



Content overview

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**WELLBEING
HEALTH &
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Accompanying resources

- [Checklist: Induction](#)
- [Template: Induction Presentation](#)
- [Template: Feedback Form](#)
- [Tool: Ethics Case Studies for Training Young Researchers](#)
- [Tool: Health Research Methods Cheat Sheet](#)
- Respectful practice card: Chronic Illness
- Respectful practice card: Intersectionality
- Respectful practice card: Building Research Pride

Overview

Capacity-building through the research journey is relational, reciprocal and continuous. Researchers and young people are both teachers and learners together in this process. Considering how you embed and invite opportunities to exchange ideas, knowledge, skills and experience can lead to an enriched process and outcomes for both researchers, young people and the project.

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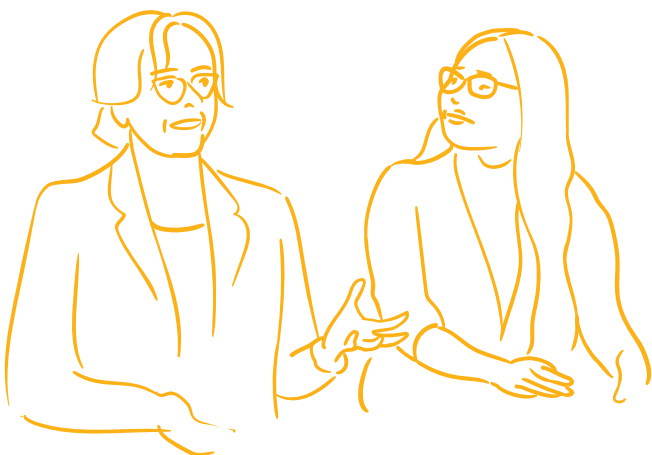
Engaging and building young people's evolving capacities

Central to engaging meaningfully with young people is recognising that everyone has different capacities and strengths: including their unique experience, perspective, skills, abilities and knowledge. All our capacities are continually evolving, it is important to put support in place to enable everyone involved in research to fully participate and bring their best contributions.

Capacity building is a key part of youth engagement - whether it is a one-off consultation to inform a project, or a longer-term collaborative or youth-led research initiative. Among other things, young people are experts in their own experience and may be interested or knowledgeable in the topic of your research. Recruitment for youth involvement opportunities often asks young people to 'come as they are' which means the onus is on the researchers to make sure that appropriate induction, training and support is in place to get the best out of the experience for young people, researchers and the research project itself.

Importantly, young people should be introduced to the context of your research, in order to contribute to the content.

Providing an opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge can also be a meaningful way to recognise and value young people's contributions. This can enhance their individual aspirations and access to further education and employment pathways.



Building the capacity of researchers to engage meaningfully with young people

One of the biggest barriers to engagement with young people in health research is the lack of skills and knowledge among researchers and adult stakeholders.¹ In addition to resourcing, this gap can include:

1. Attitudes and awareness

Some researchers lack awareness of benefits of engaging with young people to define and design research. Researchers may believe it is unnecessary to involve young people. A limited number of papers found that young people themselves may not see health research as an attractive activity – a barrier that can be overcome with good communication.

2. Ethics protocols

Some researchers are discouraged by the complexity of or lack of clarity on protocols they need to follow to receive ethical approval for working with legal minors.

3. Skills

Both adults and young researchers need training to effectively collaborate and materials/tools need to be adapted to match young people's capabilities.

4. Ways of working together

Researchers can find it a challenge to adapt ways of working to young people's needs, capabilities and less flexible schedules. It can also be challenging to identify and maintain a network of young people they can work with over a sustained period of time.

Prepare

To address some of these potential gaps and challenges, you should take the time to prepare yourself, your team and any other relevant stakeholders so that you own skills in engaging meaningfully and safely with young people. This includes identifying the training needs of researchers, or any other stakeholders who will be engaging with young people throughout the course of the research cycle.

Further reading on addressing challenges in involving young people in health research

● [Wellcome inquiry, Chapter 4](#)



Defining roles and setting expectations

Being clear about the role, level of involvement/influence in the research project and setting clear expectations from when you initially engage young people is an important step towards ensuring meaningful and realistic engagement.

Young people can play a wide variety of roles in health research, including:

Agenda setting

Identifying research questions that are more aligned to young people's experiences and needs

Research design

Selecting research tools/approaches that will be more acceptable to young research subjects

Data collection

Recruiting young research subjects, and leading data collection so that data reflects their own perceptions on what is important to be captured

Data analysis

Interpreting language used by other young people in qualitative data analysis for adults

Dissemination:

Presenting research findings in formal settings, and sharing and translating findings through existing networks to their peers and their wider communities



Prior to recruiting young people into a particular health research project, it's important that you and your team realistically assess the level of involvement you expect young people will have. Sometimes these roles may evolve over time, as young people become more confident and interested in the research cycle. Being realistic at the outset will really help with managing expectations and allocating appropriate resources.

Examples of ways that young people and researchers have worked together in the WH&Y Commission

Research

Working with senior researchers to advise, design, resolve research ethics issues and undertake research. Reviewing journal articles, reports, research grants, ethics applications and any other materials necessary.

Networking

Growing partnerships for youth participation and research and translation partnerships for WH&Y work.

Communication

Communicating young people's perspectives + voices in partnership with WHY CRE Communication through social media, newsletters, blogs and producing content for the WH&Y.

Further resources

- [Template: Role Descriptions](#)



Connect



Relationship building 1:1

Building relationships with the young people involved in any research phase is vital for meaningful engagement. This helps to gauge the interests, skills, strengths of young people as well as any tailored support which is needed to enable their participation.

Induction and orientation

When young people are formally commencing their involvement in your health research project, you need to provide them with an induction to the project, organisation, research process, their involvement and other key stakeholders' roles and responsibilities.

Carefully consider when, where and how you facilitate the induction. This could include:

- Online or face to face delivery
- Ensuring the setting is welcoming and accessible
- Preparing relevant materials and sending these to young people in advance
- Confirming if young people have any dietary, cultural, religious, accessibility, gender or other diversity requirements which need to be appropriately accommodated and planned for
- Considering if it is possible and appropriate to have the induction co-facilitated by an existing young person who is already engaged/has been engaged in this project/similar projects
- Time of day
- What day of the week is best for young people involved
- Transport subsidies/accessibility (if the induction is being held face to face)



Tip: to avoid challenges with timetabling, it is a good idea to include set dates, times and locations for the induction in the recruitment pack for young people.

Further resources:

- [Checklist: Induction](#)
- [Template: Induction Presentation](#)
- [CRIS Co-research Toolkit for Young People:](#)
 - [Training Guide: Introduction to Social Research](#)
 - [Training Guide: Introduction to Ethics in Social Research](#)
 - [Training Guide: Power and Privilege in Social Research](#)
 - [Training Guide: Introduction to Research Project Management](#)
- [Tool: Ethics Case Studies for Training Young Researchers](#)
- [Tool: Health Research Methods Cheat Sheet](#)



Getting on the same page with terminology

In each industry and project there are key terms, acronyms and sometimes concepts which might be unfamiliar to the young people you are engaging with. As part of your preparation for induction, and in all stages of the research process, do a terminology check. A shared glossary built over the course of your work can help to create a comfortable environment for continual learning. There might also be an opportunity for exchange: where you ask and brush up on terminology or concepts which are familiar to young people but not to you!

Ongoing training

As you implement your research project, there may be additional training you need to provide for young people along the way. This can help their engagement to be meaningful, supported, reflective and skilled.

This could include:

- Media training
- Key messaging training
- Public speaking training
- Skills in data collection and analysis
- Report writing
- Administering research instruments
- Advocacy and campaigning
- Workshop facilitation training
- Research administration
- Using online tools/software

You also want to consider what areas of knowledge, skills and experience young people can share with you and your team. At the WH&Y, Commissioners identified knowledge and skills gaps of peers and senior researchers, which led to youth-led and delivered training on:

- Gender and sexuality
- Intersectionality, and
- Chronic illness



Ask young people involved in your research if they have identified any areas of training which they would like to develop and deliver to the benefit of everyone involved.

Further resources:

- Respectful practice card: Chronic Illness
- Respectful practice card: Intersectionality
- Respectful practice card: Building Research Pride

Reflect



Evaluating capacity-building activities

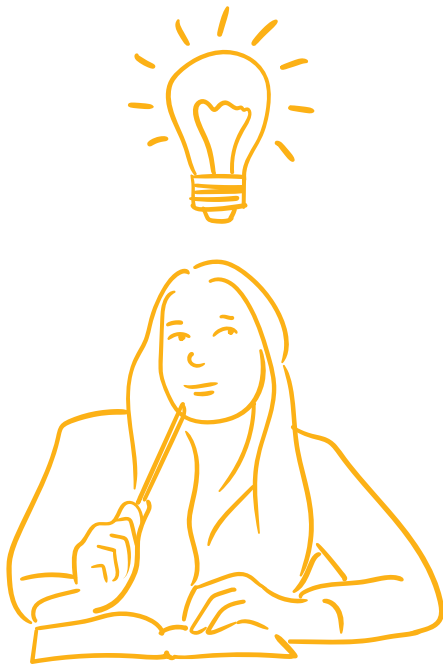
Building regular feedback and evaluation loops into your capacity-building activities as you go is important. This can help you to know what's working well, and where there are gaps for young people or researchers which need to be addressed in order to deliver the best research outcomes.

Consider collaborating with young people to develop a shared framework to evaluate your mutual learning, development and change as a result of capacity-strengthening activities. This could be as simple as interviewing each other (young people and researchers) to discover and reflect on your key learnings.

WH&Y has also developed some tools to collect feedback from young people after training or capacity-strengthening activities which you can adapt for your setting.

Tools

- [Template: Feedback Form](#)



Applying the WH&Y framework: reflection questions

Mutual trust & accountability

Have you asked young people what training or capacity-building they could deliver which their peers and the researchers might benefit from?

What training needs does the research team have?
Does everyone understand and have the skills to work respectfully with young people?

Equity & responsiveness

Have you made the time to build relationships and understand any barriers to participation young people might be facing?

Diversity & inclusion

Have you considered and made the time to discover the unique strengths, skills and knowledge of your group (adults and young people)?

Are there skills, knowledge and experience within the group that could enhance your research project and process?

How might you create space for exchange of knowledge, skills, experience and expertise within your engagement activities with young people?



Footnotes

¹ Successful youth participation in health research depends on the attitudes of adults Pincham, Hannah L et al. The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, Volume 4, Issue 12, 857 - 859