



Youth co-research readiness self-assessment tool

Adapted from VicHealth

Engaging in co-research requires organisational and team-level support. A review of readiness at both levels will assist to build the commitment and confidence to achieve successful in co-research with young people.

Use the self-assessment tool below to gauge your level of readiness to commence co-research with young people. This can help you to consider what you need to have in place or start working towards.

If you don't have all of these things in place, you might trial co-research, whilst being clear with those involved about the parameters you are working within and how these might limit the process.

The traffic light rating system can help your team and organisation to see where you are ready (or on the way) to starting co-research with young people.

Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If most of your ratings are red, consider implementing meaningful youth engagement at different points in the research cycle, with the aim of upskilling yourself and your organisation to be better placed to implement co-research for a future project.• You may want to think about how you can advocate for co-research in your organisation/team.
Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the majority of your ratings are amber, you have a lot of things in motion which will help create an enabling environment for co-research.• You might need to spend a little more time preparing your organisation and your team. There will be a lot of things to learn on the way, but by the time you reflect and continuously improve, you should be able to implement a meaningful process which benefits research and young people alike.
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the majority of your ratings are green, you are in a good place to start co-research.• Don't make the mistake of thinking you know it all – there will still be challenges and lots of things to learn along the way. But you are positioned to start strongly.

Assessing your organisation



Assessment criteria	Red	Amber	Green
1. Our organisation is committed to valuing and advocating for involving young people in meaningful youth researcher roles.			
2. Our organisation is willing to value young people by providing appropriate remuneration.			
3. Our organisation can dedicate adequate resourcing and time to support researchers and young people involved in co-research.			
4. Our organisation is committed to including diverse young people in co-research, and self-determination for young people with a lived experience (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and LGBTIQ+ young people).			
5. Our organisation is prepared to make reasonable adjustments to support the involvement of young people who experience participation barriers.			
6. Our organisation has assessed the risks involved in co-research from a physical, organisational and mental wellbeing perspective and will create controls to address these.			

Assessing your organisation



Assessment criteria	Red	Amber	Green
7. Our organisation understands that co-research is time-intensive and there needs to be a long-term commitment to an authentic process			
8. Our organisation is committed to continuous learning and improvement, even if this happens through making mistakes and trying again.			
9. Our organisation will take tangible steps towards being a collaborative and authentic partner with other organisations who have different kinds of youth expertise to us. We will share knowledge, information, resources and be committed to working together with others to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. Sometimes this means that we will need to follow, listen and not take credit for others' contributions			
10. Our organisation has policies, procedures, training and accountability mechanisms in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people during their involvement with us, and we will communicate these things to young people upfront.			

Assessing your team



Assessment criteria	Red	Amber	Green
1. Our team is committed to involving diverse young people in co-research in ways that are meaningful to them.			
2. Our team has a shared understanding of the fundamentals of co-research, and is committed to sharing and redistributing power with young people, building relationships and managing challenges creatively.			
3. Our team has invested time in preparing ourselves and the work environment so that young people have the information and support to meaningfully participate in co-research.			
4. Our team has the resources, skills, knowledge and experience to safely and meaningfully engage with young people in research roles.			
5. Our team is committed to continuous learning and improvement, and have built in ways to reflect on our practice.			
6. Our team values the diverse knowledge and expertise that young people bring, including lived experience expertise. We are open to learning new ways of working and thinking from young people.			
7. Our team has assessed the risks involved in co-research from a physical, organisational and mental wellbeing perspective and will create controls to address these.			

Assessing your team



Assessment criteria	Red	Amber	Green
8. Our team has taken the time to undergo necessary consultation, self-education and preparation to safely and appropriately engage any young people with a lived experience who are involved in research (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and young people with disability). We have a plan and are prepared to respond to any reasonable adjustments which need to be made along the way to ensure the full participation of the unique young people involved.			
9. Our team is committed to the reality that co-research will be a mutual learning experience, with unpredictable developments and outcomes. We are prepared to give the time and bring the courage required to navigate this together. We have considered carefully (with young people and any other partners) how we will communicate and make shared decisions along the way.			
10. Our organisation has policies, procedures, training and accountability mechanisms in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people during their involvement with us, and we will communicate these things to young people upfront.			
11. Our team is familiar with policies, procedures, training and accountability mechanisms in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people (especially young people under 18) during their involvement with us, and we will communicate these things to young people upfront.			
12. Our team recognises that whilst we seek to genuinely co-research with young people as research collaborators, we maintain responsibility for responding to issues or concerns. We are responsible for establishing and communicating expectations around things which are non-negotiable (such as timeframes or budgets).			
13. Our team has identified some 'critical friends' (with experience in co-research and/or youth engagement) who can help guide us through this process.			