

Helping young people stay out of harm's way

Young people have told us how important the trusted adults in their lives are to support and advise them.

Whether you're a youth worker, sports coach, community leader or a teacher, you can be that person – the one they turn to for advice, or to share a concern that they may not talk to anyone else about.

Combining the TRUE approach with your skills and experience is a simple approach to day-to-day conversations with young people.



Talk

Create open and honest dialogue with young people.

Help them build respectful relationships where they are treated as equals.

Recognise

Acknowledge what's happening and recognise their feelings and fears, without adding more.

Offer up the facts and share information about consequences, in all their forms.

Understand

Demonstrate you're trying to understand by truly listening to their experiences.

Give them space to talk freely with no judgement.

Empower

Help young people understand their own capabilities.

Help them recognise the things they can positively do for themselves, and help them consider who they trust to ask for help.

Through applying these principles, you can help build their confidence, helping them make their own positive choices and stay safe.

If you're interested in further support or training, visit

www.StayTrueToYou.co.uk

or email info@staytruetoyou.co.uk



Understanding the TRUE approach

Talk

We know young people are keen to open up and have honest conversations. But they need to be treated as equals—not spoken to like kids.

So...

We need to create dialogue with young people, helping them build meaningful, respectful relationships where they are treated as equals.

How?

- Be spontaneous – if there's an opportunity to talk, even if only brief, let them know you're there and they can come to you whenever they need.
- Make sure the location feels safe. Can they sit side-by-side, could it be done on a walk?
- Set clear boundaries. What are the dos and don'ts? How long do they have to talk? Will it be confidential?

Understand

Young people have told us their ideal conversations are with adults who act like youth workers who listen – empathetically and without judgement.

So...

We need to demonstrate empathy with young people by truly listening to their experiences.

How?

- Take the time to understand exactly what they are telling you – and just listen.
- Resist interrupting, sharing your own stories, offering advice, or sounding judgmental in any way.
- Use gentle, open-ended questions to clarify points raised rather than satisfying your own interests.

Recognise

Our research shows that being overly positive can lack credibility with young people.

So...

We need to acknowledge the reality of what's happening, recognising the feelings and fears of young people, without adding more.

How?

- Directly acknowledge and accept young people's fear.
- Don't diminish their fear or tell them there's nothing to be afraid of. Explore what drives their fears and what influences they are exposed to, help them see through any myths or misinformation.
- Offer up the relevant facts, explore the consequences of their actions on both them and those around them, but don't dwell on the negative. Focus on the here and now.

Empower

Research shows us it's extremely powerful for young people to have adults who believe in them.

So...

We need to help young people understand their own capabilities and have them know there is always someone they can turn to for advice and support.

How?

- Seek opportunities to reinforce a young person's positive behaviours (no matter how small).
- Don't just point out 'bad' things they've done.
- Encourage them to consider who the trusted adults are they can turn to for help and advice. Let them know there is always someone there for them.

For more information and free resources visit:

StayTrueToYou.co.uk

