AMP's Top Ten Tips for Engaging with Young People

= **Examples of What to Say**

= **Examples of What NOT to Say**

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1

Ask one open-ended question and STOP! Avoid stacking questions or capping an open-ended question that is immediately followed by a closed-ended question, suggestion or a lengthy explanation.

What do you like to do for fun?

What do you like to do for fun? Do you like to hang out with your friends?

What type of support do you want?

What type of support do you want? I bet your uncle would be willing to help.

What do you think the steps are for renting an apartment?

What do you think the steps are for renting an apartment? When renting an apartment there are lots of things to consider like location, cost, eligibility, roommates, and terms of the lease.

2

Ask a question before offering a suggestion. If you think that the young person might be missing something or needs more information, guide them to it by asking questions rather than telling them what to do or what to consider.

I wonder if there might be a fee to sign up for the drama class?

You can ask your caseworker if she can pay for the drama class fee.

How do you plan on getting there?

You'll probably need to take the bus to get there.

What would you say if your girlfriend says...

You could try telling your girlfriend...

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3

Follow up with a question or reflection any time a young person says something that seems particularly important, meaningful, or personal; or takes a risk, or mentions something more than once.

It sounds like you really enjoy drawing.

So what I am hearing you say is that you don't like your new school because it has been hard to make new friends.

It seems like getting your nose pierced is something you have been thinking about doing for a while.

I could imagine that snowboarding is both fun and scary.

4

Keep it conversational. When you are doing a worksheet or a structured piece of curriculum with a young person try to make it more conversational by using reflections; follow up questions; and positive body language, like nodding your head, to show that you are genuinely interested in what they are talking about. Sometimes it's okay to "just go with it" if you and the youth get off track; this can build rapport. You can always gently redirect them by using a reflection or open-ended question.

How long have you been doing...

What's your favorite thing about...

It sounds like ____ is really important to you.

5

Make sure the praise is purposeful when you give the young person praise or highlight one of their strengths. Try to avoid only giving one word responses like "awesome," "nice," or "cool."

That's awesome that you reworked your paper and were able to bring your grade up from a C to an A.

I thought you did an excellent job sharing your activity with the team.

It takes a lot of courage to walk into a party where you don't know anyone.

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6

Congratulate the young person every step of the way to achieving their goals. The smaller steps are just as important, so make sure to acknowledge and celebrate those, too.

Wow, that's great that you got into the massage therapy program. I know you spent a lot of time researching the program and putting together your application.

Thanks for all of your hard work today.

Nice job drafting your plan. I know you put a lot of effort into this.

That's great that you made some progress on your activity over the weekend.

7

Highlight all of the goals, ideas, strengths, and activities that the young person comes up with. Avoid showing preference for the things that you agree with or feel like the young person should be working towards.

This is an impressive list of strengths.

I think out of all the ideas that you came up with, it makes the most sense for you to focus on getting a part-time job since that is something your mom really wants you to do.

You have brainstormed a lot of great ideas for potential next steps.

I like that idea. You should do that.

8

Prompt the young person to think about the support they might want to do something. This is especially important when the young person is planning on doing a difficult task or trying something new. Make sure that the young person is the one deciding on who they want to support them and how they would like to be supported.

Would you like some support with that?

Who would you like to support you?

How can they support you?

Is there anything I can do to be supportive?

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9

Check to see if the young person has any other ideas to add before prompting the young person to move on to a new topic. This is especially important when the young person is brainstorming.

Can you think of any other action steps related to your goal?

What do you think your friends might say some of your strengths are?

Is there anyone else you would like to ask for support?

10

Ask the young person if they would like to do the writing if you are making some kind of take-away document or notes. If you are writing for the young person make sure that you are using words they choose. Avoid paraphrasing or summarizing their ideas for them. Instead encourage the young person to think about exactly how they want things to be recorded.

Would you like to write?

How do you want me to write that?

Do you want me to write that down?

Could you look this over and make sure that I got everything down correctly?

Could you repeat that? I want to make sure that I'm writing things down in your words.

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