

**NONVIOLENCE AND
YOUTH WORK PRACTICE
IN AUSTRALIA**

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I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

Signed: Graeme Stuart

Dedication

For Bill Moyer (1933-2002), Quaker and nonviolence activist, trainer, writer and theorist who supported and inspired many peace, civil rights, social justice, and environmental activists. My understanding of, and commitment to, nonviolence were deepened through my contact with him.

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Abstract

This study developed a model of youth work practice based on a philosophy of nonviolence. Youth work in Australia is in the process of creating a clear self-consciousness and idea of its role, and a philosophy of nonviolence provides a strong foundation for further development. The study was based on the first three phases of intervention research (problem analysis and project planning, information gathering and synthesis, and design) within a heuristic paradigm. It involved a literature review, a telephone survey of 60 youth workers, in-depth interviews with 20 young people and 15 youth workers, and focus groups with 16 youth workers. Literature on youth work in Australia and Britain, and youth care in Canada and South Africa helped identify key features of youth work. Ten principles of nonviolence were developed based on principled nonviolence literature. The telephone survey provided a broad overview of current practice in New South Wales, and identified issues for further exploration in the interviews. The in-depth interviews with youth workers and young people explored their perceptions of violence and discrimination within their services; ways in which youth workers prevent and respond to disruptive, violent and unsafe behaviour; and ways in which youth work practice can be consistent with a philosophy of nonviolence. Based on the research, a model of nonviolent practice was developed, and then refined following focus groups with youth workers. The model encourages youth workers to be committed to nonviolence in all they do; to develop a reflective work practice; to build professional, caring relationships; to focus on power-with; to be committed to social change; to apply principles of social justice; to ensure there are adequate, appropriate staff and resources; to negotiate clear expectations and boundaries; to create a positive environment; to respond to behaviour nonviolently; and to facilitate informal education.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACOSS	Australian Council of Social Services
AFC	Adolescent and Family Counsellor
APT	American Peace Test
AVP	Alternatives to Violence Project
ch.	Chapter
CETS	Community Employment, Training and Support (industrial award)
CSGP	Community Services Grants Program
CYSS	Community Youth Support Scheme
DET	Department of Education and Training
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DoCS	Department of Community Services
EAYP	Education Access - Youth Programs
ed., eds	Editor(s)
et al.	Et alii (and others)
HELP	Helping Early Leavers Program
HIP	Help Increase the Peace
IHSHY	Innovative Health Service for Homeless Youth
JPET	Job Placement Employment Training
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
n.d.	No date
no.	Number
NSW	New South Wales
p., pp.	Page(s)
para., paras	Paragraph(s)
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SACS	Social and Community Services (industrial award)
SCF	Save the Children Fund
TAFE	Technical and Further Education (a tertiary vocational education provider)
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
vol., vols	Volume(s)

