

Supportive Relationships



This checklist is part of the 8 Key Qualities of Youth Engagement.*

This quality of youth engagement is achieved through practices such as these:

- Treating young people with respect
- Acknowledging young people's strengths, attempts, successes and failures
- Working with young people as partners and taking equal responsibility for the outcomes of a project
- Prioritizing youth voice (knowing when to stay quiet, prompting less-vocal young people, reminding other adults to make room for youth input, etc.)
- Asking questions, listening and allowing young people to come to realizations on their own (rather than giving advice or telling a young person what to do)
- Modeling appropriate behaviour, effective communication, acceptance and kindness
- Being available and present to young people
- Meeting young people where they are at (not expecting them to be different, or better, or anything other than they are)
- Holding young people accountable for their actions; holding adults equally accountable for their actions
- Being an advocate (supporting young people by ensuring they have their voice heard and have their rights respected)

- ❑ Acting as a resource broker (connecting young people to organizations, services and individuals that can support their needs)
- ❑ Being genuine (despite some misconceptions, young people appreciate adults who are themselves, rather than trying to mimic or fit in to youth culture)
- ❑ Trying things outside your comfort zone, demonstrating positive risk taking (Participating in games and youth-focussed activities, getting your face-painted, dancing with a group of young people, doing Karaoke, etc.)
- ❑ Adjusting adult practices/norms to better accommodate young people's participation (wearing casual clothing, using plain language, not using acronyms, meeting in a casual environment, etc.)

* According to Eccles and Gootman¹⁴, there are eight key qualities associated with positive developmental settings: Physical and Psychological Safety, Appropriate Structure, Supportive Relationships, Opportunities for Belonging and Meaningful Inclusion, Positive Social Norms, Support for Efficacy and Mattering, Opportunities for Skill Building and Learning and Integration of Family, School and Community Efforts