



Guiding Principles Checklist

March 2025

Contents

Guiding Principles Checklist	1
Introduction	4
Guiding Principle 1: Focus on Youth Experiences	7
Guiding Principle 2: Amplify Community Voices	18
Guiding Principle 3: Foster Inclusivity	28
Guiding Principle 4: Embrace Diversity.....	38
Guiding Principle 5: Promote Lifelong Learning	49
Guiding Principle 6: Prioritize Wellness	58
Guiding Principles in Action	68
Keep Going	73

Introduction

What is CanWork BC?

CanWork BC aims to make it easier for youth with disabilities (YWD) ages to 15 to 30 years old to find and keep employment. There are a series of tools and resources for YWD, employers, service providers, educators, and caregivers.

CanAssist at the University of Victoria, with the support of the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, wrote the Provincial Employment Strategy for Youth with Disabilities (ESYD). This strategy informed the CanWork BC tools and resources.

What are the Guiding Principles?

The Guiding Principles reflect the core values of the ESYD and shape the work of CanWork BC. They also provide a shared framework for supporting YWD in their employment journeys. There are six Guiding Principles:

1. Focus on Youth Experiences
2. Amplify Community Voices
3. Foster Inclusivity
4. Embrace Diversity
5. Promote Life-long Learning
6. Prioritize Wellness

What is the Guiding Principles Checklist?

The Guiding Principles Checklist is a resource designed to help employment programs assess how well they align with the Guiding Principles for Supporting Youth with Disabilities. It provides a clear breakdown of each principle and ways it can be practically applied. Employment service providers can use the checklist to evaluate and enhance their programs, fostering more inclusive employment services tailored to the needs of YWD.

Why was this checklist created?

YWD in British Columbia face challenges accessing employment support. The current landscape is fragmented—while many effective programs exist, they often operate in silos and primarily serve adults rather than youth. Availability, eligibility criteria, and approaches vary across the province, making it difficult for YWD to find the support they need.

This checklist aims to help bridge that gap by translating the Guiding Principles into practical, actionable steps for service providers.

How was this checklist developed?

This checklist was informed by extensive engagement with community members. It represents a collaborative effort to unify and amplify the great work already happening across BC.

To ensure its relevance and effectiveness, the checklist was further refined through two rounds of user testing with 120 employment service providers across the province. Feedback from the testing showed:

- 97% of service providers rated the checklist as easy to use.
- 78% said it helped them better understand the needs of YWD.
- 81% agreed it is a valuable tool for evaluating their program.
- 96% said they would recommend the checklist to a colleague.

How can you use this checklist?

You can complete the full checklist or focus on a specific Guiding Principle. To get started, read the principle's description and review each checklist item below. Check 'Yes' if it applies to your program, 'No' if it does not, and 'Not applicable' if it doesn't fit your program's structure. Any 'Yes' responses highlight an area of strength in supporting YWD, while "No" responses indicate an opportunity for growth to better meet the employment needs of YWD.

The checklist is divided into three key areas of service delivery:

- **Program Information and Access:** How programs are marketed, who can access them, and how YWD enrol.
- **Pre-Employment Support:** Programming that helps YWD prepare for employment, such as career planning and skill development.
- **Job Search and Employment Support:** Support related to job applications, interviewing, and workplace accommodations.

This checklist is a starting point for ensuring employment programs are inclusive and responsive to the needs of YWD. It assumes users have foundational knowledge of employment support and serves as a guide for tailoring services. While some checklist items may not be possible within current funding structures, they reflect best practices and can serve as inspiration for future improvements or be referenced in funding applications.

More Learning

If you're looking for more resources specific to YWD check-out canworkbc.ca. Additional tools are available to help you strengthen your services:

- CanWork BC Youth Tool
- CanWork BC Youth Tool workbooks
- CanWork BC Youth Tool Facilitator Guides

By using this checklist and exploring these additional resources, you're taking an important step toward creating more accessible, inclusive and effective employment services for YWD across BC.



Guiding Principle 1: Focus on Youth Experiences

Application to Employment Programming:

Recognize and address the unique transitions and challenges YWD face as they move into adulthood.

Description:

The transition from childhood to adulthood is a dynamic period of growth, change, and decision-making. For YWD, this transition is further complicated by accessibility barriers and social stigma, making the shift to employment even more challenging. YWD need support beyond job-readiness training to support them as they navigate their employment journey for the first time.

YWD need employment programming that is flexible and responsive to the complexity of their development. Support should extend beyond traditional employment services to include relevant practical life skills such as financial management or understanding employment expectations.

Equally important is the way employment programs engage with YWD. Many young people rely on digital platforms, social media, and apps to find and absorb information. To be effective, employment services should consider youth-friendly communication methods that align with how young people navigate the world.

Section 1: Program Information and Access

1. Is your program information understandable and accessible to YWD?

Example: Uses plain language, available in the primary language of each YWD, available in multiple formats like audio, text, and video, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Is your program information distributed to YWD and their caregivers?

Example: Advertised through social media platforms, available in community centers and schools, promoted at transition fairs and in community by youth-specific outreach staff, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Do you work with youth-serving community spaces to introduce YWD and their caregivers to your program?

Example: Work with high schools and post-secondary institutions, libraries, community centers, and/or community health centers to recruit YWD, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Is your program application process accessible to YWD and their caregivers?

Example: A straightforward fillable application is posted to your website and social media channels, drop-in and phone registration is available, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Do you make repeated attempts to help YWD register for your program once they express interest?

Example: Asking YWD for their contact information so you can follow-up, having youth-specific outreach workers who promote your program in the community and remain a support for YWD as they navigate registration, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 2: Pre-Employment Support

1. Does your program prioritize relationship building between YWD and staff?

Example: Staff are given the time and space to build trusting relationships with the YWD they support, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program support YWD to learn professional expectations and life skills?

Example: Understanding professionalism, workplace culture and cultural competency, interpersonal skills, financial literacy, filing taxes, and navigating government benefits such as disability assistance or Employment Insurance.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program help YWD connect with services that support their transition from youth to adulthood when needed?

Example: Referrals to housing support services, healthcare, education and literacy programs, or transportation assistance like HandyDART, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Can your program respond to changing priorities that happen throughout the youth to adulthood transition?

Example: Needing to pause or alter employment preparation to give space for a YWD to manage loss of housing or a relationship crisis, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Does your program offer the opportunity for YWD to connect with one another?

Example: Providing information about youth workshops, volunteer opportunities, and community events, hosting meet and greets and group events, providing peer mentorship opportunities, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 3: Job Search and Employment Support

1. Does your program provide Customized Employment, Job Development, and Job Coaching services to YWD?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program support YWD to understand their basic employee rights, as outlined by the [BC Employment Standards Act](#)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program support YWD to navigate the practical aspects of starting a new job?

Example: Completing onboarding tasks such as requesting a Criminal Record Check and filling out new hire paperwork, understanding a pay stub including vacation and stat pay, learning how to call in sick or request vacation, navigating workplace culture, identifying key contacts, and establishing natural supports, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. If a single employment opportunity doesn't align with a YWD's situation or goals, does your program support them in exploring multiple income streams?

Example: Babysitting, newspaper delivery, selling art online or in a market, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. As appropriate, does your program support YWD to explore self-employment opportunities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable



Guiding Principle 2: Amplify Community Voices

Application to Employment Programming:

Engage and centre the perspectives of YWD by encouraging self-exploration, awareness, and empowerment.

Description:

YWD are the experts of their own experiences. Their experiences should shape employment programs, ensuring that services align with their lived realities. Encourage YWD to explore their strengths, passions, and identities to foster self-awareness and gain clarity on their employment journey.

Beyond self-exploration, YWD should be empowered to direct their own support at every stage. This means having access to the right information and resources to make informed decisions that shape their employment pathway.

Amplify the voices of youth with disabilities by actively engaging and centering their perspectives, encouraging self-exploration, awareness, and empowerment.

Section 1: Program Information and Access

1. Is it clear that your program can offer support to YWD who don't have clarity on what their employment goals are?

Example: Materials state that YWD do not need to be actively searching for a job to access support, program information highlights self-exploration and discovery as part of the support process, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Is your program information up to date, accurate, and consistent across all materials so YWD can easily find and access what they need?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Do your program materials make it clear that YWD lead their own support journey?

Example: Materials explain how YWD can contribute to creating their support plan, and that there's opportunities for YWD to review their plan and make changes as needed, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Do you consult YWD in the design and development of your program information materials?

Example: Having YWD and provides input on materials, having a youth-led design process, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Does your program present staff as advocates for YWD throughout their employment journey?

Example: Describing job coaches to YWD as an “advocate” who will help them reach their goals and navigate the system of support, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 2: Pre-Employment Support

1. Does your program emphasize the importance of self-exploration in the employment journey?

Example: Introducing YWD to an [identity wheel](#), offering values and skills inventories, strengths assessments, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program support YWD to explore the impact they want to make through their work?

Example: Helping YWD identify that they want to use their work to connect with people, coach/mentor children, contribute creative ideas, fight climate change, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. As YWD gain clarity on who they are and the impact they want to have, does your program celebrate small successes based on their personal growth milestones?

Example: Offering positive reinforcement through certificates, email messages or cards, sharing successes on social media, sharing “wow” moments with caregivers, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your program support YWD to connect with professional mentors who share aspects of their identity or the impact that they want to make?

Example: Workplace mentors who contribute in ways that align with YWD's goals, professionals in a field of interest, professional mentors who share aspects of their identity, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Does your program support YWD to foster optimism about their future and build autonomy in their lives?

Example: Helping YWD set meaningful, manageable goals that encourage progress in their personal journey, supporting them in adapting when things don't go as planned, and guiding them to consider possible outcomes and learning opportunities, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 3: Job Search and Employment Support

1. Does your program empower YWD to understand and advocate for their rights as employees with disabilities?

Example: Teaching YWD about the [Duty to Accommodate](#) under the [BC Human Rights Code](#), etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program support YWD to find jobs that align with the impact they want to make?

Example: Supporting a YWD who wants to fight climate change to find work protecting the environment, supporting a YWD who wants to coach/mentor children find work in a school, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. If YWD are already working, does your program empower them to find meaning in their work?

Example: [Job crafting](#), where YWD learn to redesign the work they currently do to align it with their contribution interests, like helping a youth who works as a barista reframe their role as a way to help people by making their day better, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. If a job isn't the right fit for a YWD, does your program help them explore alternative roles that align with their strengths or interests in a different way?

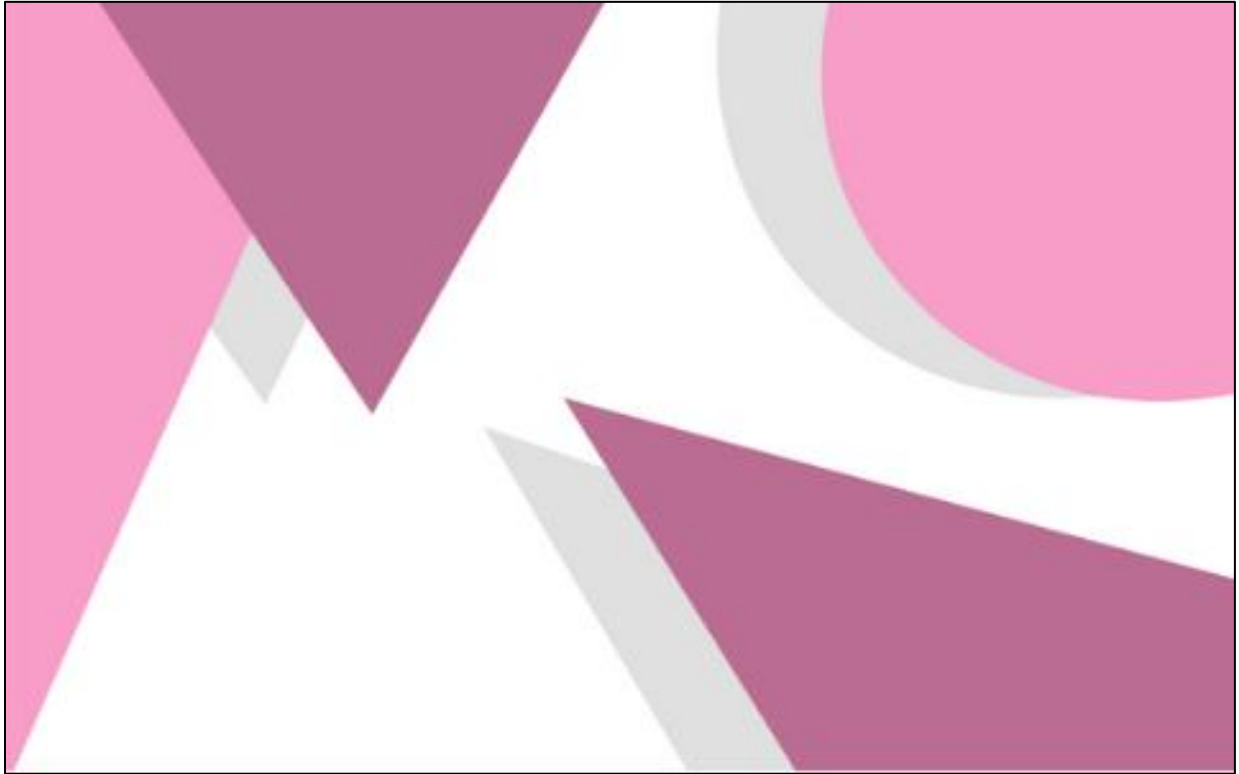
Example: If a YWD wants to connect with people but retail/customer service is not working, supporting them to try another job where they can interact with the public (for example, a theatre or restaurant host), etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Do you have systems in place that invite and encourage YWD to provide feedback on the support they receive in your program?

Example: Consistent check-ins throughout their support, an anonymous suggestion box in your office, suggestion/feedback channel on your website, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable



Guiding Principle 3: Foster Inclusivity

Application to Employment Programming:

Ensure employment service spaces are accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for all YWD.

Description:

A welcoming, safe, and accommodating environment is important for YWD as they explore employment. Many young people are still discovering their identities, and an inclusive space allows them to explore their strengths and goals without fear of judgment or exclusion.

Employment programs must go beyond simply welcoming YWD with disabilities—they must actively remove barriers and create accessible environments where all YWD can fully engage. This includes ensuring that both physical and virtual service spaces are designed to accommodate a variety of needs and provide meaningful opportunities for participation.

Inclusion is more than just meeting requirements— it's about creating a sense of belonging for YWD and ensuring they can comfortably navigate and fully participate in programming.

Section 1: Program Information and Access

1. Does your program information clearly communicate that you offer a welcoming and non-judgmental virtual and physical space?

Example: Using [gender inclusive language](#) on all materials, highlighting success stories from a diverse range of YWD, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Are visible symbols of inclusion present in your virtual and physical spaces?

Example: [Disability pride flag](#), Deaf flag, rainbow flag, nametags with pronouns, [Moose Hide pins](#), Indigenous territorial acknowledgment plaques, local Indigenous maps, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Is your program information available in spaces that support YWD facing intersecting barriers to employment?

Example: Organizations that support Indigenous YWD, YWD in the LGBTQIA2S+ community, and racialized YWD/persons of colour, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your program information clearly highlight a collaborative relationship between YWD and staff, rather than an authoritative one?

Example: Media on your website shows the collaborative relationship between YWD and staff, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Are your physical spaces designed to be comfortable, welcoming, and non-intimidating for YWD?

Example: A practical, easy-to-navigate layout, accessible and approachable staff, clean and comfortable common areas, unobstructed exits, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 2: Pre-Employment Support

1. Are your physical and virtual service spaces accessible to YWD?

Example: Sensory friendly spaces are available, closed captioning and video description in ASL is available for video, automatic transcripts are enabled in virtual meetings, physical spaces are wheelchair accessible, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Can your program arrange additional accessibility supports as needed?

Example: Hiring a sign language interpreter or providing other translation services for YWD who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their first language, acquiring assistive devices and technologies or partnering with organizations that provide them, offering flexible support plans to accommodate a YWD's substance use recovery, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program support YWD in exploring and identifying the accommodations they need?

Example: Offering accommodation assessments, exploring the [Job Accommodation Network](#), sharing examples of accommodations your program has offered before, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your organization's culture embody and celebrate equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)?

Example: A diverse staff team where members feel encouraged to show up as their full selves at work, access to EDI and cultural or disability sensitivity training for all staff, staff modeling safety and inclusion in their interactions with service participants and colleagues, and ongoing job accommodation discussions in the workplace, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. When YWD work one-on-one with staff, does your program make an effort to connect them with a staff member who shares commonalities to foster safety and understanding?

Example: Shared age, gender identity, culture, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 3: Job Search and Employment Support

1. Does your program support YWD to seek employment in an environment that fosters their success?

Example: Supporting a YWD who is recovering from alcohol use disorder to pursue employment in a space where alcohol is not present, establishing connections with employers who are activity creating safe and accommodating workplaces, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program have resources available to help YWD access work-appropriate clothing that meets their needs?

Example: Gender-affirming clothing, adaptive clothing, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program have a plan or policy to support YWD who experience discrimination at work?

Example: Providing one-on-one coaching to support YWD in responding to discrimination, connecting them with appropriate resources, and offering advocacy or support in workplace discussions.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your program have resources on accessibility and inclusion available to employers?

Example: Resources on inclusive interviewing, hiring, and onboarding, creating safe and inclusive workplaces, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. As needed, do you support YWD in planning and preparing for environments outside of your program's control?

Example: Helping a YWD evaluate if their work environment is a safe place to express all parts of their identity, supporting a YWD to create a safety plan for their after-hours bus ride home from work, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable



Guiding Principle 4: Embrace Diversity

Application to Employment Programming:

Acknowledge and respond to the varied experiences, identities, and needs of YWD by offering flexible and adaptive employment services.

Description:

No two YWD experience their employment journey the same way. Some may have strong family support, financial stability, and established networks, while others might face systemic barriers, financial insecurity, or limited access to basic needs. Some YWD may be ready to work, while others may need time to build confidence or develop skills before considering employment. Employment programs should recognize these differences and connect YWD to relevant support, rather than assuming employment is the immediate priority.

To effectively serve all YWD, programs must be flexible and adaptable, ensuring that barriers to participation are minimized. Programs should be designed to meet YWD where they are, rather than expecting them to fit into rigid structures.

By embracing the diverse experiences of YWD's and ensuring employment services are flexible and responsive, programs can create opportunities for all YWD—regardless of where they start.

Section 1: Program Information and Access

1. Does your program offer flexible enrolment options?

Example: In-person, phone, and online enrolment options, no set application deadline for YWD, multiple service start dates throughout the year, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. If your program requires government issued identification for registration and YWD do not have it, do you support them to obtain it?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Is your program accessible to YWD with different scheduling needs?

Example: Support is available in the evenings and weekends, and on a drop-in basis, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your program offer support to help YWD navigate transportation to and from your physical spaces?

Example: Supporting YWD to map out the walking or biking route, sharing transit instructions, providing one-to-one bus training with staff, providing bus tickets, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Can YWD access your program based on self-identification of a disability?

Example: Formal diagnosis or proof of disability is not required to participate in programming, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 2: Pre-Employment Support

1. Does your program offer support that reaches YWD where they are?

Example: Providing outreach workshops, offering online support options, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program allow for flexible attendance?

Example: YWD are given the opportunity to catch up on missed sessions, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Are your staff trained to understand how YWD's situations and experiences can influence their behaviour, choices, and actions?

Example: Staff are provided training on trauma informed care, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Are your staff trained to recognize basic needs insecurities that may impact YWD's participation and to help them access appropriate support services?

Example: Staff are trained to identify signs that basic needs are unmet, engage in supportive conversations with YWD, and provide resources for services like food banks, housing supports, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Does your program take a coaching approach to help YWD learn from mistakes?

Example: Holding a debrief session with a YWD after a workplace challenge, guiding them as they understand the impact of their actions, and supporting them to explore alternative approaches for the future.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 3: Job Search and Employment Support

1. Does your program support YWD to gain professional experience?

Example: Setting YWD up with work experiences or trial shifts in different workplaces, supporting volunteerism, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program connect employers to incentives for hiring YWD?

Example: Employer resources, wage subsidy programs, direct contact to your service staff for questions or concerns, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program support YWD to obtain the necessary equipment for a new job?

Example: Providing access to interview attire, industry-specific work boots, tools, safety gear, or uniforms required for their role, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. When appropriate, do staff support YWD in creating a plan for disclosing disabilities and requesting workplace accommodations?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. When appropriate, does your program support employers in providing workplace accommodations for YWD?

Example: Sharing examples of common workplace accommodations, assisting employers in identify assistive devices, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable



Guiding Principle 5: Promote Lifelong Learning

Application to Employment Programming:

Encourage continuous learning and growth, recognizing that the employment journey is dynamic and non-linear.

Description:

YWD are constantly learning and adapting, both personally and professionally. Employment experiences serve as valuable learning opportunities, helping YWD discover their strengths, preferences, and areas for growth.

Because career paths are rarely linear, goals often shift over time, requiring ongoing exploration and support. Employment programs should emphasize learning over immediate job placement, allowing YWD to explore career options without pressure. Providing long-term guidance and mentorship ensures YWD can access support before, during, and after employment, helping them navigate career transitions and professional development.

Encouraging career progression beyond entry-level jobs fosters confidence and lasting employment. By recognizing and building on YWD's skills and strengths, employment programs can help them secure meaningful work while also nurturing their potential for sustained career growth and fulfillment.

Section 1: Program Information and Access

1. Does your program information clearly communicate that support is focused on long-term learning and progression through the employment journey?

Example: Communicating that support is about self-discovery and developing transferable employability skills (versus focusing on job placement as the end goal), etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program information highlight the value of building professional experience?

Example: Emphasizing learning and growth milestones as program outcomes, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program information make it clear that YWD don't need work or volunteer experience to participate?

Example: Participation is not limited to those with a certain level of professional experience, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your program information use language that normalizes changes and challenges throughout the employment journey?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Do you have information available on your website and in your physical spaces that promotes continuous learning and career growth?

Example: Posters that direct YWD to free learning, having a bulletin board highlighting workshops that are available in the community, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 2: Pre-Employment Support

1. Does your program support YWD to learn about the employment journey and the role of continuous learning throughout this journey?

Example: Supporting YWD to understand that the employment journey is dynamic and that it's normal for goals to shift, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program support YWD to explore their employment ambitions and identify practical actions to pursue them?

Example: Helping YWD identify what they can do today, next week, next month, and next year to work towards their larger career goals, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program support YWD to acquire the certifications they need for employment and career growth?

Example: Driver's license, Food Safe, First Aid, Serving it Right, WHIMIS, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your program promote career exploration?

Example: Connecting YWD to job fairs and job shadowing opportunities, supporting YWD to explore different professions, facilitating informational interviews with employers, helping YWD learn about and explore labour market information, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Does your program support YWD to develop the Federal Government's [Essential Skills for Success](#) throughout the employment journey?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 3: Job Search and Employment Support

1. Do you ensure on-going support is available to YWD once they have a job?

Example: Consistent check-ins with YWD and their employer, support through transition between jobs, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program support YWD to identify and pursue professional development opportunities at work?

Example: Supporting YWD to identify and ask their employer for training opportunities, ensuring YWD have access to regular feedback from their supervisor, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program support YWD to explore opportunities for advancement in the jobs they are applying for?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your program support YWD to develop and maintain a career portfolio that highlights their skills and achievements?

Example: Having a place to catalogue certificates, accomplishments, and work samples (for example, an online artist portfolio, academic projects or writing samples, links to websites designed, or sketchbook of illustrations), etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Does your program support YWD to recognize the value each work experience adds to their employment journey?

Example: Supporting YWD to identify transferable skills that relate to their larger career ambitions, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable



Guiding Principle 6: Prioritize Wellness

Application to Employment Programming:

Support the holistic well-being of YWD, emphasizing wellness as essential to employment success.

Description:

Employment is a key part of independence and belonging, and it is closely connected to overall well-being. Employment programs play a vital role in supporting YWD as they navigate their employment journey and develop the skills needed to sustain their well-being along the way.

YWD experience significant life transitions, important decisions, and challenges that can impact their mental health and well-being. Today's youth value and prioritize mental health, and they expect workplaces and employment programs to do the same. Recognizing this connection allows employment services to better support YWD in their employment journey while maintaining well-being.

A wellness-focused approach that integrates well-being into employment programming creates an environment where YWD feel supported, motivated, and empowered to pursue meaningful employment while maintaining a sense of balance.

Section 1: Program Information and Access

1. Does your program frame employment as a key piece of well-being?

Example: Materials highlight how employment can help you gain independence or connect and contribute to community, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Do you offer resources for promoting wellness in your physical and virtual spaces?

Example: Wellness resource section on your website, wellness pamphlets or brochures in your office, information on crisis support lines easily accessible to YWD, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program recognize the impact of mental health challenges on a YWD's motivation and readiness for employment by actively reducing barriers?

Example: Providing informal visits for YWD to explore services without pressure to enrol, offering accessible program information through various formats, such as phone, email, meetings, video calls, and chat boxes, ensuring natural supports, such as caregivers, teachers, and counselors, are involved in sharing program details with YWD, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your program recognize mental health challenges as disabilities?

Example: Youth with mental health challenges are eligible to participate in your program, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Does your program information make it clear that YWD can take wellness days from support as needed?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 2: Pre-Employment Support

1. Does your program support YWD to learn about and explore their wellness?

Example: Teaching YWD about the [wellness wheel](#) and how employment relates to each part, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program provide opportunities for YWD and staff to practice wellness?

Example: Take breaks to walk, stretch, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program offer YWD access to a safe and comfortable space to use as needed?

Example: Outdoor space, a space for prayer, meditation, reflection, emotional regulation, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. When appropriate, does your program connect YWD to counselling and other mental health resources?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Are your service staff trained to respond to wellness crises?

Example: They have basic First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, suicide intervention, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 3: Job Search and Employment Support

1. Does your program support YWD in managing the stresses that arise during the job search?

Example: Interview anxiety, feelings of rejection, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

2. Does your program help YWD prepare for the challenges and adjustments that come with starting a new job?

Example: Helping YWD map out the new bus route to work, planning for a routine change, talking to YWD about different management styles and job expectations, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

3. Does your program support YWD to create healthy habits that promote success at work?

Example: Making a lunch the night before a shift, preparing their uniform, creating a healthy sleep schedule, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

4. Does your program help YWD to develop their own wellness plan for on the job?

Example: Identifying a calm space, practicing emotional regulation techniques, learning strategies to handle feedback or constructive criticism, etc.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

5. Does your program support YWD in developing healthy workplace relationships?

Example: Learning how to interact with a supervisor, navigating appropriate conversation topics with co-workers, and managing workplace conflicts.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Guiding Principles in Action

This scenario illustrates how the Guiding Principles can be applied in day-to-day practice. Read through the example and consider the reflection questions to deepen your understanding of the Guiding Principles and explore how they could be integrated into your own practice.

Note: this scenario illustrates a best-case scenario. While it is based on real practices observed across the province, it represents a blend of multiple programs rather than any single one. The ESYD initiative recognizes that not all practices may currently be feasible due to funding, resource, or policy constraints. The scenario aims to showcase effective practices, acknowledging that the reality of implementing them in programs may vary.

Scenario: Navigating Pathways Employment Program

Alex stumbled upon an ad for the 'Navigating Pathways' employment program while scrolling through social media. Intrigued by their flexible scheduling and eligibility for students, Alex decided to visit the program's center.

Stepping into the space, Alex was initially nervous but quickly felt at ease. Symbols of inclusion, such as the pride flag, were displayed on the walls, and the staff greeted them warmly. Despite intending to enrol online later, Alex's hectic school schedule kept getting in the way.

After a few weeks, Alex received a personalized email from a staff member, reigniting their interest in the program. However, Alex's busy schedule remained a challenge. Recognizing this, the staff member offered access to a self-serve employment support tool, allowing Alex to start employment support at their own pace.

Alex began using the tool to engage with gamified employment support on their phone and gradually felt motivated to fully enrol in the program. They shared their progress with their job coach through the self-serve tool's platform. Alex had worked on Employment Essentials and felt confident in their resume and cover letter writing skills. They expressed interest in moving on to explore their strengths, interests, and career aspirations with the support of their job coach.

Their job coach encouraged them to attend self-exploration focused workshops offered by the program. These workshops provided Alex with opportunities to connect with peers and delve deeper into their career aspirations.

As Alex continued through the program, they were offered paid opportunities to lead workshops they had completed or mentor other youth. This not only supported their leadership and life skills but also provided valuable experience for their resume.

Through this, Alex gained clarity on their career goals and felt confident to begin applying for jobs. Their job coach offered continuous support, emphasizing the importance of overall wellbeing. This included understanding when Alex needed to take a short break to prioritize their emotional wellbeing, after facing interview rejections.

After securing employment, Alex received support from their job coach through the onboarding process. Once comfortable in their role, Alex had the option to continue receiving support, even though they were no longer actively engaged in programming. They understood they could always return for guidance or assistance with career advancement as needed.

Through their experience with 'Navigating Pathways', Alex not only secured employment but built confidence in themselves and their potential, thanks to the program's holistic approach. Alex gave the program permission to share their journey, when it's helpful for others, and remains involved as a mentor for fellow youth with disabilities.

Reflection Questions

1. How does the 'Navigating Pathways' employment program use the Guiding Principles to offer impactful support for youth with disabilities?

Consider: Flexible scheduling, safe and accommodating environments, opportunities for continuous learning, etc.

2. Are there ways your own program or programs you've observed use the Guiding Principles to offer impactful support for youth with disabilities?

Consider: Following up with youth after they have expressed interest in the program, displaying symbols of safety in program spaces, etc.

3. What challenges could you see in implementing practices like those demonstrated in the 'Navigating Pathways' program?

Consider: Obstacles such as funding limitations, organizational culture, external factors, etc.

4. What are some ways your program can apply the Guiding Principles to offer impactful employment support for youth with disabilities?

Consider: The opportunities for growth you identified in the checklist and how you can address these areas to better support YWD in your program.

Keep Going

Great work using the Guiding Principles Checklist—you've taken an important step toward creating more accessible, inclusive and effective employment services for youth with disabilities across BC.

There is so much more to learn! Access the full CanWork BC content and learn more about the program at canworkbc.ca

Canada



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

This program is funded by the Government of Canada
and the Province of British Columbia.