

Program Philosophy

From the moment youth walk into Open Doors for Youth, our interaction with them will be guided by the following philosophy and principles.

Nine evidence-based, guiding principles to help youth overcome homelessness

The principles begin with the perspective that youth are on a journey; all of our interactions with youth are filtered through that journey perspective. This means we must be trauma-informed, non-judgmental and work to reduce harm. By holding these principles, we can build a trusting relationship that allows us to focus on youths' strengths and opportunities for positive development. Through all of this, we approach youth as whole beings through a youth-focused collaborative system of support.

Journey Oriented: Interact with youth to help them understand the interconnectedness of past, present, and future as they decide where they want to go and how to get there.

Trauma-Informed: Recognize that most homeless youth have experienced trauma; build relationships, responses, and services on that knowledge.

Non-Judgmental: Interact with youth without labeling or judging them on the basis of background, experiences, choices, or behaviors.

Harm Reduction: Contain the effects of risky behavior in the short-term and seek to reduce its effects in the long-term.

Trusting Youth-Adult Relationships: Build relationships by interacting with youth in an honest, dependable, authentic, caring and supportive way.

Strengths-Based: Start with and build upon the skills, strengths, and positive characteristics of each youth.

Positive Youth Development: Provide opportunities for youth to build a sense of competency, usefulness, belonging, and power.

Holistic: Engage youth in a manner that recognizes that mental, physical, spiritual, and social health are interconnected and interrelated.

Collaboration: Establish a principles-based, youth-focused system of support that integrates practices, procedures, and services within and across agencies, systems, and policies.

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