

Tips to best engage young people

Principles of Youth Work Best Practice

Principles of Youth Work Best Practice:

Empowerment – Young people having greater control over their lives through participation.

Purposeful engagement: Young people taking on valued roles, addressing issues that are relevant to them, and influencing real outcomes.

Inclusiveness: Ensuring all young people are able to participate, regardless of background, culture, where they live, their gender or sexuality.

When consulting or engaging with young people you must consider how you will adjust your practice to be youth friendly, safe and encouraging so that they feel empowered to contribute and make decisions that are positive and effective overall.

Things to consider

- Challenge any biases or assumptions that may influence your interactions with young people.
- Prepare projects with young people in mind early during the planning stage. Think about partners, strategies and methods you can tap into to develop a youth-inclusive project.
- Inform parents or carers about the project to increase likelihood of young people's participation.
- Use visual aids and interactive activities to encourage idea sharing and participant discussions.
- 'Read the room' and be flexible to change facilitation strategies, to allow young people to speak and move freely.
- Consider how you will follow up with young people to 'close the loop' about the results of their contribution.
- Allow time for young people to connect and form friendships as this will boost group moral and enlist genuine contributions.

Decision Making Frameworks

Hart's Ladder of Participation



Things to avoid

- Avoid using complex language, acronyms or jargon during conversations as this can be exclusionary to young people.
- Avoid relying on one specific method to collate youth voice, instead, use group discussion, games and idea sharing to collate feedback and contributions.
- Do not minimise or assume young people's experiences. Allow them to share their thoughts freely and without judgement.
- Avoid targeting only young people in leadership roles, as they may not share the same experiences and opinions of other young people (i.e. not representative of community)
- Avoid limiting young people's contributions to surveys or one-off opportunities. Explore options to engage young people through alternative methods like online forums or focus groups.

Considerations and Barriers

-  **LOCATION:** Ensure your location is easily accessible for young people and close to public transport.
-  **TIME:** Deliver your project when young people are available and able to attend. Avoid during school hours, weekends and late evenings.
-  **COST:** Ensure consultation involves no expenses for young people. It is best practice to provide compensation for young people e.g. reimburse participants for their time, contributions and travel costs.

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Strategies to engage young people

THIS IS A
**SAFE
SPACE**

Establish a safe group environment
Inform participants that this is a space to share and learn collectively, without judgement. Set clear expectations for everyone's participation.



Set the scene. Give young people a clear overview of what will be discussed, and relevant background information, to help guide their thinking and contributions.

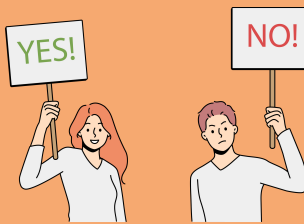


Research activities that you can use during your interactions with young people e.g. icebreakers / games.

"Be genuine, open, flexible and creative in developing and delivering opportunities to engage and consult with young people"



Group discussions - encourage young people to share ideas as a group and generate conversation.



Use agree/disagree prompts gauge young people's opinions on a topic, then unpack through group discussion.

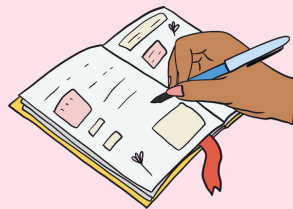


Use visual brainstorms, post it notes and butcher paper to encourage young people to share ideas and reflections.

"Be empathetic to different experiences and backgrounds young people have"



Use visuals, videos and images to explain content and prompt young people's ideas and contributions.



Personal reflections - Capture young people's feedback and experiences through drawing and journaling.



Genuine praise and acknowledgement to boost young people's confidence and validate their contributions, building trust and rapport.

"Be patient with young people and respect our time and opinions"