Principle 4: Support young people as whole people who have lives and needs beyond the programme


YOUNG PEOPLE BRING REAL-LIFE CONCERNS
SO THE PROGRAMME NEEDS TO OFFER SUPPORT
REGULAR TOUCH-POINTS
SUPPORT THE WHOLE YOUNG PERSON BY OFFERING HOLISTIC SUPPORT
PRACTICAL
CULTURAL
RELATIONAL
DEVELOPMENTAL
ACCESSIBILITY
EMOTIONAL
INCLUSION
OUTPUTS
MENTOR
"...make sure they've got loads of wrap-around support... together build that support network for them... they can reach out at any time"

Principle 4: Support the whole person

Why this matters

Young people's lives outside the programme affect whether they can take part, stay involved, and grow as leaders.

Barriers are often practical, not about a lack of interest or ability. Young people may be managing caring roles, family commitments, school, college, work, money worries, travel, housing, health, or uncertainty about the future.

Supporting the whole person means making participation feel possible. It means noticing what might get in the way, reducing pressure where you can, and making sure young people know where to go for support.

"...make sure they've got loads of wrap-around support... build that support network for them... they can reach out at any time."



What this can look like in practice



If you notice:	Try:
Young people are nto showing up, arriving late, or seem unsure about engaging	Check whether travel, cost, timing, equipment, caring roles, health, or confidence are getting in the way. Work with young people to find practical solutions.
Young people attend but seem reluctant to join in	Offer quieter or lower-pressure ways to take part. Let young people observe, work in pairs, help behind the scenes, or build up slowly.
A young person misses a session or seems anxious or overwhelmed	Follow up warmly. Ask what support would help, share what they missed if useful, and make it clear they are welcome back.
Support needs are unclear or change over time	Build a simple support network around the young person. Agree who they can go to, how they prefer to be contacted, and what support they want.
Young people feel embarrassed about needing adjustments	Make adjustments part of normal programme design, not something young people have to ask for or explain publicly.

Principle 4: Support the whole person

What you can do to suppor the whole person

- Ask young people what makes it easier or harder for them to take part.
- Check practical barriers early, such as travel, cost, timing, food, kit, health, safety and confidence.
- Agree how young people prefer to be contacted.
- Make adjustments feel normal and not like special treatment.
- Offer different ways to take part, including quieter or less visible roles, observation opportuntities, or behind the scened work.
- Follow up with care if someone misses a session or seems to be struggling.
- Keep useful local signposting information visible and up to date.
- Create a straightforward and easily accessible.
- Only ask personal information when it is needed to support the young person.
- Protect dignity and privacy by not asking young people to explain their situation publicly.
- Remember that delivery staff can support young people, but they are not clinicians. Their role is to notice, listen, support and signpost.



Signs it’s working

- Young people know who they can come to for support
- Young people know how to ask for help without having to explain anything publicly
- Practical barriers are discussed early and routinely, not as a reaction when someone struggles
- Ddjustments are offered as normal part of the programme
- Young people are offered, and are able to access different participation opportuntiies
- Staff know what to do if they are worried about someone and support does not depend on one staff member



Continue exploring the toolkit

Ready to move on? Continue to the next section:
Principle 5: Make flexibility and access part of your programme design

You can also return to the Leaders Like Us toolkit at a glance page to explore the modules and principles in any order.

Contact us

If you have questions about the Leaders Like Us toolkit, would like to discuss how to use the resources in your setting, or are interested in working with us, please get in touch.

Dr Jamie Crowther
Born in Bradford
Email: jamie.crowther@bthft.nhs.uk

We welcome feedback on the toolkit, including how you have used or adapted the resources and what you have learned.



