

OUR GUIDE TO WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

This guide has been co-produced
by Highfurlong Special School's
Resilience Committee as part
of the Resilience Revolution.



The group consists of young people of varying ages and disabilities.
We want to share our expertise around the things we feel you can do to
improve the way in which you work alongside young people of all abilities.



Blackpool Council

#ResilienceRevolution

LOOK AT THE PERSON YOU SPEAK TO

It's really important that you look at us when you talk to us, it makes us feel involved in the conversation and therefore involved in the group.

When people don't look at us, we feel left out and ignored and it makes us feel unhappy. Don't worry, if we can't answer we will let you know!



Sometimes when I go to a restaurant, the waiter will ask my mum what I want to order, I'm 16 but it makes me feel like a small child. Just because I'm in a wheelchair it doesn't mean I can't talk, or order my own food.

Jack

COMMITMENT

We get excited to work with other people on new projects and build new relationships. We will commit 100% and we expect you to do the same. So, turn up when you say you will and be honest with us about what we're working on together. Be consistent and everything else will fall into place!



GET TO KNOW US FIRST

Come and visit us before diving straight in. You could watch how a lesson/session runs ordinarily, or just hang out with us in the canteen or common room. Try and listen and observe, pick up on how we like to communicate - and what makes us laugh!



Before Nathan came to work with us, he spent a break time hanging out with us in the common room. We played games, shared jokes and got to know each other. Once he started work with us, the games and jokes continued into our sessions!

Kieran

BE PREPARED TO LEARN FROM US

One of the things we love to do is teach adults, so don't be afraid of switching roles and learning from us too. It's not a weakness to not know all the answers, in fact we think it's a strength to recognise that other people may know something we don't and to enable them to share it with us.



PUPIL SAY

One thing you might pick up on quite quickly, is that not all of us can talk, but we still like to say how we feel and share our ideas. This might be electronically through iPads or sign language. Make sure you cater for everybody's abilities in the group and allow time for everybody to contribute.



TAKE THINGS SLOW

Sometimes we might need a little bit more time to think about things and get our point across, so be patient. Slowing down your communication can really help and taking things step by step. It's also worth thinking about doing fewer tasks and activities in a session...More doesn't always mean better - sometimes by doing less, we can produce more.



When I first began working with the committee, I quickly realised I was pitching the sessions too fast and too busy. I began to break my sessions down into two parts; a working activity and a fun activity and this really helped productivity and relationships.

Nathan

DON'T BE AFRAID OF SILENCE

Silence is OK! It doesn't mean we aren't enjoying ourselves. We might just be thinking things through, or working up the confidence to get involved. Or, one of us might be entering our thoughts into our iPad to speak for us. Don't forget, some of us might just enjoy listening to others too.



BE YOURSELF

We like to get to know people just like everyone else. Tell us a bit about what you like and don't like and a little bit about what your life is like outside of work – we love hearing stories, especially funny ones! Be yourself – we certainly won't judge you for it!



DON'T ASSUME OUR ABILITY



We've been written off at times in our lives and it doesn't feel good. Don't assume that we can't do something. Instead, talk to us about it, we may just have to be creative and go about things in a different way. And if there ever is something we just simply can't do – hey, at least we gave it a shot!

As a committee we have delivered presentations to over 150 people, we deliver training on disability awareness and we have also helped our Enterprise group bring in funding by hosting a panel of people for questions at our school.

Harrison

ALLOW FOR RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

You might have targets to reach, but we do too! Take time in the session to build on our relationships. Let us show you what we've been doing and what we're good at, let's chat about our interests and have a laugh. We work better when we're comfortable and feel valued.



GO WITH THE FLOW

Things don't always go to plan, so be prepared to adapt! Some of us may have to dash out of the room for physio, or medication, or to go to the bathroom. Some of us may feel that it's really important for you to hear a story. Some of us may take longer with an activity than you first thought – this is OK. Go with the flow!



Sometimes I have to leave the room. I feel so much better knowing that I can slip in and out of the session without feeling like I'm disrupting anything.

Rebecca

CONFIDENCE IS THE KEY

We know meeting new people can be daunting – but please try and be confident, being nervous or unsure makes us feel worried and a little distressed. When you're confident, it helps us – we feel cheerful, calm, happy and ready to go!



Created by Highfurlong and HeadStart Blackpool



**HEADSTART
BLACKPOOL**

**RESILIENCE
COMMITTEE**

Archie
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The Resilience Revolution, funded by the Big Lottery Community Fund, is a whole town approach to addressing the mental health needs of young people by utilising Boingboing's Resilient Therapy approach across education, health, social care, leisure, culture and community settings. It is a collaboration, led by a complex and passionate partnership between Blackpool Council, Boingboing, the Centre of Resilience for Social Justice at the University of Brighton and young people, parents, carers, schools and stakeholders across the town.



University of Brighton
Centre of Resilience for Social Justice

