

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST

The following strategies offer ideas on how to connect meaningfully with young people:

- One-to-one conversations that build rapport and enable communication about changes, challenges and successes.
- Discussions about your and young people's strengths, interests, motivations, preferred ways of working and support needed.
- Showing care and respect. Circumstances can change for young people in their lives and they may not be able to continue to participate in engagement. In this circumstance, open and transparent communication is best about how you can support them to engage, with consideration given for them and other youth members involved. If you haven't heard from someone in a while, check in to see how they are going and whether there's any support they need.
- Communicate when and where you are available so young people know how they can contact you.
- Learn to be comfortable with awkwardness – at least for a bit. If young people are unsure how to contribute, provide them with explanations, choices or examples when asking for their input.
- Give young people the confidence to speak up by establishing respectful and non-judgemental spaces. Ask young people for their ideas and opinions, but don't expect them to have all the answers.
- Experiment with setting aside your title and approaching youth engagement as a curious individual, rather than as a person with a job to do.
- Debrief after any challenges with young people and your team.
- Be transparent. If sensitive information cannot be shared, let people know this is the case and why. If you are working within resource limitations, be clear about these to set expectations about what is and isn't possible. Provide regular updates to young people if things change, and explain why.

