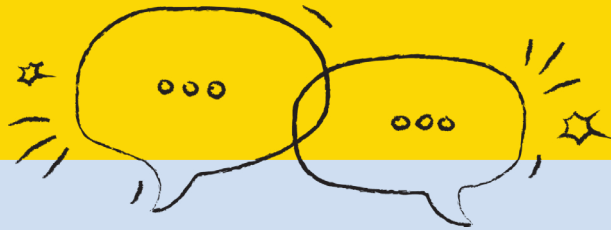


# **SPEAK TO US IN A WAY THAT MAKES SENSE: 15 COMMUNICATION TIPS FROM A YOUNG PERSON**

Good communication is essential for building strong relationships with young people, especially in policymaking. However, traditional communication methods may not connect well with them. Here are some tips for communicating clearly and respectfully:



- 1. Adapt your approach:** Your tone and body language matter. Face young people directly to show you're listening. Be mindful of how you might come across—aim to seem relaxed and open.
- 2. Show you care:** Maintain eye contact and listen actively. Wait for them to finish speaking, ask open-ended questions, and validate their ideas.
- 3. Use active listening:** Nod, smile, and give brief affirmations to show you're engaged. Minimise distractions, like putting away your phone.
- 4. Ask what works:** In online settings, let young people choose how they want to participate, like using the chat function or working through a Mentimeter or Miro presentation.
- 5. Use positive language:** Highlight the strengths and contributions of young people instead of viewing them as passive participants. Avoid talking down to young people, but make sure you're using clear, simple and uplifting language. Starting with an Acknowledgement of Country sets a respectful and inclusive foundation for meaningful youth engagement.
- 6. Be mindful of language:** Respect young people's preferences for how they identify by listening to how they want to be referred to and engaged with.
- 7. Recognise diversity:** "Young people" covers a wide age range (12-25). Tailor your language to fit their different perspectives and needs. State pronouns at the start of a session – not all young people identify themselves the same way.
- 8. Reflect on your purpose:** Know what information you want to share and what actions you want young people to take. Be transparent about your intentions.
- 9. Stay current:** Understand the trends and current events influencing young people.
- 10. Use quotes:** Direct quotes from young people can be more relatable than summaries. Involve young people in creating content to help it resonate.
- 11. Incorporate visuals:** Use images and graphics to make your content engaging. Visuals help break up text and keep attention.

**12. Keep it simple:** Use clear language, headings, and bullet points. Short sentences work best. Avoid jargon, acronyms that haven't been explained, and overwhelming details – ensure accessibility.

**13. Maintain a friendly tone:** Use a warm, conversational tone. Humour can make your communication more relatable and enjoyable.

**14. Respect personal space:** Be mindful of physical distance and give young people time to express themselves, especially on sensitive topics.

**15. Understand differences in communication styles:** Recognise young people with neuro-diverse needs may express themselves in ways that don't always align with traditional communication expectations. Be open and flexible, focusing on understanding rather than expecting one standard style.

By following these tips, you can communicate more effectively with young people and build stronger connections.