

Recruiting Young People to Partner in Research

05

GUIDEBOOK
SECTION

Youth Engagement
in Health Research



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- [Checklist: Recruiting Young People](#)

**WELLBEING
HEALTH &
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in Adolescent Health

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Overview

Recruiting young people to partner with you in research

“As the outcomes of the participatory process should reflect the views of the young people who are involved in the research and design processes, ensuring effective recruitment of a target audience can be critical. Recruitment strategies will differ depending on the project and how connected you already are with the young people you wish to work with.”¹

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When you are commencing your youth engagement journey, it is vital to think about how you recruit young people you plan to engage in your research. Who is at the table matters for bringing a diverse and representative mix of perspectives, experiences, expertise, skills and knowledge which can enrich the research process. Getting the recruitment process right is vital, as it will significantly shape how, when and what your engagement looks like at different phases of the research. It also has the potential to significantly change the trajectory, findings and outcomes of your research, so it is worth investing the time to undertake a quality recruitment process.

Further resources

- [Enabling participation guide, pages 6-7](#)



Prepare



Deciding what is possible in your context

Your first consideration is to be clear and realistic about the resourcing available and your team's capacity and local conditions that may affect access to young people.

- Do you have the budget to support creating your own mechanism for youth engagement (eg. a youth advisory group which might meet monthly, remuneration, catering etc)?
- Do you have the staff capacity to support your own mechanism for youth engagement (see the previous resource on Getting the Right Team)?



If not, then you may need to consider an alternative approach where you could still undertake engagement with young people, but it may need to take a different form:

- Are there existing organisations who are already engaging with the cohort of young people you are seeking to involve?
- Could you explore partnering with another/several organisations to engage with young people through their existing mechanisms/platforms for the purpose of your research?
- What could your team/institution contribute towards this process (eg. remuneration of young people, staff time to facilitate engagement activities, evaluation, reporting back etc) to make it worthwhile for both the partner organisation and the young people engaged?

You also want to consider the best mechanism for youth engagement, one that will be fit for the purpose and scope of your research (see other resources on youth engagement mechanisms).

Once you have determined these factors, you are ready to think through the details of who and how you recruit young people to engage in the research.

Key considerations when you are designing your recruitment process

Overall

- Is this a process you can co-design and develop together with young people you are already engaged with, or who have direct experience in similar roles?
- If not, are there young people engaged in a similar/partner organisation who you could consult with and involve to help inform and co-design the roles and selection criteria, advise on an accessible recruitment process and participate on the interview panels etc?
- What are the potential benefits and risks that young people may experience as a result of their involvement? How will benefits be amplified and risks be minimised?
- What is necessary to include in your ethics approval? Are young people co-designers, advisors, researchers or participants in the research? Will you collect and analyse data they contribute?
- Do you need to inform, engage with and involve parents/guardians/carers and families as gatekeepers, stakeholders and facilitators when it comes to young people being involved in your research? If so, how will you do this? There is a delicate balance to strike between young people's privacy and confidentiality when it comes to health research, and legal guardianship of young people under 18 (in the Australian context).

Connect

Recruiting young people

Use the resources below to work through key phases of the recruitment process.

Further resources:

- [Checklist: Recruiting Young People](#)
- [Template: Role Descriptions](#)



Reflect

Applying the WH&Y framework: reflection questions

Mutual trust & accountability

How has your recruitment process demonstrated shared accountability between stakeholders and built mutual trust?

Equity & responsiveness

Did your recruitment process lead to the involvement of young people who bring experiences that will contribute towards reducing unfair differences in health outcomes?

Diversity & inclusion

Did your recruitment process result in a diverse and representative group of young people being selected?

Were there gaps or barriers to engaging with and successfully recruiting a diverse group of young people? Who is not represented? What could you do or change next time to address this?



Footnotes

¹ Hagen et al., Enabling participation guide, (2016) A companion document to the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre Innovative Methodologies Guide Participatory Design of Evidence-Based Online Youth Mental Health Promotion, Intervention and Treatment, Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre, p 6-7