

# Implementing and Sustaining Youth Engagement

# 07

GUIDEBOOK  
SECTION

Youth Engagement  
in Health Research



## Content overview

### Overview

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- Key considerations for sustaining youth engagement
- Key considerations for respectful practice

#### Connect

- Key considerations for the mode of delivering research activities
- Key considerations and engagement tips throughout the research cycle
- Research methods which can encourage collaboration between young people and researchers

#### Reflect

- Tips from young people on what not to do
- Tips on what works
- Applying the WH&Y Framework

**WELLBEING  
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Research Excellence  
in Adolescent Health

**YR** **YOUNG &  
RESILIENT  
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CENTRE**



## Accompanying resources

- [Tips: Sustaining Youth Engagement](#)
- [Checklist: Project Meetings](#)
- [Checklist: Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [Checklist: Key Considerations for Delivering Research Activities](#)
- [Method Card: Research Carousel](#)
- [Method Card: Future Scenarios](#)
- [Respectful Practice Card: Intersectionality](#)
- [Respectful Practice Card: Building Research Pride](#)
- [Respectful practice card: Chronic Illness](#)

## Overview

In this section of the Guidebook, we offer some overarching considerations to help you prepare, connect and reflect on how you continually engage young people throughout their involvement in your research. This is regardless of the length of time or entry/exit points of engagement with young people. We also provide some more specific suggestions for how you can implement good engagement practice at key phases of the research cycle.



# Prepare

## Key considerations for sustaining youth engagement

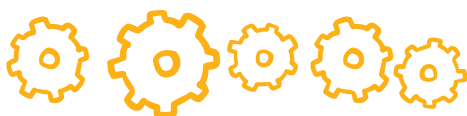
In addition to thinking about the best methods for engaging young people in research, there are several important things you need to consider before you start to coordinate and liaise with young people:

### 1. Communication on young people's terms

- What are young people's preferences when it comes to communication (E.g. email, SMS, closed Facebook group, Slack)?
- Do you have the knowledge/skills/resources to use young people's chosen mode of communication?
- Have you put things in place to implement your duty of care?
- Are you communicating to the young people in ways that they understand?

### 2. Rapport-building

- Have you spent some time getting to know the young people you are engaging? Why they are interested in your work? What would they like to get out of your research?
- Is this built into the plan?
- What are their strengths and what would they like to achieve in the process of being involved in your research?
- What do they know about research?
- How are you going to balance building rapport with creating and maintaining boundaries with young people?



### 3. Organisation/coordination of events

- Do you have a set location/time for you to meet with young people?
- How frequently would they like to meet?

### 4. Creating a comfortable/accepting space

- Have you considered cultural sensitivities (such as dietary requirements, prayer rooms, gendered interactions)?
- Have you considered young people's preferences around names and pronouns?
- Have you considered any accessibility requirements young people may have (including young people who are neurodiverse)?
- Are other young people/members of staff aware of these requirements?

### Further resources

- [Tips: Sustaining Youth Engagement](#)
- [Checklist: Project Meetings](#)
- [Checklist: Roles and Responsibilities](#)

## Key considerations for respectful practice

Young people engaged in knowledge production and dissemination through the WH&Y Commission have developed some respectful practice cards for researchers. These provide practical considerations for researchers to assist you in respectful engagement around young people's lived experiences and evolving sense of self and identity.

### Further resources

- [Respectful Practice Card: Chronic Illness](#)
- [Respectful Practice Card: Intersectionality](#)
- [Respectful Practice Card: Building Research Pride](#)

# Connect

## Key considerations for the mode of delivering research activities

There are several things to consider when thinking about the mode of delivery for your research, be it online or face to face.

Use the checklist below to unpack some of these considerations you and your team should think through prior to connecting with young people around research activities.

### Further resources

- [Checklist: Key Considerations for Delivering Research Activities](#)

## Research methods which can encourage collaboration between young people and researchers

### Future scenarios

Group-based method to imagine new possibilities.

### Research carousel

Small-groups of young people learn about and feedback on multiple projects or different aspects of a single project in one workshop.

### Reverse research carousel

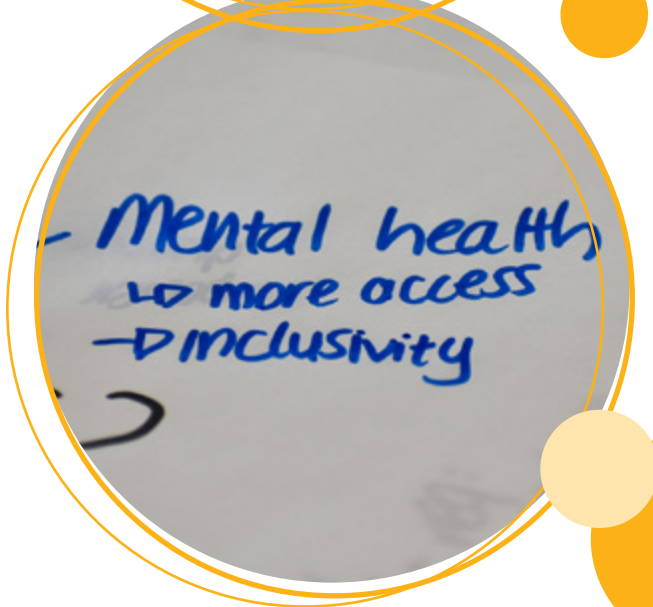
Young people invite feedback and advice from senior researchers through small group discussion of their projects / ideas.

### Round table discussions

Small groups explore intergenerational perspectives on set questions.

### Storytelling

Participants write short stories in response to a set of prompting questions and then share and explore these together.



### Further resources

- [Beyond sticky notes](#)
- [Co-designing with young people - the fundamentals, Orygen](#)
- [Participatory Design of evidence-based online youth mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention and treatment. – Hagen et al.](#)
- [Method Card: Future Scenarios](#)
- [Method Card: Research Carousel](#)

# Reflect

## Tips from young people on what not to do

- Don't assume young people will have absolute knowledge of the literature and area of expertise - that's a researcher's job.
- Don't create and use yes/no questions. This does not provide leeway for participants to provide their honest ideas.
- Don't put all the burden on young people to deliver the project by themselves.
- Often methodologies used by researchers may not be as engaging for young people. You need to check in around this and perhaps adapt/co-create methods together.
- No surprises!
- When people assume that influencers are the best way to disseminate findings – consider if this is the most meaningful and relevant way to engage (often it's not).

## Tips on what works

- Let young individuals share their concerns and allow them to express themselves in their own words rather than forcing participants to agree with a certain idea raised by researchers.
- Give greater instructions on what is required by young people as participants.
- More face-to-face interactions result in greater expression by participants.

## Applying the WH&Y framework: reflection questions

### Mutual trust & accountability

How will the small ways you interact with young people (emails, phone calls, conversations at a workshop) build trust?

How will you build ongoing mechanisms for mutual accountability – such as opportunities for regular check-ins and feedback?

Are you clear on the different roles and responsibilities of young people and adults alike?

### Equity & responsiveness

How are you and your team being attuned to the experience of young people once they are recruited and inducted into your project?

How are you reviewing your research methods and asking young people how these can be more relevant and engaging for them?

### Diversity & inclusion

How are you going to create a comfortable environment where all people (especially young people) feel able to share their actual views and ideas?

Are you prepared to investigate further and potentially to change your mind or approach if challenged?

What is the right mix of face to face and/or digital interactions? What are the preferences of young people in your group?

