

The Meaningful Conversations Framework

1. Trusting relationships set the foundation for meaningful conversations

Action 1.1:

Young people are treated as individuals with unique life stories and important life moments, past and present. This means engaging with them in a way that recognises and respects their care identities, without enforcing them.

Action 1.2:

Practitioners actively care for young people's mental health, supporting them to understand and communicate their feelings.

Action 1.3:

Practitioners take a strengths based approach. This means building a genuine understanding of each young person's needs, strengths and aspirations.

Action 1.4:

Practitioners are consistent in their presence, and can be relied upon by all young people on their caseload.

2. Meaningful conversations enable young people to actively participate in decision making

Action 2.1:

Practitioners provide opportunities for young people to have conversations when they need them. This means offering open channels of communication outside of formal meetings.

Action 2.2:

Wherever possible, conversations take place in safe spaces. This means they should be private, informal, unpressured and not scary or disruptive (e.g. not in the presence of carers or during school).

Action 2.3:

Practitioners help young people make informed decisions by providing them with appropriate and accessible information. Young people are supported to understand the information and ask questions before decisions are made.

Action 2.4:

Practitioners actively listen to young people. This means concentrating, understanding, reflecting back and responding to what they say.

Action 2.5:

Practitioners make it clear to young people that their participation in decisions is valued and will be taken seriously.

3. Decisions are made based on young people's perspectives

Action 3.1:

Practitioners actively represent young people's perspectives. This means continuously using their views as evidence to challenge professional assumptions and inform decisions at every stage.

Action 3.2:

Practitioners recognise when they are not the best representative, and work with the young person to identify who is (e.g. themselves, a trusted adult, a befriender, or an advocate).

Action 3.3:

Once a decision is made, practitioners explain to young people how their perspectives shaped it. Where their perspectives were not acted upon, practitioners explain why.