



Tips

Creating a safe environment

Some ways you can work to create a safe environment for young people involved in your research include:

- Creating a group agreement at the outset of young people's engagement can help them to identify how the group can work together to take care of each other/keep each other safe.
- Explicitly explaining your child and young person safe policy, and complaints mechanism in ways that are relevant and accessible to young people you are engaging with as part of their induction to the project.
- Continuous checking in for permission. Just because someone gives their consent at the start of a project does not mean you should assume they automatically want to participate in all activities.
- Providing regular opportunities to check in with young people involved to understand how they are going and to create space for discussing any concerns early on.
- Considering the diverse cultures, identities and of young people involved, and finding out from young people involved what other supports will create psychological safety.
- Providing appropriate referral pathways and support to young people in the case of issues arising.
- Ensure you have 2 facilitators at all times when working with young people.
- Careful and detailed documentation of any issues arising.
- Consider the age dynamics between young people you are working with – there is a risk here of potential harm when older and younger people are mixing.
- If you are dealing with a particularly sensitive topic, you may want to consider having a professional counsellor/psychologist/health professional who has experience working with young people as someone on site or on hand to support young people if needed, or to help build psychosocial supports into your engagement process.