



HELPING PEOPLE GET INVOLVED

This module explores how mental health research can be redesigned to make participation more accessible, inclusive, and meaningful for young people. The ideas for redesign come directly from the young people themselves, who took on the role of experts in reimagining how research could better meet their needs. By inviting the young people to take this role, we create space for their insight, creativity, and lived experience to lead the way.

Drawing on the barriers and facilitators the young people identified for the characters they created, you will hear their audio insights on what needs to change within research systems, environments, and relationships to better support young people's involvement. The aim is to move beyond identifying barriers, towards reimagining research as a space where all young people feel valued, heard, and able to contribute.

Kaya



"People are the way they are because of things that have happened to them, so you need to find out her whole story first."

Click [here](#) to listen to the audio insights from the group of young people with experience in the justice system who co-created Kaya. This piece lasts around 2 minutes.

Tara



"Consistency is a big part of it [engagement]."

"If the researcher is from the same culture, she will be more open to talk."

Click [here](#) to listen to the audio insights from the group of young people from Global Majority communities who co-created Tara. This piece lasts around 2 minutes.

Cat



"Research on autism and ADHD, then you'll have more understanding of why the person is the way they are."

Click [here](#) to listen to the audio insights from the group of neurodiverse young people who co-created Cat. You'll also hear the voices of some of the adults that support the young people. Sometimes they voice the thoughts of a young person, and sometimes they expand on the insights the young people shared in the discussion. This piece lasts around 2 minutes.

Harry



"Making it obvious before people attend that everyone there is safe to talk to is really important."

"I think diversity in gender and race definitely helps to ensure that everyone feels comfortable."

Click [here](#) to listen to the audio insights from the group of LGBTQIA+ young people who co-created Harry. This piece lasts around 2 minutes.

Across all of the insights you've heard, a clear message comes through: young people want research that feels safe, human, and flexible. They want researchers to meet them where they are, to see and respect them as individuals, and to build genuine relationships based on trust. For young people, meaningful engagement in research isn't just about giving data; it's about connection, comfort, and care.

We would like to thank the young people for their contributions, and everyone who helped make the workshops possible.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Having listened to these voices, what could you do in your own role to make research safe, flexible, and person centred for the young people you work with?

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people shared their ideas on making mental health research feel more inclusive and welcoming.

Build trust through transparency.

Knowing the researcher, the process, and what participation involves helps participants feel safe.

Make it person-centred and flexible.

Adapting the pace, setting, and methods to individual needs helps young people feel seen and supported.

Create a safe, inclusive environment.

Cultural awareness, representation, and diversity all make participation more comfortable.

Communicate purpose and benefits clearly.

Understanding why participation matters and how input will be used builds confidence.

Offer reassurance and support.

Consistency and trusted supporters can help participants feel secure.

IN SUMMARY | HELPING PEOPLE GET INVOLVED

Young people want research that is flexible and person-centred. They feel engagement works best when participation is transparent, culturally aware, and responsive to individual needs.