

IN BRIEF

Building Bridges for the Sake of Youth *Community- and Faith-Based Youth Workers Have Much to Learn from Each Other*

The Question

Is there common ground for shared learning and networking among community- and faith-based youth workers? And, if so, are youth workers interested in linking with each other?

The Bottom Line

Most youth workers in both sectors share commitments to core competencies of youth work, including developing positive relationships with youth, being positive role models, and involving and empowering youth. Furthermore, most indicate that they would value opportunities to learn with and from each other—despite some significant challenges in doing so.

The Evidence

The following themes emerged from an exploratory study by the National Collaboration for Youth and Search Institute, which involved an online survey of 1,322 community- and faith-based youth workers, six focus groups, and a national consultation:

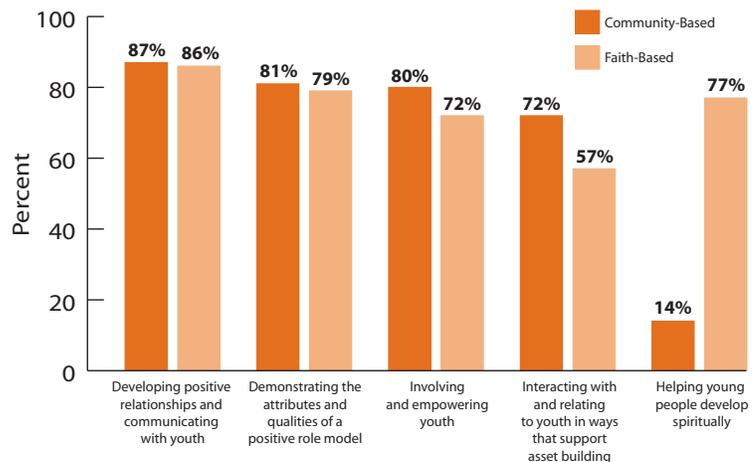
- High percentages of youth workers in both sectors believe a number of competencies are “essential” to youth work (Figure A). There are also key differences in priorities.
- More than half of respondents said they would be “very interested” in cross-sector learning opportunities, with most of the rest being “somewhat interested.”

- Even with some of the cautions and concerns, both community-based youth workers and faith-based youth workers seem interested in linking together to improve their efforts with and on behalf of youth, challenge mutual misperceptions, learn from each other, and, in the process, work toward greater shared commitment to working together to create communities where young people are valued, guided, and empowered to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

FIGURE A

Essential Competencies for Youth Workers, by Sector

Youth workers were asked how important 12 competencies are to working effectively with youth. At least 70% of respondents in one of the sectors said the following were “essential.”



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