

**Principle and
Practice Statement:
Body-Mind-Spirit**



Purpose:

This principle and practice statement is intended to articulate our collective principles regarding the framework of 'body-mind-spirit' and ways in which this may be implemented and inform our practice.

Introduction:







'Body, mind, and spirit' are words nested in the origins of the YMCA, representing 'the whole person' as articulated in the mission statement of the YMCAs of Australia: *"We work together from a base of Christian values to provide opportunities for all people to grow in body, mind and spirit."* This is emphasised in the second Values statement of the Y: *"The YMCAs of Australia are guided to achieve their Mission by the following Christian values... The whole person, consisting of a body, a mind and a spirit each of which is of equal importance."*

While reflecting the Christian basis of the Y, there are many other religious and secular philosophies that also value the uniqueness and importance, individually as well as collectively, of a person's body, mind and spirit and that all three elements are integral to the human condition.

Throughout its existence, the Y has continued to embed notions of 'body-mind-spirit', and continues to recognise the importance of these interconnected human dimensions. Intuitively, we may have a broad and shared understanding of these concepts, but we have not overtly articulated what they mean in practice and how we individually and collectively ensure these are intentional aspects of our culture and practice. To this end contemporary ways of engaging with the whole person (body, mind and spirit) are known as person-centred approaches.



Principles:

| | PRINCIPLES: | IN PRACTICE, THIS MEANS: |
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|  | Reflecting our foundations | We will value the origins and enduring nature of 'body-mind-spirit' as symbolic of the importance of 'the whole person'. This means we will acknowledge our Movement heritage, including all world views, and accounting for the interrelatedness of all aspects of human beings. While our history and the global context in which the Y exists continue to change and evolve, the underlying concept of 'body-mind-spirit' remains unchanged. |
|  | Contemporary application | We will apply a lens of 'body-mind-spirit' in our contemporary context through adopting a programmatic and service response that addresses needs of 'the whole person' in their own personal, social, economic, cultural, and environmental spheres. This also acknowledges egalitarian constructs of human rights, social justice and personal freedoms of expression. |
|  | Holistic approach | Our current practice in all aspects of the Y is to engage with, and support, the whole person in the context of the programs or services we are providing. This is true in our children's services, youth work, health and wellness centres, education programs, family support, leisure activities - everything we do. Using person-centred and evidence-informed models of support, we respond to the expressed needs of people in a holistic framework. |
|  | Evidence-informed | Our functional terminology should be the evidence-informed terminology of modern research and practice in the different fields of service that the Y is engaged with, and it will continue to evolve and change as the evidence-informed practice changes. Regardless of how the functional terminology changes, however, our approach will always be about the whole person. |
|  | Person-centred | We will place 'the whole person' at the centre of our planning and activity at all levels of the Movement, recognising and harnessing the unique circumstances, aspirations and strengths of the people who engage with us. This also acknowledges that in adopting a 'body-mind-spirit' framework we consider 'the whole person' to be greater than the sum of their parts. |
|  | Systems approach | This recognises that 'the whole person' exists and interacts within a complex social, emotional, physical, cultural and environmental ecosystem, of which the Y is one part. In this context, 'body-mind-spirit' can be influenced and impacted in myriad ways. |
|  | Internal and externally focused | Our understanding and conceptualising of 'body-mind-spirit' in practice is equally important for our staff and volunteers in addition to the individuals and communities we work alongside. |