to others, and to envision positive futures for themselves.

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**We safeguard young people's physical and emotional well-being.** Ensuring young people are physically safe and emotionally secure is a big responsibility — and also a big sign of trust. We acknowledge that feeling safe differs for each young person, especially for those who've experienced adversity and trauma. We provide safe spaces for all young people, and always put their well-being first.

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**We act with integrity toward ourselves, others and our profession.** We are aware of our influence on young people. We conduct ourselves knowing that we are role models. We are professionals who ensure that what we say and do increases public respect for young people and elevates the field of youth work. We know that acting with integrity requires honesty, authenticity, and courage.

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