ssdp Australia

Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Ethical Framework

Introduction

About Us

SSDP Australia is the only independent youth organisation in Australia advocating for harm reduction and drug law reform; proudly led by young people with diverse lived and living experiences of drug use.

Our work spans the local to the global; from university campuses, to festivals, to parliaments and the United Nations. We are laying groundwork for an intersectional youth movement to change the conversation around drugs and empower the next generation of drug policy leaders.

Mission

We empower, coordinate, and represent a grassroots network of Australian students and young people to advocate for drug law reform.

Overview

The Ethical Framework guides how we do things. It determines how each of us, as students and young people doing work in the drug policy space, should act and behave towards each other and towards the people and organisations we’re in contact with.

Vision

We envision an Australia beyond drug prohibition with empowered youth, respect for drugs, and justice for all.

Drugs aren't going anywhere, despite a century of prohibition. By respecting the potential risks and benefits of drugs and the rights of those who use them, over time we can unwind and repair harms and stigma. We can forge better approaches to drug use and policy based on youth empowerment, public health, and social justice.

Our Values

Social Justice

We recognise full First Nations sovereignty and self-determination.
We consider the history of contemporary drug policies.
We value approaches to justice that are reparative, restorative, and transformative.
We centre peoples' lived experiences in policy development: "nothing about us without us."
We value human rights and humanitarianism.
We believe in equal access to the benefits of drug regulation.

Public Health

We emphasise the social determinants of health.
We respect bodily autonomy and cognitive liberty.
We value community safety and wellbeing.
We respect drugs as complex tools with many risks and benefits.
We build cultures of collective care and individual accountability.

Youth Empowerment

We believe in the power of young people and future generations to drive change.
We believe that young people should be involved in conversations and decisions which impact us.
We create spaces for meaningful youth involvement in education, research, and advocacy.
We respect young peoples' rites of passage.
We honour young peoples' diversities.
We are inspired by young peoples' hopes for a better future.

Our Principles

1. Engaged Compassion

We show up without judgment, with openness and acceptance for ourselves and others. We listen respectfully to each other and treat everyone with kindness and compassion.

2. Yindyamarra

A Wiradjuri word meaning “go slowly, with honour”. We learn from the wisdom that the best work is often considered, careful, and strategic, and that meaningful change can often take time.

3. Peer-Led Activism

We centre those with lived and living experience in our activism, recognising that those who are most affected by drug policies are typically nearest to the solutions.

4. Evidenced-Informed Practice

We believe that promoting the unique contributions of lived experiences, expert consensus, and empiricism is the best way to design drug policies and inform our organisation’s directions.

5. Reflexive Practice

We acknowledge our lived experiences and our world views, and how these impact the way we represent our communities. We are critically reflexive and engage in ongoing reflection and evaluation to inform our practice.

6. Holistic Harm Reduction

We engage with people free of judgment to address the complex effects of drug prohibition and wider systems at the individual, community, and institutional levels.

7. Collective Collaboration

We create space for people to meaningfully participate, united in the pursuit of common goals. We do this with transparent systems of governance, clearly defined teams and strategies, and by fostering consent-based cultures of decision-making.