

Action Guide

CONSULTING WITH OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE

Finding out what other young people think is vital because young people are a diverse group and have different experiences, ideas and opinions.

It's important to consult with other young people so you can best represent them in your community, school or organisation. Consulting with other young people can be really valuable to find out if they feel the same way you do about an issue or project.

What is consultation?

It's giving young people a voice within the community so that we all have a say in what goes on – creating something that is suitable to everyone because everyone deserves an opinion to be listened to no matter what their age is.

YOUNG PERSON ON A STUDENT COUNCIL,
17 YEARS

Consultation is a tool used to gather views from a range of people, for a specific purpose. It helps and ensures a range of viewpoints can be heard and considered when decisions are being made.

Why should I consult with other young people?

When the [regional] council asked us about the bus service, we went out and surveyed young people in schools to see what they thought. They had lots of ideas and experiences we never had, and it made our feedback to the council stronger.

YOUTH COUNCILLOR, 18 YEARS

It's important to consult with other young people about decisions because:

- sometimes what you think is not what other young people think
- other young people will have different experiences
- having a collection of voices and not just one opinion can provide more credibility
- different groups of young people have expertise and knowledge about different issues.

When consulting with other young people about a specific topic or issue, gather the views and opinions from a range of young people who:

- could be most directly affected
- have the most direct experience.

For example, a group of young people identified an issue in their community. The group decided to survey other young people to see if this was an issue for them. The survey highlighted that this was an issue, so the group decided they would do something about it. Instead of just using their own views, this group consulted with other young people and asked if this was an issue for them.

When the council asked us about what to do with the skate park, I said we needed to ask skateboarders, as only one of us had ever been to the park before!

YOUTH COUNCILLOR, 17 YEARS

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One size does not fit everyone

Sometimes, decision-makers forget that young people have different life experiences and backgrounds. They may ask you to comment on something before you've had a chance to consult with other young people about their thoughts and opinions. If this is the case, you can:

- let them know that you are responding from your own personal opinion
- ask them for the opportunity to consult with other young people so you can gather a range of young people's thoughts and opinions on the topic.

Put yourself in their shoes

Before you begin your consultation, it's important to consider what other young people are thinking and put yourself in their shoes.

- Who is this person and what group are they from?
 - Introduce yourself and explain what the role of your group is.
- Why do they want my opinion on this?
 - Let them know why you have specifically asked for their opinion and why their opinion is important.
- Where will my thoughts and ideas go to?
 - Let them know where their voice will go and how you will feedback decisions and outcomes from the consultation.

How do you consult with other young people?

If you need to find out what other young people think about your local park, ask them.

If you need to find out what new sports equipment is needed for your school, ask the students.

EXAMPLE

A youth health advisory group surveyed young people in their health centre waiting room, asking them what they thought about the health services in their community.



WORK OUT YOUR PLAN

It's always a good idea to plan – the following steps will help you work out your plan.

EXAMPLE

CONSULTATION PLAN



MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATU WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI
Administered by the Ministry of Social Development

To download a copy of this form online, please go to:
www.myd.govt.co.nz

Step 1 WHAT	What do you need to know from young people?	<i>Ideas from young people on how to make the park safer.</i>
Step 2 WHY	Why is it important for young people to have a say on this topic?	<i>This is important because a lot of young people use the park and there has been a lot of negative publicity about the park being unsafe.</i>
Step 3 WHO	Who are the young people affected by this issue or who know the most about the topic?	<i>Young people who use the park.</i>
	Which young people's opinions do you need?	<i>Young people who live by the park but might not use it.</i>
Step 4 HOW	How will you find out what these young people think about the topic?	<i>Survey young people and ask questions about how they think the park can be made safer.</i>
Step 5 WHERE	Where do you need to go to do your consultation?	<i>Hand out the survey to students at the local park and deliver the survey to letterboxes in the surrounding neighbourhood.</i>
	Where are the young people you need to consult with?	
Step 6 WHEN	When is the best time to consult with these young people?	<i>After school hours.</i>
Step 7 FEEDBACK	How will you feedback the youth opinions you gather to the decision-makers?	<i>Write a letter to the city councillors summarising the feedback from young people.</i>
	How will you let young people know the outcome of their opinions?	<i>Write a letter directly to the young people involved. Write a media release and distribute to local media.</i>

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	Which young people's opinions do you need?	
Step 4 HOW	How will you find out what these young people think about the topic?	
Step 5 WHERE	Where do you need to go to do your consultation?	
	Where are the young people you need to consult with?	
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Step 7 FEEDBACK	How will you feedback the youth opinions you gather to the decision-makers?	
	How will you let young people know the outcome of their opinions?	

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Methods to use when consulting other young people

You can find out what other young people think on an issue or topic by:

- surveys
- focus groups
- interviewing young people
- online forums/blogs.

Let other young people know how they can have their say

You need to make sure other young people know how they can have their say. There are a variety of ways you can do this, including:

- word of mouth
- school notices
- talking to local youth groups and church groups
- handing out flyers at your mall or and at youth events
- talking to students at your school assembly
- posting information on the internet.

Contact the Ministry of Youth Development at mydinfo@myd.govt.nz if you want to promote through youth networks.

You have consulted with other young people – now what?

When you've consulted and gathered other young people's views, you will need to collate all the information and summarise what other young people have said. You can do this by:

- creating a PowerPoint presentation including the main messages
- writing a report
- producing a film/video (don't forget to get permission from the people you film).

Let other young people know the outcome

Keeping other young people updated on what's happening throughout the process and letting them know the decisions made is important, so let them know:

- how you presented the information to decision-makers
- what the decision-makers did with the information
- what decisions were made.

Update young people through:

- websites, e.g. Bebo, Facebook, www.myd.govt.nz
- newsletters, e.g. school, council, youth group.