

Adult Rating of Youth Behaviour

Manual and Guide

Updated March 2022



Introduction

The **Adult Rating of Youth Behaviour (ARYB)** asks staff to rate young peoples' *socio-emotional skills* based on behaviours displayed within the environment of the youth provision settings, as observed during several provision sessions. This is a good indicator of how young people are likely to perform in settings where they are well supported. Staff should observe each young person for at least four provision hours before using the ARYB. This manual includes the following section to support successful implementation and understanding of the ARYB:

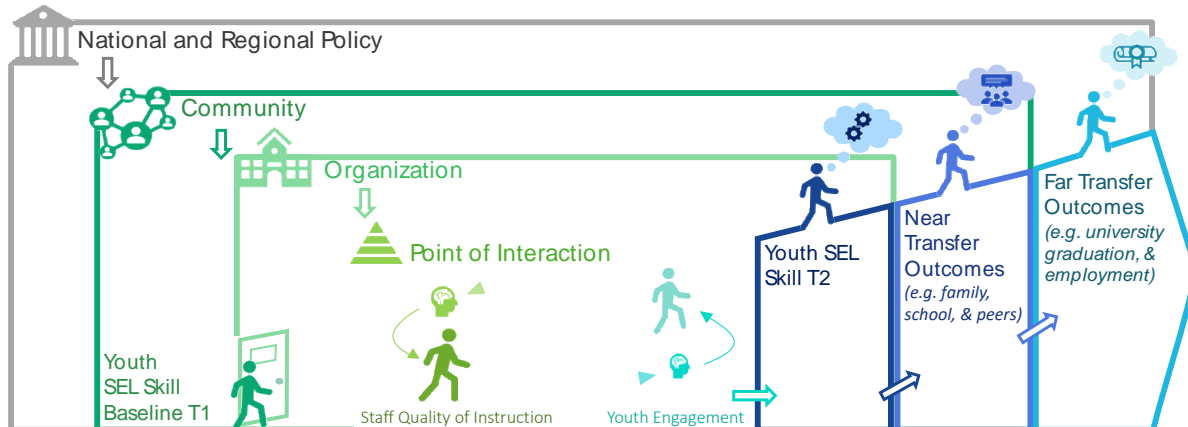
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Theory of Change

The user guide is based on the Outcomes Framework 2.1, which sets out how youth provision contributes to improvements in outcomes for young people. The Outcomes Framework 2.1 includes a theory of change that details how quality youth provision can lead to socio-emotional development for young people. In summary of Figure 1:

- High-quality staff practices and content offered at the point of interaction, where staff and young people meet during provision, are likely to lead to higher levels of youth engagement during each session or interaction.
- Young people bring with them a set of experiences and beliefs about themselves and the world around them, shaped by the contexts in which they are living and learning. This affects how young people engage with youth provision.
- Over time and multiple interactions, the combination of high-quality staff practices and young people's engagement at the point of interaction promotes the growth of socio-emotional skills.
- With sufficient participation in, and intensity of exposure to, high-quality settings, the effects of socio-emotional skill growth will transfer to other settings.
- This includes the 'near transfer' of socio-emotional skills to family, school, and peers and the 'far transfer' of socio-emotional skills to subsequent life course events or experiences, such as early adulthood health, education, and employment. Young people continue to further apply and grow their socio-emotional skills in these settings.
- Improvement in socio-emotional skills is linked to longer-term impacts including an improved ability to cope with the transition into adulthood, alongside long-term improvements in mental and physical health, educational attainment, sustainable employment, finances, secure housing, positive relationships and personal safety.

Figure 1: Theory of Change



About the Adult Rating of Youth Behaviour (ARYB)

The Adult Rating of Youth Behaviour (ARYB) is an observational rating instrument used to assess *optimal* socio-emotional behavioural skills in six domains of socio-emotional functioning (i.e., Emotion Management, Empathy, Problem Solving, Initiative, Teamwork, & Responsibility). Optimal skills are the best someone can do while receiving high-quality support to enact these skills, for example, within the youth provision setting. The ARYB focuses on specific observable behaviours associated with the socio-emotional learning of young people from 5 to 18 years of age and can be used within the context of any type of provision. The ARYB was not designed to be an exhaustive measure of socio-emotional skills; rather, it was designed to focus on a few key types of behavioural skill related to each of the six domains. If your primary goal is to assess socio-emotional skill growth, we generally recommend using observational measures like the ARYB because they focus on optimal behavioural skills, which we view as the most valid and sensitive (to change) information about SEL skills (Smith & Peck, 2020).

The ARYB was developed from extensive practitioner input and research associated with the research programs of Larson et al. (e.g., Larson & Angus, 2011; Larson & Brown, 2007; Larson & Hansen, 2005; Larson et al., 2006; Pearce & Larson, 2010; Rusk, Larson, et al., 2013; Salusky, Larson, et al., 2014) and Smith et al. (2016). Psychometric details, including validity and reliability information, for a previous version of this kind of observational rating system for assessing young people's SEL behavioural skills in the six socio-emotional domains used here are available from the Weikart Center (i.e., cypq.org; Peck, Smith, Hillaker, Macleod, Roy, Helegda, & Smith [2018]).

Validity

In a sample of mostly teenage young people (n = 96) who have been rated on the ARYB by adult youth work practitioners, alpha coefficients of reliability for the six socio-emotional skill domain scale scores were: .79 for Emotion Management, .76 for Empathy, .91 for Initiative, .90 for Problem Solving, .88 for Responsibility, and .91 for Teamwork. The correlations among these scales ranged from .36 (between Emotion Management and Empathy) to .81 (between Initiative and Problem Solving) and averaged .59, which is an improvement over scale scores we have obtained using the Staff Rating of Youth Behavior (where correlations among scales ranged from .47 to .84 and averaged .65 across 12 samples of young people). The differentiation among ARYB scales is sufficient to produce meaningful profiles of young people's socio-emotional skills and performance feedback for continuous improvement processes (e.g., planning with data). For example, pattern-centered analysis of the ARYB scales for the sample of 96 young people revealed six different socio-emotional skill profiles, with 11% of young people evidencing very strong socio-emotional skill profiles and 8% of young people evidencing very weak socio-emotional profiles.

Analysis

Data collected with the ARYB measurement tool can be entered into the Centre for Youth Impact's Data Portal. This will enable you to view change for individuals, cohorts and the results for your whole organisation. After calculating the ARYB domain scores, this information can be used to inform decisions about future training decisions or provision planning (e.g., organizations serving high percentages of young people who score very low in a given domain may decide to focus training and provision more closely on that domain content). If the ARYB is also used as a follow-up measure, then the ARYB domain scores can be used to assess socio-emotional skill change (e.g., by comparing the ARYB domain score means from the baseline assessment to the ARYB domain score means from the follow-up assessment). Finding evidence of socio-emotional skill growth using ARYB scores supports conclusions like (a) the young people participating in this

provision are improving their SEL skills and, potentially, (b) the reason young people are improving their socio-emotional skills is because we are creating high-quality provision.

How and When to Use

The ARYB should be used by staff to assess young people's optimal socio-emotional behavioural skills. It can be used after at least two weeks (or four hours of provision time) from when young people first entered provision in order to assess their *baseline* socio-emotional behavioural skills. Baseline socio-emotional behavioural skill information can be used to plan provision (e.g., to tailor provision to the needs of the young people who are attending) and better familiarise you with the young people attending provision. If the aim is to assess 'pre-test' skill information for the purposes of assessing change with a post-test, it is best to collect ARYB information as early as possible (i.e., near the four hours of provision mark) because later assessments may not accurately reflect young people's 'pre-test' skills (i.e., they are likely already growing their skills during the first few weeks of provision).

The ARYB can also be used at both baseline and follow-up, shortly after or near the end of provision, in order to assess socio-emotional behavioural skill growth. Although ARYB scores tend to be especially sensitive to S socio-emotional growth, we generally recommend waiting at least 2 months to conduct follow-up ARYB ratings if your primary aim is to assess socio-emotional skill growth. Information about socio-emotional behavioural skill growth can be used to understand both young people's development and the relation of this development to other aspects of provision (e.g., the impact of provision quality on socio-emotional behavioural skill growth).

Administration and Scoring

This section provides:

- **ARYB items** – these are the questions or statements against which you will rate young people's behaviour.
- **Item response scale** – this contains the response options that you will use to indicate your rating of behaviour.
- **The procedure for calculating the ARYB domain scores** – this is the scoring process used to calculate overall ratings for each young person on each of the six domains from the individual item scores.
- **The protocol for administration** – this is how you use the measure to ensure you get the most honest and reflective ratings.

Items

The ARYB includes 24 core items and two additional questions about the young people and their attendance. The response scale for items 3-26 is:

1 = Never

2 = Rarely

3 = Occasionally

4 = Most of the time

5 = All of the time

The additional questions, Items 1 and 2, are useful for understanding important factors that may help you to interpret your findings. However, if you are already collecting this information about young people as part of your monitoring data and are able to link it to the questionnaire responses, you do not need to include these two questions.

1. How long have you known this young person?
2. [1 = < 2 weeks; 2 = 2-8 weeks, 3 = 2-6 months; 4 = 6-12 months; 5 = a year or more]
3. For about how many hours of provision time have you observed this young person?
4. [1 = < 4 hours; 2 = 4-8 hours, 3 = 8-16 hours; 4 = 16-32 hours; 5 = 32 hours or more]

Emotion Management

5. How often did the young person easily manage both positive and negative feelings (e.g., didn't lash out at others when feeling bad; didn't brag or gloat when feeling good)?
6. How often did the young person get frustrated easily (e.g., challenging tasks, minor set-backs, disagreements, or critical feedback cause more frustration than expected for a successful provision experience)? (R)
7. How often did the young person respond constructively when frustrated by challenging tasks, minor set-backs, disagreements, or critical feedback (e.g., didn't blame others or give up; thought about it and tried again or sought help)?
8. How often did the young person display disruptive behaviour? (R)

Empathy

9. How often did the young person notice when someone was sad, upset, uncomfortable, or feeling rejected or bullied?
10. How often did the young person respond without judgement to other people's opinions, feelings, or situation?
11. How often did the young person appear to experience the same feelings as another person's feelings (e.g., not just understand, but feel what someone else was feeling, or empathise with others)?
12. How often did the young person discuss or describe social biases (e.g., ableism, classism, racism)?

Teamwork

13. How often did the young person help or cooperate with others who were struggling?
14. How often did the young person expect or remind others to do their part?
15. How often did the young person seek help from others when stuck?
16. How often did the young person keep track of their own and others' group progress?

Responsibility

17. How often did the young person finish the task that they started, with minimal supervision?
18. How often did the young person do the things that they said they are going to do?
19. How often did the young person do the things an adult asked them to do?
20. How often did the young person acknowledge a mistake and take action to address it?

Initiative

21. How often did the young person take the initiative (e.g., volunteer for a challenging task; quick to raise hand in response to a question put the group)?
22. How often did the young person set an ambitious but realistic goal?
23. How often did the young person stay focused and on-task despite distractions?
24. How often did the young person push through during a challenging task?

Problem Solving

25. How often did the young person evaluate alternative plans for reaching a specific goal (e.g., develop alternative plans, or a plan-B, in case things don't work out)?
26. How often did the young person create plans, with multiple steps, for reaching a specific goal?
27. How often did the young person manage their time (e.g., by prioritising steps in a process, sticking to a plan, or moving on when a step may not have been completed perfectly but was good enough)?
28. How often did the young person think about, and adjust to feedback about, their past behaviour or task performance?

Scoring

1. Rater responses to all items marked by "(R)" should be reverse scored, such that:
1 = 5, 2 = 4, 3 = 3, 4 = 2, and 5 = 1.
2. The mean of the response values across all items within a domain should be calculated to produce a single domain score for each young person. If some item responses are missing, scale scores can be calculated as long as there are responses to at least 3 of the 4 items in each domain (but remember to calculate the mean score based only on the number of questions for which young people have actually provided a response). Each of the six domain-specific scale scores should range from 1 to 5.

Instructions

Read the statement. Consider the behaviour of the target young person in the past two weeks in terms of the statement. Mark the box that best describes how often you saw that behaviour from that young person. Please do not skip any items. The "not applicable" (N/A) response should be used only if there were no situations in which the behaviour could have been observed (i.e., no opportunities in the last two weeks). There are no right or wrong answers.

Protocol

Please read and carefully follow these criteria for observational ratings using the ARYB:

1. Identify the adult who will conduct the ratings of young people's behaviour.
 - a. The adult rater should be a person who regularly leads the session in which the young person participates and has had the opportunity to observe the young person for approximately four hours of session time over a period at least two weeks before completing the ARYB;
 - b. Although there is no training requirement, the adult who rates young people on the ARYB should, ideally, be among the best trained in the areas of youth development, social-emotional skills, and adult practices that promote positive youth development and SEL skill growth.
2. Identify the young person who will be rated, and fill in the Unique ID register in the Excel Template provided.

- a. The Unique ID register template provided is **only** for the internal use of participant organisations. The template will automatically generate unique IDs for each young person whose behaviour is being rated.
 - b. These IDs must then be used in completing the Ratings Template, as set out below.
 - c. In order to separate personally identifiable data from ratings data, it is crucial that these two templates are saved in **separate**, private, secure, and memorable locations (e.g., in two different folders on a password-protected computer).
3. Observe young people during provision sessions for at least two weeks and for *at least* two provision hours per week. The ratings should be based on direct observations of the young person, considering only behaviours the rater has actually seen. Behaviours that were reported to have occurred in other settings, or were not observed by the rater, should not be scored.
 4. With reference to the guidance below, complete ratings for young people using the Ratings template provided.
 - a. Rate only those young people who have been identified (as outlined in step 2 of the protocol).
 - b. Ensure that you correctly enter the Unique ID from the register you have completed. The easiest way to do this is to copy and paste the ID from the register into the ratings template.
 - c. Allow approximately five minutes to complete the ratings for each young person (e.g., plan for 50 minutes to rate 10 young people).
 - d. The ratings should be completed during a quiet time where there are no distractions.
 5. For most or all of the rating items, we could have added the phrase “when appropriate” because we want to know how often the behaviour is observed in situations where the behaviour is considered appropriate for that situation.
 - a. For example, for the question, “How often does the young person help or cooperate with others?” using the response scale option “2” (i.e., rarely) does not mean they are working alone most of the time so have few opportunities to help or cooperate but rather that of the opportunities you observe, they rarely help or cooperate.
 - b. Similarly, for the question, “How often does the young person accurately name personal feelings?” using the response scale option “4” (i.e., most of the time) means that they usually use an emotion word that fits what they appear to you to be feeling; it should not be used to mean that they are talking about their feelings all the time.
 6. There are no right or wrong answers. Please do not skip any items. If there are cases where the given behaviour could not be observed because there were no opportunities for the given young person to have demonstrated the behaviour, a “not applicable” response option is provided.

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