

A photograph of three young women on a soccer field. The woman on the left is wearing a blue soccer jersey. The woman in the middle is wearing a white hijab and a black and white soccer jersey. The woman on the right is wearing a black hijab and a green soccer jersey, and is holding a soccer ball. They are all smiling and talking. In the background, other people are playing soccer on a green field. The sky is clear and blue.

# Research with Rangatahi

An approach to research practice centred on youth voice



# Introduction

This resource is designed to help you meaningfully include young people's voice in research.

**Part 1** supports you to:

- clarify your purpose and goals
- use the Mana Taiohi framework
- choose appropriate research methods
- find and engage young people
- create safe, uplifting spaces
- consider ethics and consent
- share the findings.

**Part 2** focuses on individual research methods, helping you understand:

- what they are
- when to use them
- how to use them.

# Part 1: Planning



# Start with youth voice

Gathering meaningful insights starts with understanding why youth voice matters.

Youth voice is about young people sharing their views and perspectives on things that affect their lives. It means creating genuine opportunities for rangatahi to have influence.

## Why it matters

- Leads to better informed and more relevant decisions.
- Helps young people feel valued, heard and respected.
- Builds trust, connection and a sense of belonging.
- Improves understanding of young people's needs and experiences.

When we include rangatahi and engage with them authentically, the outcomes are better for everyone.

# Consider the Mana Taiohi framework

Mana Taiohi is a principle-based framework for positive youth development in Aotearoa New Zealand.

When used in research with young people, it helps ensure the process supports the mana (dignity and authority), agency and wellbeing of young people, and creates enriching experiences.

**For research with young people, this could look like:**

- building authentic relationships and trust before collecting information
- supporting rangatahi agency and choice, including how they take part in research
- respecting aspirations and mana, and ensuring the research benefits rangatahi.

You can learn more about Mana Taiohi in the video opposite or explore the 'Introduction to Mana Taiohi' module on Sport Tutor.



Watch the [Ara Taiohi video](#) about the Mana Taiohi framework.

# Find your why

Grounding your approach in Mana Taiohi means being intentional about why you are seeking rangatahi voice and honest about how their perspectives will influence decisions.

## Get clear on your purpose

Before starting any research with young people, it's important to be clear about why you want to involve them.

Understanding your 'why' shapes the way you engage young people and the methods you choose. It also helps rangatahi understand the value of their contribution and how their voice will be used.

When you align your 'why' with the 'why' of rangatahi, engagement is more meaningful.

## Questions to consider



- What are we trying to learn and why does it matter?
- How will young people's input influence decisions or actions?
- How ready is our organisation to listen and act on what we hear?
- Why might rangatahi want to be involved and what outcomes do they hope to see?

# Youth engagement approaches

This table shows common approaches organisations use to involve young people in their work.

Research with rangatahi generally sits in the bottom 3 approaches, which are the focus of this resource.

While these sit at the 'influence' end of the spectrum, they are still valuable and can be used at different stages of a project to complement one another.

For example, research and feedback methods can help you hear from a wider and more diverse range of young people, including those who prefer anonymous or low-commitment ways of sharing their views.

Type of youth voice	Definition	Power
Youth board	A group of young people that meets regularly to discuss and make decisions on the immediate and long-term priorities of an organisation. They have full decision-making power and sometimes work alongside an adult board.	Full decision-making power ●●●
Youth board member	Elected member/s of an organisation's board that are equal to the other (adult) board members.	Full decision-making power ●●●
Associate/intern/ aspiring director or board member	Member/s of an organisation's board that do not have voting rights, usually part of a learning and development opportunity.	Influence only ●○○
Youth council	A group that regularly provides their opinions, ideas and feedback on matters put forward to them by an organisation. They may bring things to attention they feel are important to their peers. They may lead a specific project.	Some decision-making power ●●○
Youth commission	Same as a youth council, but they only come together for the length of a project.	Some decision-making power ●●○
Youth advisory group/board	Regularly provide their opinions, ideas and feedback on a specific matter or project.	Influence only ●○○
Focus group	Provide opinions, ideas or feedback. Engagement is usually a one-off, or for a specific project.	Influence only ●○○
Feedback	Through surveys, feedback forms and voting forms.	Influence only ●○○
Informal feedback	Casual conversations with young people or social media engagement (for example, Instagram polls, comments on posts).	Influence only ●○○

# Clarify your goals

There is no single 'right' method. The most effective method is the one that best fits your purpose, your audience and the type of insights you need.

Different methods support different ways of listening. Being intentional about how you gather insights helps ensure rangatahi can participate in ways that feel comfortable, respectful and meaningful – and that the information you gather is useful.

Before deciding how to engage:

- **Clarify your purpose**  
What do you need to learn and how will findings be used?
- **Identify your audience**  
Who do you need to hear from and why?
- **Be clear on value**  
How will participation benefit rangatahi?

**You may find it helpful  
to fill in these blanks**



The goals of this research are to

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so that we or our community can

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# Check existing data sources

Before starting your own research, take time to check what information already exists or whether existing tools could be adapted to gather what you need. This can help avoid duplication, make better use of what's already available and save you time.

A few examples of information available to you are covered below.

## Voice of Rangatahi and Voice of Tamariki

A set of surveys run by Regional Sports Trusts that explore how children and young people experience physical activity at school or kura and beyond.

The surveys provide insights into participation, enjoyment, inclusion, barriers and what supports positive physical activity experiences for rangatahi and tamariki across Aotearoa.

[Find out more](#)

## Voice of Participant

A survey run by National Sport Organisations that explores the experiences of participants within their sport at a club level.

It provides insights into how people experience their club environment, including satisfaction, belonging, fairness, safety, inclusion and areas where the participant experience could be improved.

[Find out more](#)

## Organisation-specific data

Your organisation may already hold useful information about young people, such as:

- participation data
- membership records
- feedback from programmes and events.

Reviewing existing data first can help avoid duplication and make better use of what's already available.

# Match methods to your goals and audience

Not every method works for every situation. Pick the one that best fits your purpose, audience and the kind of insights you're after. The most powerful research often **combines** a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches.



## Quantitative

**Type of research:** numbers based, countable or measurable, numerical data

**Goal:** to measure, predict, draw conclusions (how many, how much, how often)

**Sample size:** scalable to large groups

### When to use:

- when you need feedback from a lot of people, like a whole club or region
- when you want easily quantifiable feedback or trends of a population, or to measure or compare things.

**Examples:** surveys, questionnaires, registration forms.



## Qualitative

**Type of research:** understanding, exploratory or explanatory

**Goal:** to understand the what, how, why behind behaviour

**Sample size:** small

### When to use:

- just starting to explore a topic
- in-depth information or understanding
- can't reach participants with a survey.

**Examples:** interviews, focus groups, case studies, observations.

# Choose methods that connect

When grounded in Mana Taiohi, any research method can support quality engagement and connect with young people.

Traditional methods like surveys, focus groups and interviews still have real value. With some creativity, they can also be more engaging for rangatahi.

It's worth considering other methods that create safe spaces and support rangatahi to share what matters in their own way.

## Benefits of creative and inclusive methods



- Support different ways of communicating – not all young people express themselves through writing or formal discussion.
- Enable rangatahi to share te ao (their world of experiences, emotions and stories) in ways that feel authentic.
- Create safe, engaging and fun environments that support whai wāhitanga (participation and agency).
- Build trust and connection (whanaungatanga), leading to richer and more meaningful insight.
- Help ensure every voice is heard, not just the most confident.
- Lead to more authentic and insightful outcomes that support the mana of rangatahi.

# Match your method to insight type

These boxes highlight different methods and the type of insights they support to help you choose what best fits your needs.

Remember, there is no single 'right' method. The most effective method is the one that fits your purpose, audience and the type of insights you need.

More information about each method is in Part 2 of this resource.

## Quick views or preferences

Simple, fast activities that help young people share initial reactions, opinions or preferences with minimal effort.

**Methods:** [Polls](#), [Emoji cards](#), [Ping pong score](#), [Traffic lights](#), [Token survey](#)

## Ideas, experiences or stories

Creative and conversational methods that support rangatahi to share lived experiences, ideas and what matters to them in their own way.

**Methods:** [Interview](#), [Focus group](#), [Photo booth](#), [Drawing](#), [Photo cards](#), [What would they say?](#), [Think. Pair. Share](#), [Photo or video journal](#)

## Priorities or decisions

Interactive methods that help young people compare options, explore trade-offs and build shared understanding about what matters most.

**Methods:** [Vote with your feet](#), [Vote with your feet \(continuum\)](#), [What matters most](#), [Priority dots](#)

## Feedback, reflection or evaluation

Structured ways for young people to reflect on experiences, provide feedback and identify what is working or could be improved.

**Methods:** [Survey](#), [Graffiti wall](#), [Table curling](#), [Postcards](#), [Post-it note races](#), [Barriers wall](#), [Pin your thoughts](#), [Snowball fight](#), [Business cards](#), [Mood board](#)

# Find young people

Once you're clear on your purpose and method, consider how you will recruit young people to take part.

Go where rangatahi already are, using trusted connections where possible.

## Contact through existing programmes or memberships

Invite participants already involved in your programmes – they're familiar with your work and easier to reach.

## Partner with organisations that engage

Collaborate with schools, youth groups or community organisations to access a wider and more diverse audience.

## Social media outreach

Use platforms popular with young people, like Instagram and TikTok, to share opportunities in a way that feels authentic.

## Youth advisory groups

Tap into existing youth leadership structures – they often have motivated members keen to contribute.

## Snowball sampling

Ask participants to refer friends or peers – this helps you reach networks you might not otherwise access.

## Peer-led recruitment

Empower young people to lead the recruitment process – they know best how to connect with their peers.

## Events and community

Recruit at sports and recreation events, festivals or youth hubs where rangatahi naturally gather.

# How to engage young people

How you engage young people matters just as much as the method you use. Thoughtful, authentic engagement helps rangatahi feel respected, clear about their role and confident to contribute.

## Key considerations for engaging young people

### Use clear, plain language

Communicate in plain, strengths-based language and avoid jargon. If possible, involve young people in shaping messages.

### Acknowledge their contribution

Recognise the time, energy and expertise young people bring by offering something meaningful in return, such as kai, koha or learning opportunities.

### Be transparent about influence

Explain what decisions young people can shape, and what can and can't change.

### Set expectations early

Be clear about why you're engaging them, what you're asking of them and how their views will influence decisions.

## Some examples of acknowledgment



Source: [Youth Voices in Active Recreation and Sport](#)

# Online tools – things to consider

Online tools can be a powerful way to engage young people when you can't bring everyone together in person.

They promote inclusive participation, allow young people to engage from familiar spaces, and make it easier to hear from people across different locations and schedules, or with access needs.

Many of the methods in this resource, such as polls, graffiti walls, priority activities and reflection exercises, can be adapted for online or hybrid settings using simple digital platforms.

Examples include shared whiteboards, collaborative walls, break-out groups, live polling tools and chat-based activities.

## A reminder

Online tools are not a replacement for relationships. They work best when grounded in Mana Taiohi principles, supporting connection, care, participation and respect.

## Key considerations

When using online tools with rangatahi, it's important to be intentional about how you design and facilitate engagement.

### Keep it simple

Choose tools that are easy to use and don't require lots of set-up or instructions.

### Check access and comfort

Be mindful of device access, data limits and confidence using digital tools. Offer alternatives where possible.

### Prioritise safety and privacy

Be clear about how information will be used, who can see it and how long it will be kept. Avoid using personal messaging platforms unless appropriate safeguards are in place.

### Moderate with care

Set clear expectations for respectful behaviour and actively moderate shared spaces to keep them safe and inclusive.



# Create safe, uplifting spaces

When engaging in person, the environment you create shapes how comfortable rangatahi feel to share.

## Whanaungatanga

Take time to connect before collecting information. Trust is built through genuine relationships, not one-off interactions.

## Manaakitanga

Choose environments where young people feel comfortable, welcome and supported. Consider practical needs like kai, transport and comfort, and emotional safety throughout the process, including making it clear that opting out is always ok.

## Choose the right people to lead engagement

It's people, not organisations, who build trust. Ensure facilitators have the right skills, approach and support.

# Consider ethics and consent

Information shared by rangatahi is taonga (a treasure). When collecting and using it, we act as kaitiaki (guardians) and have a responsibility to protect people's rights, mana and wellbeing.

Grounding your approach in Mana Taiohi means thinking carefully about consent, privacy and potential harm, and ensuring the process leaves young people feeling respected and uplifted.

## Gaining consent

All engagement should begin with a clear introduction that explains:

- what the engagement is about and why it's happening
- what young people are being asked to do
- how their information will be used, shared and stored.

Consent must be:

- **informed** – people understand the purpose, benefits and any potential risks
- **voluntary** – participation is a choice and people can opt out at any time.



# Consider ethics and consent

## Minimising harm and enhancing mana

Before collecting information, think through how people might be harmed, emotionally, socially or culturally, and how you will reduce those risks.

This includes:

- avoiding methods that could cause discomfort or distress
- respecting mātauranga that may be considered tapu
- sharing findings in ways that uphold the mana of those involved
- have clear support pathways in place if engagement causes distress or harm.

## Protecting privacy

When collecting personal information, you are committing to protecting it. In New Zealand, all organisations must follow the Privacy Act 2020 and its principles.

This means:

- collecting only what you need
- storing information safely
- using information only for the purpose you've explained.

For more guidance on ethics, consent and privacy, refer to Sport NZ's [Introduction to Research Methods](#) learning modules.

# How you share results matters

Sharing findings with rangatahi is an important part of respectful practice. It helps build trust and genuine partnership (whanaungatanga), and it reinforces their agency (whai wāhitanga) and confidence that their voice matters.

## Good practice means:

### Share results in youth friendly formats

Share findings in ways that feel accessible and engaging – visuals, short videos, social media posts and simple summaries rather than long, written reports.

### Use clear, respectful language

Avoid jargon and technical terms. Explain ideas in plain language that reflects how young people talk and understand the world.

### Return findings in ways that uplift mana

Share insights in a way that respects young people's dignity, avoids blame or focusing on what's wrong and reflects their voices accurately.

### Be honest and transparent

Clearly explain what has changed, what will change, and what couldn't be changed and why.

### Involve rangatahi before finalising

Share draft findings with young people and invite them to help shape the insights or test interpretations before wider release.

# Key takeaways

## Putting youth voice into practice

Meaningful research with young people is about more than gathering information. It's about listening with intent, engaging with care and using the principles of Mana Taiohi to guide quality research that is respectful, empowering and inclusive of rangatahi.

- 1 Be clear on your purpose**  
Know why you're engaging young people and how their voices will influence decisions.
- 2 Choose methods that fit your goals and audience**  
There is no single 'right' method. Your approach depends on what you're trying to learn and who you want to hear from.
- 3 Create safe, uplifting spaces**  
Prioritise whanaungatanga and manaakitanga so young people feel comfortable to share.
- 4 Use Mana Taiohi to guide how you engage**  
Ground your approach in a values-based foundation for meaningful, ethical and respectful practice.
- 5 Engage with respect and transparency**  
Use clear language, set expectations early and be honest about influence and limits.
- 6 Close the loop**  
Share findings back in youth-friendly ways that uplift mana and show how rangatahi voices have made a difference.

# Part 2: Research methods



# Creative ways to hear from rangatahi

The methods that follow offer a range of creative, practical ways to hear from young people that support different communication styles, contexts and purposes.

Used with care and intent, these approaches can help rangatahi feel safe, respected and confident to share, and can lead to richer, more meaningful insights.

Each method can be adapted to suit your audience, setting and resources, and many can be used in-person, online or in hybrid ways.

Many of the methods have been adapted from the [Street Games Youth Voice Toolkit](#).

# Quick views or preferences

Simple, fast activities that help young people share initial reactions, opinions or preferences with minimal effort.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Page</b>
Polls	24
Emoji cards	25
Ping pong score	26
Traffic lights	27
Token survey	28

# Polls

## What

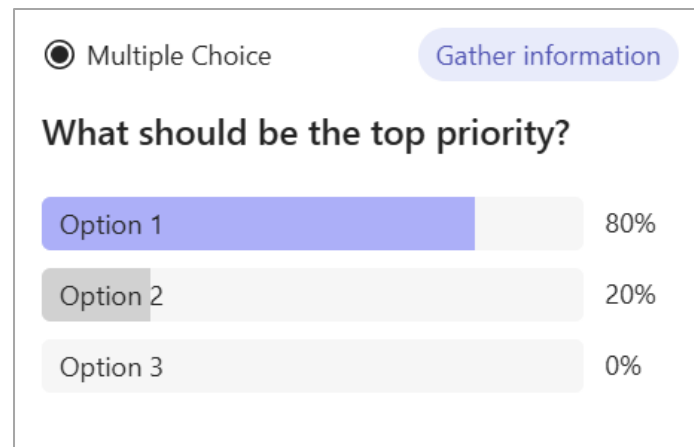
A quick way to capture immediate views or preferences using short, simple questions.

## When to use

- For quick check-ins or pulse-checks.
- As a warm-up or check-out.
- When time is limited.

## How to

- Prepare 1 to 3 clear, neutral questions.
- Ask questions verbally or use a polling tool.
- Invite everyone to respond at the same time.
- Show results immediately if possible and invite optional reflection.



## Tips

- Keep questions simple and age appropriate.
- Make participation optional.
- Reinforce there are no right or wrong answers.
- Polls are not just for in-person feedback – there are plenty of online tools available to help get real-time feedback and interaction, including Mentimeter, Kahoot, Microsoft Teams and Slido.

# Emoji cards

## What

Using images or symbols to help young people express feelings or reactions.

## When to use

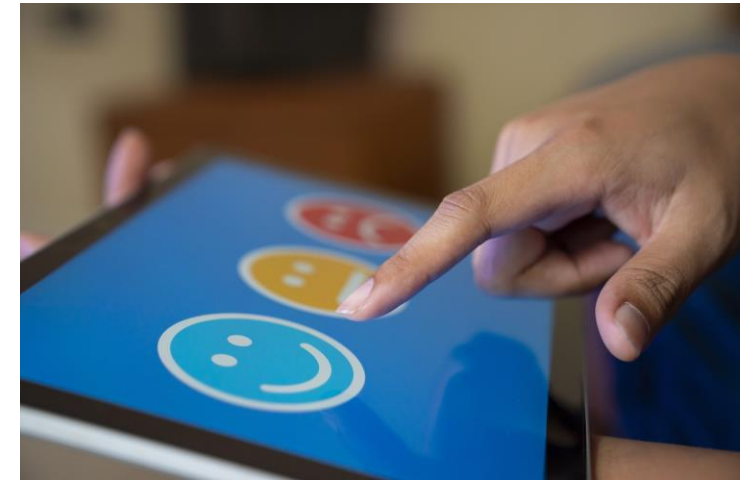
- With younger groups or mixed literacy levels.
- For check-ins, check-outs or experience feedback.

## How to

- Lay out or hand out emoji cards with thumbs up, thumbs down or variations of happy and sad faces.
- Ask a clear question or prompt.
- Invite participants to choose an emoji by holding up the emoji card that best reflects their feelings toward the question.
- Optionally invite explanation.

## Tips

- Let rangatahi explain what the image means to them.
- Passing is always ok.



# Ping pong score

## What

A game-based discussion activity where bouncing a ball into cups triggers questions or prompts for group conversation.

## When to use

- To spark conversation in a fun, low pressure way.
- To explore ideas, opinions or experiences without formal facilitation.

## How to

- Write a question, statement or scenario on the base of 6 or 10 large plastic cups with a different prompt on the bottom of each cup.
- Place the cups in a triangle formation at the end of a table.
- Invite participants to bounce a ping pong ball into the cups.
- Once a ball has landed in a cup, read the prompt aloud and use it to start a discussion.

## Tips

- Keep prompts open ended to encourage discussion.
- This could be an activity at an event – it doesn't have to be with a formal group.
- Be mindful of accessibility and offer alternative ways to take part.



# Traffic lights

## What

A visual way for young people to show how they feel using red, amber and green cards.

## When to use

- For quick check-ins or feedback.
- To get a sense of how a group is feeling at a glance.

## How to

- Give each participant a red, amber or green card.
- Explain what each colour represents in relation to the question being asked. For example, green for agreement, yellow for uncertainty and red for disagreement.
- Ask a clear question or statement.
- Invite participants to hold up the colour that best reflects how they feel.

## Tips

- Normalise mixed responses.
- Used colours to open conversations.



# Token survey

## What

A quick, anonymous activity where participants use tokens to respond to one or a small number of closed-ended questions.

## When to use

- When you want fast, straightforward feedback from a group.
- At events or workshops with a captive audience.
- When time is limited but you still want everyone to contribute.

## How to

- Develop one clear question with no more than three response options.
- Display the question on a large sheet of paper where everyone can see it.
- Label jars or containers with each response option.
- Provide participants with a token and invite them to place it in the jar that best reflects their response.
- Once everyone has had the chance to respond, count the tokens and record the results.

## Tips

- Decide whether you want jars to be clear with results visible or covered to reduce influence.
- Place different questions on different tables or use a single question as people arrive or leave.
- Use different coloured tokens to represent different groups like different ages or genders.



# Ideas, experiences or stories

Creative and conversational methods that support rangatahi to share lived experiences, ideas and what matters to them in their own way.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Page</b>
Interviews	30
Focus group	31
Photo booth	32
Drawing	33
Photo cards	34
What would they say?	35
Think. Pair. Share.	36
Photo or video journal	37

# Interview

## What

1-to-1 conversations that explore experiences and perspectives in depth.

## When to use

- When depth matters more than numbers.
- For sensitive or personal topics.

## How to

- Prepare open-ended questions linked to your purpose.
- Meet in a quiet, comfortable setting.
- Ask questions conversationally and listen actively.
- Close by explaining what happens next.

## Tips

- Consider whether you will have someone write notes while interviewing or if you will record the conversation to transcribe later.
- Build rapport before starting.
- Offer choice over format, time and location.

# Focus group

## What

Facilitated group discussions exploring shared experiences or ideas with a small group of people.

## When to use

- To explore a topic collectively.
- To gather in-depth information to help understand the what, how and why behind behaviour.

## How to

- Develop prompts or questions to guide discussion based on your purpose.
- Consider how you will gather feedback – it doesn't have to be all discussion, you can also use other creative methods.
- Bring together a small group (4–8 participants).
- Explain the purpose and set group agreements.
- Facilitate conversation and manage turn-taking.

## Tips

- Create a safe, respectful environment.
- Be mindful of power dynamics and invite quieter voices in.
- Consider sharing questions or topics with participants in advance so they feel prepared.



# Photo booth

## What

A visual method that uses photos to capture young people's views, messages or reflections in response to a prompt.

## When to use

- At events or workshops where you have a captive audience.
- To gather quick insights in an engaging, low-pressure way.
- To capture mood, sentiment or key messages at a point in time.

## How to

- Set up a simple photo booth space using a camera, tablet or phone on a stand or self timer.
- Provide a clear prompt like a sentence starter, question or message to respond to.
- Invite participants to write their response on a whiteboard, card or piece of paper.
- Participants take a photo of themselves holding their response.
- Collect the images and review them to identify key themes or messages.

## Tips

- Be explicit about consent and image use.
- Offer non-photo alternatives.
- You can also use a video as an alternative or additional option – invite young people to record themselves giving a response to a question.

# Drawing

## What

Using drawing to express ideas, experiences or feelings.

## When to use

- When words feel limiting.
- With younger participants.

## How to

- Provide drawing materials.
- Offer a clear prompt or question for young people to respond to.
- Allow quiet drawing time.
- Invite explanation if participants choose.

## Tips

- Emphasise there is no right or wrong.
- Focus on meaning, not skill.
- This can be used as part of a focus group or interview.



# Photo cards

## What

Using images as prompts for reflection or discussion.

## When to use

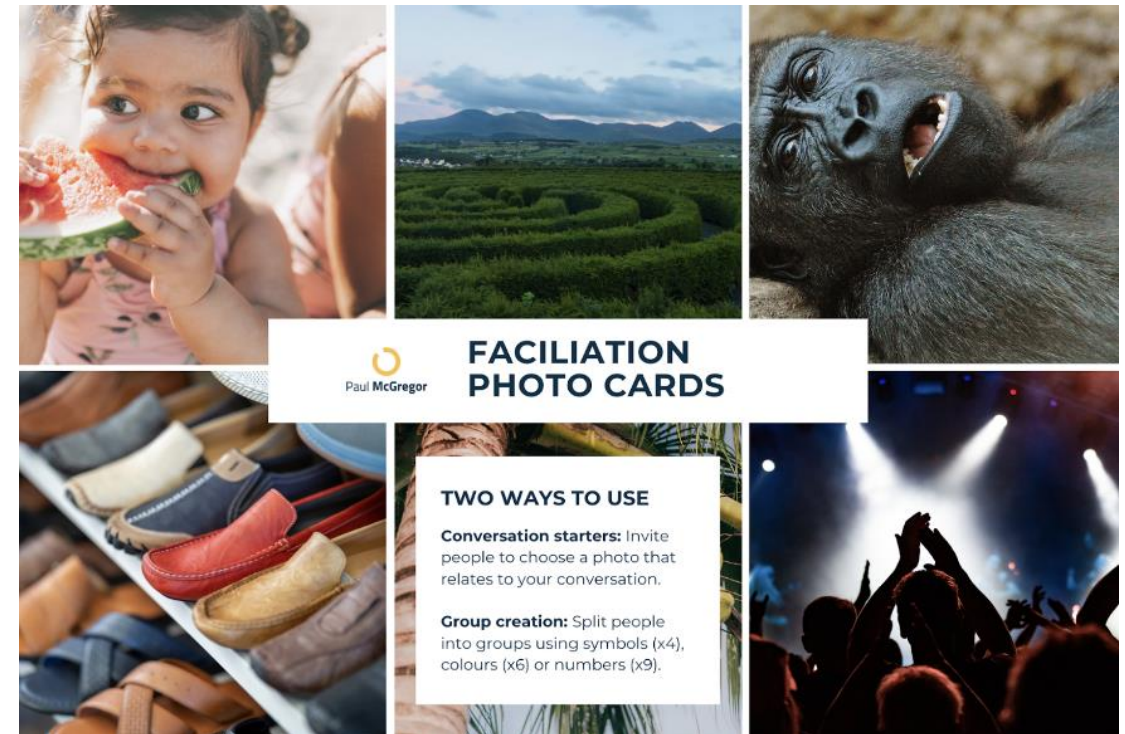
- To start conversations.
- When exploring abstract ideas.

## How to

- Spread out a range of images.
- Provide a question or prompt, like ‘Choose an image that captures how you would like a community space to make you feel.’
- Ask participants to choose an image.
- Invite them to explain their choice either with the whole group or in smaller groups.

## Tips

- Offer a range of diverse images – you can make your own photo cards or find [a set to print online](#).
- Avoid assuming meaning.



# What would they say?

## What

A group exercise that helps young people explore different perspective by imagining how others might think or respond.

## When to use

- To explore multiple viewpoints.

## How to

- A range of fictional people are created in advance to illustrate a diverse group of people.
- Introduce a scenario, question or challenge to the group.
- In small groups, each group must answer the question, putting themselves in the shoes of each of the fictional characters and trying to give the point of view of the fictional character, thinking about what they might say or feel.
- Ask what they might say or feel.
- Discuss responses together.

## Tips

- Keep characters strengths-based and encourage respectful discussion.
- Depending on the size of your group, each group can be all of the characters or a group can have 1 each.

# Think. Pair. Share.

## What

A simple discussion method that supports individual thinking before sharing ideas with others.

## When to use

- When confidence or comfort with speaking varies across the group.
- When you have a challenge or scenario that benefits from individual thinking first.

## How to

Present participants with a topic or problem to discuss, then give them:

- 2 minutes to think about the topic and make notes
- 2 minutes discussing as a pair
- 2 minutes sharing back to the group as a collective.

## Tips

- Let pairs form naturally.
- Give clear time cues so each stage stays focused.
- Encourage sharing themes or ideas, not personal or identifiable details.
- Be flexible – not everyone needs to share in the full group.

# Photo or video journal

## What

Capturing experiences in real time using photos or short videos.

## When to use

When you need real-time feedback as participants navigate a situation, environment or event.



## How to

- Invite participants to document their experiences over a set period, using photos or short videos in response to one or two clear prompts over a set period of time.
- Participants use their own devices to record images or short clips as they go about their day, event or activity.
- Ask participants to share these back in real time through messaging or social media hashtags, or collate them and share them back at the end of the set period.
- Ask participants to include brief reflections, either spoken or written, to explain what each image or video represents, to help you make meaning of the images.
- Use the content to guide a follow-up group or individual discussion.

## Tips

- Be clear on what types of content you want captured, how it will be used, and who will see it before starting.
- Avoid sharing identifiable images of others unless explicit permission has been given.
- Use secure, agreed upon platforms for sharing images or videos.
- Encourage participants to only share what they are comfortable with.

# Priorities or decisions

Interactive methods that help young people compare options, express what matters most and contribute to shared decision-making.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Page</b>
Vote with your feet	39
Vote with your feet (continuum)	40
What matters most	41
Priority dots	42

# Vote with your feet

## What

A physical activity where participants move to show agreement or preference.

## When to use

- To explore attitudes or opinions.
- When you have questions with clear answers like multiple choice or yes/no questions.

## How to

- Label positions in the room – either by just telling the group or using signs on the wall.
- Read out a statement or question.
- Ask participants to move to where they stand and record the number of people in each position.
- Invite voluntary reflection.

## Tips

- Start with a fun and easy question to get the group engaged. For example, 'What season do you like the best?'
- Ensure the movement options and spaces are accessible for all abilities.
- Normalise different positions – try to think of different ways that could help make people feel comfortable expressing their opinion rather than following the crowd.
- Once everyone has decided on their place you can ask questions of each group to explore why people have selected each position.

# Vote with your feet – continuum

## What

A variation of ‘vote with your feet’ using a scale like strongly agree to strongly disagree.

## When to use

- To explore strength of feeling.
- To surface nuance.

## How to

- Set up a visible line or scale.
- Explain what each end represents.
- Ask participants to position themselves.
- Invite optional sharing of why people have chosen where they are standing.

## Tips

- Begin with a fun and easy question to help settle people into the activity.
- Normalise different positions – try to think of different ways that could help make people feel comfortable expressing their opinion rather than following the crowd.



# What matters most

## What

A structured activity that uses a simple grid to help young people compare different options by considering how important different aspects are for each one.

## When to use

- When young people are choosing between a small number of options.
- For complex decisions where there are multiple factors to think about.

## How to

- Identify a small number of options you want to compare like programmes, ideas or locations.
- Agree on the aspects that matter most for this decision, like cost, enjoyment, accessibility and safety.
- Create a simple grid with options along 1 side and aspects across the top.
- Individually or in pairs, ask young people to consider each aspect and score how well each option meets it. For example, 1 = not at all important/doesn't meet it well, 5 = very important, meets it really well.
- Bring the group together and compare scores, discussing similarities, differences and reasoning.

## Tips

- Keep the number of options and aspects manageable to avoid overload.
- Encourage young people to explain their reasoning, especially where views differ.
- Be open to young people suggesting additional aspects that matter to them.

# Priority dots

## What

A simple visual activity that helps young people show what matters most by placing dots against different options or ideas.

## When to use

- To understand priorities or preferences.
- After generating lots of ideas and you need to see what stands out.
- To support shared decision-making.

## How to

- Clearly explain the question or decision the group is being asked to consider.
- Display the options or ideas where everyone can see them, like on a wall or board.
- Give each participant the same number of dots.
- Invite participants to place their dots on the options they feel are most important.
- Once voting is complete, review the results together and use them to prompt discussion.

## Tips

- Allow participants to place multiple dots on 1 option if they feel strongly.
- Use results as a starting point for a conversation, not the final decision.
- Be mindful of group dynamics and create space for different perspectives to be shared.



# Feedback, reflection and evaluation

Structured ways for young people to reflect on experiences, provide feedback and evaluate what is working or could be improved.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Page</b>
Survey	44
Graffiti wall	45
Table curling	46
Postcard	47
Post-it note races	48
Barriers wall	49
Pin your thoughts	50
Snowball fight	51
Business cards	52
Mood board	53

# Survey

## What

A structured set of questions that gathers views, experiences or opinions from a larger group of young people.

## When to use

- When you need input from many young people.
- To identify patterns or common experiences.
- When time limits deeper engagement.

## How to

- Clarify what you need to learn and draft clear, focused questions.
- Use mostly closed questions with a small number of open-text options.
- Share the survey digitally or on paper and allow time to complete.
- Explain how long it will take and what participation involves.

## Tips

- Keep surveys short and age-appropriate.
- Use plain, strengths-based language.
- Test questions with young people first.

For more information about creating great surveys check out our [online learning module](#).

# Graffiti wall

## What

A shared space where young people write or draw responses to prompts.

## When to use

- To gather lots of ideas quickly.
- In informal or drop-in settings.

## How to

- Display large paper or wall space.
- Write a question or prompt you'd like participants to respond to.
- Invite participants to add responses – this can be anonymous or they can write their names next to their responses.
- Allow time to read others' ideas.

## Tips

- Allow anonymity if helpful.
- Treat all contributions respectfully.



Image source: NZ Herald (2021) [Feedback wall a big hit](#).

# Table curling

## What

An interactive discussion activity that encourages young people to talk through ideas based on where a counter lands.

## When to use

- When you want to explore ideas, perspectives or experiences in a fun low-pressure way.

## How to

- On one end of the table, mark out zones with tape.
- Depending on what you are asking, each zone can be a question, statement or scenario.
- At the other end of the table, using a bottle top, coin or counter, push the counter using 1 finger into a zone.
- Whichever zone the counter lands in, speak around the topic.

## Tips

- For extra novelty, you could make the topic in each zone hidden.
- You could get the group to come up with the topics in each zone.

# Postcard

## What

Short written reflections captured on postcards.

## When to use

- When time is limited.
- For feedback or reflection.

## How to

- Provide postcards and a prompt – this could be a question or ask the participants to finish a sentence. For example, ‘What I really like about my local community is...’
- Allow time for writing – you can do this as part of 1 session or drop off the cards and invite young people to return them at a later date.
- Collect cards or have a ‘post box’ that people can drop the them into.

Tēnā koe Prime Minister, [redacted]

I think the one thing children and young people need to have good lives, now and in the future is...

*better job opportunities and Higher minimum wage so my parents have more time to spend with me, my brothers, and sisters. and stop schools from being racist and assuming bad things because i come from Otara, less school!!! More places to get away from all the bad stuff that happens in school and at home.*

**child & youth wellbeing**

To: Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

Tell us about yourself:

0 - 10 years old  
 11 - 17 years old  
 18+ years old

Māori  
 NZ European / Pākehā  
 Pacific  
 Asian  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Tips

- Allow anonymity.
- Include options for respondents to select to give you more information about their demographics.

Source: Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2019).  
[What makes a good life: Children and young people’s views on wellbeing](#)

# Post-it note races

## What

Fast-paced idea generation using sticky notes.

## When to use

- To energise groups.
- Early in engagement to generate lots of ideas.

## How to

- Divide group into equal teams and provide each group with sticky notes and pens.
- Provide a topic or question and set a clear time limit.
- Ask for 1 idea per note.
- Start the timer and each group races to provide as many different ideas on the topic as possible.
- You can either ask groups to place their notes on a wall or flip chart, or along a line on the ground starting from a 'start line' to make it more like a race.
- Collect and group notes, then facilitate a group discussion to summarise the ideas from the group.

## Tips

- Keep it playful.



# Barriers wall

## What

Identifying obstacles that affect participation or experience and solutions to address these obstacles.

## When to use

- To understand challenges.
- When designing improvements.

## How to

- Either draw a brick wall onto a flip chart and stick it on the wall or give out rectangular pieces of card or sticky notes that represent bricks.
- Introduce the topic you are exploring.
- Ask participants to write 1 barrier per brick and assemble it on the wall to form a 'brick wall'.
- Discuss common themes.
- For every barrier, on a paper shaped like a balloon or a different sticky note colour, write a solution to that barrier.

## Tips

- Validate the lived experiences of participants when exploring their barriers.



# Pin your thoughts

## What

Writing or drawing ideas and pinning them up.

## When to use

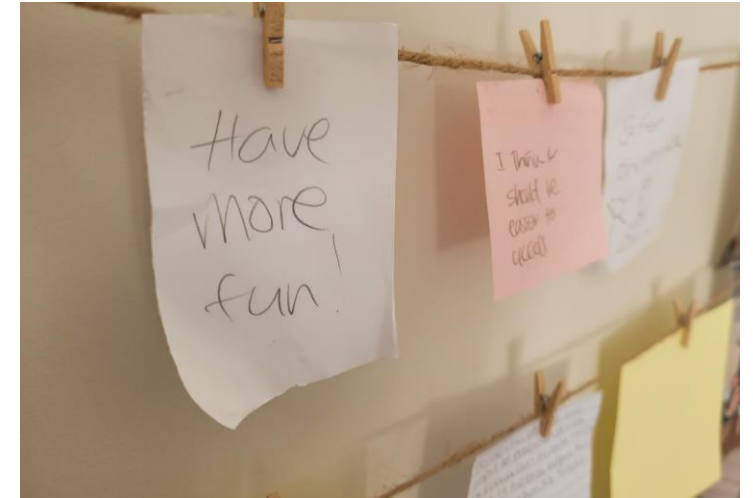
- For individual reflection.
- When you want lots of ideas quickly.

## How to

- Hang some string along a wall or across a room.
- Give each person 1 or 2 pegs, a pen and paper.
- Provide a topic or questions.
- Invite participants to write a word or small sentence on the paper and hang it on the string using the peg.
- Review together.

## Tips

- Allow self-paced participation.
- Treat all contributions respectfully.



# Snowball fight

## What

Sharing ideas or questions anonymously through a playful activity.

## When to use

- When you want honest input without putting people on the spot.
- When energy is low and you need a playful reset.
- To surface questions, concerns or ideas that people might not say out loud.

## How to

- Give everyone sticky notes or small pieces of paper.
- Ask the group to write down comments, statements or questions, depending on the purpose.
- Once they write their response, ask them to screw it up into 'snowballs' and for 30 seconds have a snowball fight.
- After 30 seconds, ask everyone to pick up the snowballs and split into smaller teams.
- Take turns to read out each piece of paper and discuss.
- Comments can be anonymous.

## Tips

- Set clear boundaries around respectful language and behaviour.
- Normalise different perspectives – no right or wrong answers.
- Have a plan for capturing key insights that emerge from discussions.



# Business cards

## What

A fast-paced activity that supports idea-sharing by pairing participants to briefly discuss and capture responses.

## When to use

- To gather a range of perspectives quickly within limited time.
- When you want to hear from everyone, not just the most confident voices.
- As an icebreaker or mid-session activity before deeper discussion.

## How to

- Ask participants to create 4 'business cards' by dividing an A4 sheet of paper into 4 cards and adding their name to the top of each.
- Introduce a question or prompt to the group for discussion.
- Participants pick a partner, swap their 'business card' and discuss the question for 30-60 seconds, making a note of their partner's answer during the conversation.
- Repeat with new partners until all sections are filled.
- After 4 rounds, gather and review the cards together to identify shared ideas and insights.

## Tips

- This can be done with 1 question for all 4 rounds, or 4 different questions.
- Focus the discussion on patterns and themes rather than individual comments.

# Mood board

## What

A collage representing feelings, ideas or aspirations in relation to a topic.

## When to use

- When visual expression or creative reflection is preferred.
- To explore how young people feel about a scenario.

## How to

- Provide each participant with a piece of paper and drawing or collage materials like pens, glue, newspapers, magazines and scissors.
- Provide a clear question or scenario using a description, image or short video.
- Invite young people to visually represent how the topic makes them feel using drawings, words, symbols or images.
- Allow time for quiet before inviting participants to explain their mood board if they choose.
- Discuss shared themes and differences across the group.

## Tips

- Can be done in pairs to enable participants to build off each others' ideas.
- Focus discussion on meaning and themes, not artistic ability.

