

Dos & Don'ts of Youth Engagement

THEMES FROM THE LITERATURE

Adult allyship - effective youth-adult partnerships include: flexibility, mentorship, authentic decision making, shared power, and reciprocal activity

Meaningful opportunities - ensuring that youth are supported so they are able to actively participate in decision-making processes; working with youth to develop projects that are valuable for everyone involved

Youth-friendly spaces - creating spaces that are safer from physical, emotional and psychological harm where youth are free to express themselves openly and authentically without fear of discrimination

DO



HAVE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Know your goals and objectives and share them with your youth partners; be clear about the youth's role and contribution



BE PARTNERS

Integrate youth voice into decision-making and identify environmental barriers to engagement



CHECK IN

Act as an adult ally by listening to youth feedback and offer mentorship where appropriate



GIVE TIME

Allow time for reflection; pre-brief and debrief sessions can clarify and build confidence



RECOGNIZE DIVERSITY

No single youth represents all youth perspectives; diverse voices deserve to be heard, respected and considered



VALUE CONTRIBUTIONS

Compensate youth for their participation in projects by providing a wage or honoraria

DON'T



DOMINATE THE CONVERSATION

Youth can feel intimidated or uneasy participating in meetings or on projects that don't make space for their participation



BE TOKENISTIC

Ensure that youth voices are heard and acted upon; value youth perspectives and representation as stakeholders in your work



PRIVILEGE ONE FORM OF KNOWLEDGE

The purpose of collaboration and consultation is to have a diversity of voices at the table



DISREGARD FEEDBACK

Make space in the project timeline for consideration of feedback and follow up on the outcomes



STEER YOUTH

Allow youth to guide the conversation towards the issues and ideas that are most important to them

Hawke, L.D., Reihan, J., Miller, J., McCann, E., Rong, J., Darnay, K., et al. (2018). Engaging youth in research planning, design and execution: Practical recommendations for researchers. *Health Expectations*, 1–6. doi: 10.1111/hex.12795

This resource was developed by the
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For more information contact
McCainYouth@camh.ca

camh

Margaret and Wallace McCain
Centre for Child, Youth and Family Mental Health