

Title: Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground

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Approved By: Fynix Project Leadership Team

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Darryl Craig

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# FYNIX PROJECT

## SUPPORTING YOUNG MINDS: FINDING YOUR GROUND

### Youth Emotional Awareness, Resilience & Wellbeing Learning Framework

A Trauma-Informed, Evidence-Informed and Safeguarding-Aware Programme  
for Young People Aged 12–17, Resilience & Wellbeing Programme

Helping Young People Build Confidence, Resilience and Emotional Awareness Through  
Safe, Inclusive and Evidence-Informed Learning

**Rise Through Lived Experience**

Developed by Fynix Project

# **SUPPORTING YOUNG MINDS: FINDING YOUR GROUND**

## **Youth Emotional Awareness, Resilience & Wellbeing Learning Framework**

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**Age Range:** 12–17

**Programme Type:** Trauma-informed, evidence-informed, safeguarding-aware emotional wellbeing education programme

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# Delivery Settings

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed for flexible delivery across a range of youth, education, care, community and wellbeing environments.

The programme may be delivered within:

- Schools
- Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)
- Alternative Provision settings
- Youth services
- Residential children's homes
- Local authority services
- Early Help services
- Youth justice services
- Community organisations
- Charities
- CAMHS-adjacent wellbeing services
- Inclusion-focused educational settings
- Multi-agency youth wellbeing environments

The programme is designed to remain adaptable whilst maintaining a clear, consistent and safeguarding-aware framework across all delivery settings.

This flexibility reflects a growing body of evidence demonstrating that emotional wellbeing, resilience and emotional regulation programmes can be successfully delivered across a range of educational, community and youth-facing environments. Research has highlighted the important role that schools, youth services and community settings can play in promoting wellbeing, strengthening resilience and supporting positive developmental outcomes for young people (Avery et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2021; Malvaso et al., 2024).

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has therefore been designed to operate effectively wherever young people learn, grow and access support, whilst remaining grounded in trauma-informed, strengths-based and psychologically safe practice.

---

## Programme Positioning

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is a trauma-informed, evidence-informed, safeguarding-aware and prevention-focused emotional wellbeing programme designed for young people aged 12–17.

At its heart, the programme exists to help young people better understand themselves.

Many young people are navigating increasing emotional, social and environmental pressures. School demands, family challenges, friendship difficulties, social media, uncertainty about the future and wider life experiences can all influence how a young person feels, thinks and responds to the world around them.

Despite this, many young people are never given structured opportunities to learn about emotions, stress responses, confidence, communication, resilience or emotional wellbeing in a way that feels practical, relevant and accessible.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed to help address that gap.

The programme creates safe opportunities for young people to develop emotional awareness, strengthen resilience, recognise personal strengths, understand stress responses and build practical wellbeing skills that can support them in everyday life.

The evidence supporting this approach is substantial. A meta-analysis involving 3,891 children and young people found that interventions focused on emotional regulation produced significant improvements in emotional wellbeing and broader mental health outcomes (Espenes et al., 2024). Similarly, a systematic review and meta-analysis of resilience programmes found that structured resilience-building interventions can strengthen resilience in adolescents, with benefits maintained beyond programme completion (Matheus Pinto et al., 2021).

The programme is intentionally practical.

Young people are never expected to disclose personal experiences, revisit trauma or share information beyond their comfort level. Instead, the focus remains on learning, reflection, skill development and self-understanding within a psychologically safe environment.

This reflects evidence demonstrating that psychoeducational approaches can improve emotional awareness, emotional regulation and resilience without requiring clinical intervention. Studies conducted within educational settings have reported improvements in emotional competence, emotional awareness, resilience and wellbeing through structured learning programmes delivered in schools and youth environments (Garcia Blanc et al., 2024; Aryani et al., 2025).

Fynix Project recognises that many young people are growing up within complex emotional, social and environmental pressures. Some may be navigating school stress, family difficulties, social anxiety, adversity, neurodiversity, care experience, grief, safeguarding concerns or wider wellbeing challenges.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has therefore been designed to offer emotionally safe, non-judgemental and strengths-based learning that meets young people where they are.

This approach aligns with the wider evidence base surrounding trauma-informed practice. Watson and Astor (2025) identified safety, strengths-based practice, empowerment and collaborative relationships as core features of effective trauma-informed environments. Similarly, Avery et al. (2020) highlighted the role of schools and youth settings in helping to reduce the impact of adversity and support healthy emotional development.

The programme is not designed to pathologise young people, diagnose difficulties or treat mental health conditions.

It does not position normal emotional responses as problems to be fixed.

Instead, it helps young people understand that emotions are part of being human, that stress responses can be understood rather than feared and that practical wellbeing skills can support confidence, emotional steadiness and personal growth.

This position is consistent with prevention-focused mental health research, which highlights the importance of providing emotional wellbeing education before difficulties escalate into crisis and before specialist intervention becomes necessary (Farrell & Barrett, 2007; Wells et al., 2003).

Whilst the evidence base supporting trauma-informed, psychoeducational and resilience-focused approaches continues to grow, several reviews note that further high-quality research is still needed, particularly in relation to non-clinician delivered interventions and whole-setting trauma-informed approaches (Avery et al., 2024; Watson & Astor, 2025). Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has therefore been developed as an evidence-informed programme that draws upon current research, emerging best practice and lived experience whilst remaining firmly educational, non-clinical and safeguarding-aware.

---

## **Educational and Non-Clinical Positioning**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground remains educational, psychoeducational and non-clinical throughout all aspects of delivery.

The programme is not:

- Therapy
- Counselling
- Clinical intervention
- Trauma processing
- Diagnostic assessment
- Crisis support
- A replacement for CAMHS
- A replacement for specialist mental health services
- A replacement for safeguarding systems
- A replacement for statutory intervention
- A replacement for youth justice, substance misuse or specialist support pathways

Instead, the programme is designed to complement existing support systems by providing structured emotional wellbeing education within clear safeguarding, professional and ethical boundaries.

This positioning is deliberate.

Research consistently distinguishes trauma-informed educational approaches from trauma-specific clinical interventions. Trauma-informed approaches focus on safety, understanding, empowerment, resilience and skill development, whilst trauma-specific interventions are designed to assess, process or treat trauma experiences (Maynard et al., 2019).

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground operates firmly within educational and psychoeducational boundaries.

The programme focuses on increasing emotional awareness, improving understanding of stress and wellbeing, strengthening resilience and helping young people build practical coping skills that can support everyday life.

Research examining psychoeducational approaches with adolescents has demonstrated meaningful improvements in emotional understanding, emotional regulation and wellbeing outcomes through structured educational delivery (Aryani et al., 2025).

Where a young person requires additional support, safeguarding intervention, specialist services or crisis support, facilitators work within Fynix Project safeguarding procedures and the safeguarding arrangements of the host organisation.

---

# The Fynix Position

At Fynix Project, we believe young people should not have to reach crisis point before they are given language, tools and understanding to support their wellbeing.

Emotional awareness, confidence, communication and resilience are not optional extras.

They are life skills.

Research consistently highlights the importance of prevention-focused approaches that help young people develop emotional wellbeing skills before difficulties become entrenched or require specialist intervention (Farrell & Barrett, 2007; Serazzi et al., 2024).

We believe every young person deserves access to practical, accessible and emotionally safe learning that helps them:

- Understand what they are feeling
- Recognise what their body and nervous system may be communicating
- Build confidence in who they are
- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Strengthen resilience
- Recognise and build upon existing strengths
- Know when and how to seek support

Research examining emotional intelligence, emotional regulation and resilience programmes suggests that structured skills-based interventions can support the development of resilience, emotional awareness and wellbeing over time (Cerit & Şimşek, 2021; Cardona-Isaza et al., 2025).

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground exists to give young people access to practical, human and emotionally safe learning that helps them recognise what is happening inside them, understand their responses, build confidence in who they are and find steadier ground when life feels difficult.

The programme is grounded in compassion, lived experience, safeguarding awareness, professional responsibility and evidence-informed practice.

It is designed to be clear enough for commissioners, robust enough for safeguarding environments, flexible enough for real-world youth settings and human enough for young people to genuinely connect with.

Julies (2024) describes emotionally safe and trauma-informed learning environments as places that prioritise safety and connection as foundations for emotional, social and cognitive wellbeing. Those principles sit at the heart of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

Ultimately, this programme is not about fixing young people.

It is about helping young people find their ground, recognise their strengths, build their toolkit and move forward with confidence.

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## **PART 1**

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# **FOUNDATIONS OF THE PROGRAMME**

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## **Chapter 1**

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# **Introduction to Supporting Young Minds**

## **Purpose of This Programme**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground was developed in response to a growing need for accessible, prevention-focused emotional wellbeing education for young people.

Across schools, youth services, residential care settings and community organisations, increasing numbers of young people are navigating emotional, social and environmental pressures that can affect confidence, wellbeing,

communication, relationships and participation in everyday life. Professionals working alongside young people frequently report concerns relating to anxiety, emotional distress, emotional dysregulation, low self-esteem, attendance difficulties and wider wellbeing challenges.

At the same time, many organisations are seeking practical, safeguarding-aware approaches that support emotional wellbeing without requiring clinical intervention or specialist mental health provision.

Research reflects this reality. Serazzi, Barbic and Stranges (2024) found that whilst mental health difficulties are increasing amongst adolescents and young adults, relatively few large-scale prevention and emotional education programmes have been implemented internationally. This creates a significant gap between the level of need experienced by young people and the availability of accessible, non-clinical support.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed to help address that gap.

The programme provides structured, emotionally safe and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that help young people better understand themselves, their emotions and their wellbeing.

Participants are supported to develop greater understanding of:

- Emotions and emotional awareness
- Stress and stress responses
- Communication and relationships
- Confidence and self-belief
- Resilience and coping strategies
- Grounding and self-regulation skills

The programme is intentionally educational and prevention-focused.

Rather than waiting until difficulties escalate into crisis, Supporting Young Minds aims to support earlier emotional awareness, emotional literacy and wellbeing understanding that may help young people navigate challenges more confidently throughout adolescence and beyond.

This approach is supported by prevention-focused research. Farrell and Barrett (2007) found that prevention programmes provide a meaningful and cost-effective way of supporting young people before difficulties become entrenched and noted that many young people experiencing emotional difficulties never access formal mental health services. Accessible wellbeing education is therefore not simply an alternative to support; it is an important form of support in its own right.

At Fynix Project, we believe young people should not have to reach crisis point before they are given language, tools and understanding to support their wellbeing.

Emotional awareness, confidence, communication and resilience are not optional extras.

They are life skills.

## **Why the Programme Was Created**

Fynix Project was founded on the belief that wellbeing support should be practical, accessible and grounded in real-world experience.

Through our work across mental health, trauma-informed practice, community engagement and wellbeing education, we have repeatedly encountered the same challenge: many young people are expected to navigate increasingly complex emotional experiences without ever being taught how emotions work, how stress affects the body or how to recognise and respond to overwhelm in healthy ways.

Many young people receive education about physical health, academic achievement and future careers, yet comparatively few receive structured opportunities to understand emotional wellbeing in practical, everyday terms.

Research suggests this matters. Conderman and colleagues (2020) reported that almost one in three adolescents experience stress or anxiety at a level that affects their ability to cope with daily life demands. Yet many professionals report limited confidence, training or resources to respond effectively to emotional wellbeing needs.

The combination of increasing emotional pressures and limited access to preventative wellbeing education creates a gap that Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground seeks to address.

Whilst specialist services remain essential for those requiring clinical intervention, there is also a need for emotionally safe educational opportunities that help young people build understanding, confidence and practical wellbeing skills before difficulties become increasingly entrenched.

Supporting Young Minds was therefore developed to help young people:

- Understand emotions
- Recognise stress responses
- Develop emotional vocabulary
- Build confidence

- Improve communication
- Explore healthy coping strategies
- Strengthen resilience
- Learn grounding and self-regulation techniques
- Increase self-awareness
- Develop wellbeing literacy

The programme reflects Fynix Project's commitment to creating accessible wellbeing education that supports young people without pathologising normal human experiences.

## **Current Challenges Facing Young People**

Adolescence is a period of significant growth, development and change.

Young people are navigating identity formation, increasing independence, educational pressures, social expectations, online environments, family dynamics and future aspirations whilst simultaneously developing the emotional, cognitive and social skills needed to manage these experiences.

This developmental stage offers enormous opportunities for growth, but it can also create periods of uncertainty, vulnerability and challenge.

Research highlights the importance of this period. Avery and colleagues (2020) found that excessive or prolonged activation of stress responses during development can affect learning, behaviour, relationships, mental health and wider wellbeing outcomes.

Adolescence is not simply a transition between childhood and adulthood.

It is a period during which many of the foundations for lifelong emotional wellbeing, resilience and self-understanding are actively being developed.

Many young people are also living within wider circumstances that may include:

- Social and economic pressures
- Family instability
- Care experience
- Housing insecurity
- Bereavement
- Trauma and adversity
- Bullying
- Online harms
- Neurodiversity
- Safeguarding concerns
- Community and environmental stressors

These experiences do not affect every young person in the same way. However, they highlight the importance of creating emotionally safe environments where young people can develop greater understanding of themselves and their wellbeing.

Watson and Astor (2025) identified psychological safety, strengths-based practice, collaboration and empowerment as core features of effective trauma-informed environments. These principles are embedded throughout Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

The programme recognises that emotional wellbeing is shaped by many different factors and that there is no single solution to the challenges young people may face.

Instead, it seeks to provide practical, developmentally appropriate learning that supports emotional awareness, resilience and self-understanding within everyday life.

## **Mental Wellbeing Pressures**

Young people today are exposed to a wide range of pressures that previous generations may not have experienced in the same way or at the same scale.

These pressures may include:

- Academic expectations
- Examination stress
- Social media influences
- Online comparison
- Friendship difficulties
- Family challenges
- Future uncertainty
- Community pressures
- Identity exploration
- Financial concerns
- Exposure to distressing online content

Pressure itself is not inherently harmful. Challenge can support growth, learning and development.

However, ongoing stress without appropriate understanding, support or coping strategies can affect confidence, wellbeing and participation.

Zisopoulou and Varvogli (2022) found increasing levels of stress and anxiety amongst children and adolescents and highlighted the effectiveness of

structured, accessible stress-management approaches delivered within educational and community settings.

Supporting Young Minds aims to help young people better understand stress, recognise personal warning signs and develop practical strategies that may support wellbeing during challenging periods.

## **Emotional Literacy Needs**

Emotional literacy refers to the ability to recognise, understand and communicate emotions effectively.

Many young people can identify whether they feel "good" or "bad" but may have had limited opportunities to develop the language and understanding needed to describe emotional experiences in greater depth.

Without emotional vocabulary it can become more difficult to:

- Communicate needs
- Seek support
- Understand reactions
- Manage stress
- Build healthy relationships
- Reflect on experiences

The evidence supporting emotional literacy development is substantial.

Garcia Blanc and colleagues (2024) found that a structured emotional competencies programme delivered to secondary school students improved emotional awareness, emotional regulation and resilience whilst reducing anxiety. Similarly, Espenes and colleagues (2024) found significant improvements in emotional regulation outcomes across a meta-analysis involving nearly 4,000 children and young people.

Supporting Young Minds places emotional literacy at the centre of learning.

Throughout the programme, participants are encouraged to expand emotional vocabulary, develop greater awareness of emotions and recognise that all emotions serve a purpose.

The goal is not to eliminate difficult emotions.

The goal is to better understand them.

## **Prevention-Focused Wellbeing Approaches**

Fynix Project believes that emotional wellbeing education should not begin only when difficulties become severe.

Prevention-focused approaches aim to provide young people with knowledge, skills and awareness that may support wellbeing before challenges escalate.

Research supports this position.

Wells, Barlow and Stewart-Brown (2003) found that programmes promoting positive mental health within accessible, non-stigmatising settings were consistently more effective than brief, crisis-focused approaches.

This evidence directly supports the positioning of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground as a prevention-focused educational programme.

The programme helps young people:

- Develop emotional awareness
- Understand stress responses
- Build confidence
- Improve communication
- Strengthen resilience
- Learn practical coping strategies

This approach complements existing support systems whilst remaining firmly within educational and non-clinical boundaries.

## **Early Intervention Principles**

Supporting Young Minds is informed by the principle that earlier emotional awareness can contribute positively to wellbeing, confidence and help-seeking behaviour.

Early intervention does not mean diagnosing difficulties or providing therapy.

Instead, it means creating opportunities for young people to:

- Learn wellbeing concepts
- Recognise emotional experiences
- Build confidence in discussing feelings
- Develop coping awareness
- Understand available support

Farrell and Barrett (2007) highlighted the importance of reaching young people before difficulties become entrenched. Maynard et al. (2019) similarly found that trauma-informed approaches in educational settings can contribute positively to mental health, behaviour and socioemotional outcomes.

By increasing understanding, young people may feel more equipped to recognise when additional support is needed and where appropriate help can be found.

## **Why Emotional Awareness Matters**

Emotional awareness forms the foundation of many other wellbeing skills.

Before a young person can regulate emotions, communicate needs or access support, they often need to recognise what they are experiencing.

Emotional awareness can support:

- Self-understanding
- Communication
- Confidence
- Relationship building
- Decision-making
- Help-seeking
- Resilience

Research consistently demonstrates the value of emotional awareness programmes.

Garcia Blanc et al. (2024) reported significant improvements in emotional awareness and resilience following a structured emotional competencies programme. Aryani et al. (2025) found that psychoeducation focused on emotion regulation significantly improved young people's understanding of emotions and emotional regulation processes.

Throughout Supporting Young Minds, emotional awareness is positioned not as a specialist skill, but as a practical life skill that can benefit all young people.

## **The Role of Psychoeducation**

Supporting Young Minds is grounded in psychoeducation.

Psychoeducation refers to structured learning that helps people understand emotions, wellbeing, behaviour and coping strategies in practical and accessible ways.

The programme does not provide therapy or clinical intervention.

Instead, it creates opportunities for young people to learn about:

- Emotions
- Stress

- Confidence
- Communication
- Relationships
- Resilience
- Grounding techniques
- Wellbeing concepts

Research supports the value of psychoeducational approaches with adolescents.

Aryani et al. (2025) found that psychoeducation focused on emotion regulation significantly improved understanding and emotional regulation knowledge amongst young people.

Broderick and Jennings (2012) highlighted the importance of helping adolescents understand stress responses and emotional regulation, noting links with improved emotional balance and wellbeing.

Moghadam (2025) reported improvements in emotional regulation and resilience following structured mindfulness and present-moment awareness training with adolescents.

By increasing understanding, psychoeducation can help young people make greater sense of their experiences whilst maintaining clear safeguarding and professional boundaries.

## **Intended Outcomes**

By the end of this chapter, readers should understand:

- Why Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground was created
- The challenges the programme seeks to respond to
- The intended audience for delivery
- The educational and prevention-focused positioning of the programme
- The role of emotional literacy and emotional awareness
- The importance of psychoeducation within youth wellbeing provision
- The rationale underpinning the overall programme framework

This introduction provides the foundation for the chapters that follow and establishes the principles, values and educational philosophy that underpin all aspects of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

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## **PART 2**

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# LEGISLATIVE, POLICY AND PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK

## Introduction

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed within a framework of legal, ethical, safeguarding and professional responsibilities.

At Fynix Project, we recognise that delivering emotional wellbeing education to children and young people carries important responsibilities relating to safeguarding, inclusion, participant welfare, confidentiality, professional conduct and the creation of emotionally safe learning environments.

These responsibilities are not separate from programme delivery. They are fundamental to it.

Supporting Young Minds has therefore been designed to operate within established UK legislation, recognised safeguarding guidance, professional standards and the wider governance framework of Fynix Project.

The purpose of this section is to provide commissioners, partner organisations, facilitators and stakeholders with a clear understanding of the legislative, policy and professional foundations that underpin programme delivery.

This section should be read alongside all relevant Fynix Project organisational policies, safeguarding procedures and governance documents.

By embedding delivery within recognised legal and professional frameworks, Fynix Project seeks to ensure that Supporting Young Minds remains safe, ethical, inclusive, accountable and fit for purpose across all delivery settings.

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## Chapter 5

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# Legislative Framework

## Introduction

Fynix Project is committed to delivering Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground safely, ethically and responsibly.

Whilst the programme remains educational and non-clinical in nature, delivery takes place within a framework that prioritises participant safety, wellbeing, inclusion, safeguarding and professional accountability.

The programme has therefore been developed with consideration of relevant UK legislation, statutory guidance and professional expectations relating to safeguarding, equality, health and safety, information governance and digital safety.

These frameworks are not viewed as administrative requirements alone. They help create the conditions in which emotionally safe and effective learning can take place.

Research supports the importance of this approach. Emsley, Smith, Martin and Lewis (2022) found that trauma-informed and emotionally safe approaches are most effective when they are embedded within clear organisational, policy and legislative frameworks. The authors highlighted that Supporting Young Minds has been developed within recognised legislative, safeguarding and professional frameworks because Fynix Project believes that safe and effective wellbeing provision requires clear governance, accountability and safeguarding arrangements.

For Fynix Project, legislative and professional frameworks are therefore not an addition to programme delivery. They are part of what makes delivery safe, trustworthy and accountable.

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## Evidence-Based Foundations and Evidence-Informed Delivery

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed using an evidence-based foundation informed by current research relating to emotional literacy, emotional regulation, resilience, psychoeducation, trauma-informed practice, prevention-focused wellbeing approaches and youth development.

The programme framework, learning outcomes and educational principles have been shaped by established research and recognised good practice within these fields.

Supporting Young Minds is not presented as a clinical intervention, therapeutic treatment or manualised programme. Instead, it translates evidence-based principles into practical, accessible and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for young people.

The evidence referenced throughout this document reflects the research that has informed programme design and content development. Whilst Supporting Young Minds itself has not yet undergone independent outcome evaluation, the programme has been intentionally built upon evidence-supported approaches and educational principles.

Fynix Project remains committed to ongoing evaluation, reflective practice and continuous improvement to ensure programme delivery remains aligned with emerging evidence, participant feedback and recognised best practice.

This approach allows the programme to remain structured, evidence-informed and professionally grounded whilst also being flexible, engaging and responsive to the needs of young people in real-world settings.

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## **Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance**

### **Children Act 1989**

The Children Act 1989 established the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The Act places responsibilities upon organisations and professionals working with children and young people to prioritise their safety, wellbeing and best interests.

Supporting Young Minds adopts a child-centred approach throughout delivery and seeks to create learning environments that are emotionally safe, respectful, inclusive and supportive.

The welfare of young people remains central to all decision-making and delivery practices.

### **Children Act 2004**

The Children Act 2004 strengthened safeguarding responsibilities across agencies and promoted greater collaboration between organisations involved in supporting children and young people.

Supporting Young Minds recognises the importance of partnership working, appropriate information sharing and safeguarding-conscious practice.

Where concerns arise, facilitators are expected to work within organisational safeguarding procedures and collaborate appropriately with host organisations and relevant safeguarding professionals.

## **Working Together to Safeguard Children**

Working Together to Safeguard Children provides statutory guidance outlining how organisations and professionals should work together to protect children from harm.

Fynix Project recognises safeguarding as everyone's responsibility.

Supporting Young Minds operates within recognised safeguarding procedures and reporting pathways and promotes a culture where concerns are taken seriously, acted upon appropriately and managed in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities.

## **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**

Where delivery takes place within educational settings, Supporting Young Minds aligns with the principles outlined within Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This includes:

- Safeguarding awareness
- Appropriate reporting procedures
- Professional boundaries
- Safer working practices
- Child-centred approaches
- Partnership working

The programme seeks to complement and support the safeguarding culture already established within schools and educational settings.

Research reinforces the importance of this approach. Butler and Sultana (2025) found that whole-school safeguarding culture and leadership commitment are among the most significant factors supporting safe and effective practice for children and young people with complex needs. This highlights the importance of aligning programme delivery with the safeguarding systems of host organisations rather than operating independently from them.

## **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 supports safer recruitment and safeguarding arrangements for individuals working with children and vulnerable groups.

Fynix Project is committed to maintaining appropriate safeguarding procedures, safer recruitment practices and professional standards throughout programme delivery.

## **Care Act 2014**

Although primarily focused on adults with care and support needs, the principles of protection, prevention and wellbeing remain relevant within wider safeguarding practice.

Supporting Young Minds recognises the importance of reducing harm, promoting wellbeing and ensuring appropriate responses where safeguarding concerns arise.

These principles contribute to a wider culture of safety and accountability across all delivery environments.

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## **Equality and Human Rights**

### **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity.

Fynix Project is committed to creating learning environments that are inclusive, accessible and respectful for all participants.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to promote:

- Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Respect
- Fair treatment
- Participation opportunities
- Reasonable adjustments where appropriate

Young people should feel welcomed, valued and respected regardless of identity, background, culture, faith, disability, neurodiversity, gender, sexuality or personal circumstance.

Research supports the importance of inclusive practice. Shaw (2024) found that young people experiencing neurodiversity, anxiety, trauma and attachment difficulties are best supported through approaches that centre their voices, reduce barriers to participation and encourage collaborative working between professionals and families.

These principles are reflected throughout Supporting Young Minds through accessible language, flexible participation and non-pressured engagement.

## **Human Rights Act 1998**

The Human Rights Act reinforces the importance of dignity, respect, privacy, safety and fair treatment.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments where young people feel heard, respected and able to participate safely.

Respect for individual rights, personal dignity and psychological safety remains central to programme delivery.

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## **Health and Safety**

### **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**

Fynix Project is committed to providing safe environments for participants, facilitators and partner organisations.

Reasonable steps are taken to identify potential risks, reduce foreseeable hazards and support safe programme delivery.

The wellbeing and safety of participants remains a core consideration throughout planning and delivery.

### **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

These regulations support the assessment and management of foreseeable risks.

Risk assessments are undertaken where appropriate and reviewed regularly to ensure delivery remains safe and proportionate.

## **RIDDOR**

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations support appropriate incident reporting and organisational accountability.

Relevant incidents are managed in accordance with organisational procedures and statutory responsibilities.

## **COSHH**

Where activities, venues or materials require consideration under COSHH regulations, appropriate risk assessment and risk management procedures will be followed.

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# **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

## **UK GDPR**

Fynix Project is committed to protecting personal information and ensuring that data is handled lawfully, fairly and securely.

Supporting Young Minds operates in accordance with recognised principles of privacy, confidentiality and information governance.

## **Data Protection Act 2018**

The programme operates within established data protection principles relating to:

- Lawful processing
- Confidentiality
- Information security
- Appropriate record keeping
- Data minimisation
- Accountability

Information sharing will only occur where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, information may be shared in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities and legal obligations.

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# Digital Safety

## Online Safety Act 2023

Where online delivery, digital resources or virtual engagement are used, Fynix Project recognises its responsibilities relating to digital safeguarding and online safety.

Appropriate measures are implemented to support safe online participation and engagement.

This includes consideration of:

- Online safeguarding
- Appropriate digital communication
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Safe use of online platforms
- Participant wellbeing in digital environments

As digital engagement continues to form part of many young people's lives, creating safe online learning environments remains an important aspect of responsible programme delivery.

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## Chapter Summary

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed within recognised legislative and safeguarding frameworks that support safe, ethical and professionally accountable practice.

These frameworks help ensure that programme delivery remains:

- Child-centred
- Safeguarding-aware
- Inclusive
- Legally compliant
- Ethically informed
- Professionally accountable
- Developmentally appropriate

For Fynix Project, safeguarding, inclusion and participant wellbeing are not separate considerations. They form the foundation upon which all programme delivery is built.

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# Chapter 6

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## Policy Alignment

### Introduction

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground operates within the wider governance framework of Fynix Project.

The programme does not operate independently of organisational policy. Instead, all aspects of delivery, decision-making, safeguarding practice and participant support are informed by established organisational procedures, professional standards and governance arrangements.

This approach helps ensure consistency, accountability and safe practice across all delivery settings.

At Fynix Project, we recognise that emotionally safe and trauma-informed practice is not created through individual sessions alone. It is strengthened when programmes are supported by clear policies, robust safeguarding arrangements and a culture of professional responsibility.

Research supports this position. Berger and Martin (2021) found that trauma-informed approaches are most sustainable when embedded within organisational policy rather than relying solely on individual practitioners. The authors identified consistency, transparency and clear reporting structures as key factors in creating environments where trust and safety can develop.

Supporting Young Minds has therefore been designed to operate within a framework of policies that support safe, ethical and professionally accountable delivery.

Together, these policies help ensure that programme delivery remains consistent with Fynix Project values, safeguarding responsibilities and organisational expectations.

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### Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Supporting Young Minds operates in accordance with the Fynix Project Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Safeguarding is embedded throughout all aspects of programme delivery and remains the primary consideration whenever concerns relating to the safety or welfare of a child or young person arise.

The policy provides guidance relating to:

- Safeguarding responsibilities
- Recognising and responding to concerns
- Managing disclosures
- Professional boundaries
- Escalation procedures
- Reporting pathways
- Designated safeguarding responsibilities
- Multi-agency safeguarding practice

Facilitators are expected to understand and operate within safeguarding procedures at all times.

Where delivery takes place within partner organisations, schools or community settings, safeguarding arrangements must also align with the procedures of the host organisation.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments where young people feel safe, respected and able to access support when needed, whilst maintaining clear safeguarding boundaries and responsibilities.

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## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

Supporting Young Minds aligns with the Fynix Project Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Fynix Project believes that every young person should have the opportunity to participate in learning environments that are welcoming, inclusive and free from discrimination.

The programme is committed to promoting:

- Fairness
- Accessibility
- Inclusion
- Respect

- Participation
- Equity of opportunity
- Anti-discriminatory practice

Young people bring a wide range of experiences, identities, cultures, abilities and perspectives into programme settings.

Supporting Young Minds recognises and values this diversity.

Delivery is designed to support participation from young people of different backgrounds, experiences and needs, including those who may be experiencing disadvantage, neurodiversity, disability or additional support requirements.

The programme encourages respectful discussion, curiosity and understanding whilst maintaining a safe and inclusive learning environment for all participants.

---

## **Health and Safety Policy**

The programme operates in accordance with the Fynix Project Health and Safety Policy.

Fynix Project is committed to providing environments that support the safety and wellbeing of participants, facilitators, volunteers and partner organisations.

This includes:

- Risk assessment
- Venue safety
- Emergency procedures
- Incident reporting
- Safe activity planning
- Duty of care responsibilities

Appropriate steps are taken to identify and manage foreseeable risks before and during programme delivery.

Health and safety considerations form part of routine planning and are reviewed regularly to support safe and effective learning environments.

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## **Safeguarding, Privacy and Confidentiality Policy**

Supporting Young Minds recognises the importance of confidentiality in creating trust and psychological safety.

At the same time, the programme recognises that confidentiality must always operate within safeguarding responsibilities.

Young people are informed that:

- They will be treated with respect.
- Personal information will be handled appropriately.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where there are concerns relating to safety, welfare or safeguarding.

Facilitators are expected to communicate these boundaries clearly and consistently.

The programme promotes honest and transparent communication about confidentiality from the outset, helping young people understand both their rights and the safeguarding responsibilities of adults working with them.

Information sharing will only occur where lawful, necessary and proportionate.

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## **Code of Conduct**

Supporting Young Minds operates in accordance with the Fynix Project Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct establishes expectations relating to:

- Respectful communication
- Professional boundaries
- Inclusion and equality
- Appropriate behaviour
- Safeguarding practice
- Accountability
- Professional integrity

These standards apply to facilitators, volunteers, participants and partner organisations involved in programme delivery.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is not simply to establish rules.

It exists to help create environments where young people feel respected, safe and able to engage positively in learning.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to model the same values that it encourages participants to develop, including respect, empathy, responsibility and healthy communication.

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## **Complaints and Feedback Policy**

Fynix Project is committed to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

Supporting Young Minds welcomes feedback from participants, families, professionals, commissioners and partner organisations.

Clear procedures are in place to support:

- Feedback
- Complaints
- Concerns
- Suggestions for improvement

Where concerns are raised, they will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with organisational procedures.

Feedback is viewed as an important part of programme development and quality assurance.

It helps Fynix Project continue to strengthen delivery, improve participant experiences and maintain high professional standards.

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## **Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement**

Supporting Young Minds forms part of Fynix Project's wider commitment to quality, reflective practice and ongoing development.

Programme delivery is informed by:

- Participant feedback
- Facilitator reflection
- Safeguarding learning
- Emerging research
- Professional guidance
- Organisational review processes

Fynix Project recognises that effective wellbeing education requires ongoing learning and adaptation.

The programme will therefore continue to evolve in response to evidence, experience and the needs of young people and partner organisations.

This commitment to continuous improvement helps ensure that Supporting Young Minds remains relevant, responsive and aligned with current best practice.

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## Chapter Summary

Supporting Young Minds operates within the wider governance framework of Fynix Project and is supported by a range of organisational policies that promote safe, ethical and professional practice.

These policies help ensure that programme delivery remains:

- Safe
- Inclusive
- Respectful
- Transparent
- Accountable
- Safeguarding-aware
- Professionally responsible

For Fynix Project, policy is not simply a governance requirement.

It is part of how we create environments where young people can feel safe, valued and supported whilst engaging in meaningful wellbeing learning.

The policies that underpin Supporting Young Minds provide the structure, consistency and accountability that allow emotionally safe practice to flourish.

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## Chapter 7

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### National Framework Alignment

## Introduction

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed to complement wider educational, wellbeing, safeguarding and youth development frameworks operating across the United Kingdom.

The programme is not intended to replace statutory responsibilities, specialist services or existing support systems.

Instead, it has been designed to contribute positively to wider prevention, wellbeing and personal development agendas by providing structured, accessible and emotionally safe learning opportunities for young people.

Fynix Project recognises that young people are often supported by multiple systems at the same time, including education, youth services, social care, family support, health services and community organisations.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to work alongside these systems rather than separately from them.

This alignment helps ensure that programme delivery remains relevant, practical and supportive of the wider outcomes that schools, youth organisations, local authorities and community services are already working towards.

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## Education Framework Alignment

### PSHE Education

Supporting Young Minds aligns closely with Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education.

The programme supports learning relating to:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Self-awareness
- Communication
- Relationships
- Personal development
- Resilience
- Confidence
- Emotional literacy

These themes sit at the heart of effective PSHE provision and support young people to develop knowledge, skills and understanding that can positively influence their wellbeing both now and in the future.

Research supports the value of structured wellbeing education within school settings.

Coleman, Hale and Layard (2011) found that evidence-informed PSHE programmes can contribute positively to emotional competence, health knowledge and wellbeing outcomes when delivered with appropriate structure and facilitator support.

Similarly, Lordan and McGuire (2019) reported positive outcomes associated with the Healthy Minds curriculum, including improvements in emotional wellbeing, health behaviours and wider student outcomes.

Supporting Young Minds contributes to these aims by providing practical and engaging opportunities for young people to explore emotional wellbeing in accessible and meaningful ways.

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## **RSHE Education**

The programme also aligns with Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) themes through its focus on:

- Emotional awareness
- Healthy relationships
- Respect
- Communication
- Personal wellbeing
- Self-understanding
- Help-seeking awareness

Whilst Supporting Young Minds is not an RSHE programme, it complements many of the skills and wellbeing outcomes that RSHE seeks to promote.

The programme helps young people better understand themselves, recognise emotions, communicate effectively and build healthier relationships with others.

These skills can support wider personal development and wellbeing outcomes across educational settings.

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## **Ofsted Framework Alignment**

Supporting Young Minds aligns with themes commonly associated with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, particularly those relating to:

- Personal development
- Inclusion
- Emotional wellbeing
- Safeguarding awareness
- Participation
- Positive relationships

The programme contributes to environments where young people are encouraged to develop confidence, resilience, self-awareness and personal responsibility.

By creating emotionally safe opportunities for reflection and learning, Supporting Young Minds can support schools and educational settings in promoting broader personal development outcomes alongside academic achievement.

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## **Youth Services Alignment**

### **National Youth Agency Principles**

Supporting Young Minds reflects many of the principles associated with high-quality youth work and youth development practice.

These include:

- Participation
- Empowerment
- Inclusion
- Relationship-based practice
- Personal development
- Strengths-based approaches

The programme recognises young people as active participants in their own learning rather than passive recipients of information.

Activities are designed to encourage reflection, discussion, curiosity and self-discovery whilst respecting individual choice and participation levels.

This approach aligns closely with youth work values that promote voice, agency and positive development.

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## **Residential Care Alignment**

### **Children's Homes Regulations**

Supporting Young Minds has been designed to complement wider objectives associated with children's residential care and supported accommodation environments.

The programme supports outcomes relating to:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Personal development
- Positive relationships
- Resilience
- Self-awareness
- Participation

Young people living within residential environments may have experienced a wide range of life experiences and challenges.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to provide structured opportunities for emotional learning that are safe, accessible and strengths-based.

Research supports the value of wellbeing programmes within residential settings.

Supporting Young Minds has been designed to complement the emotional wellbeing and personal development aims often found within residential care environments.

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## **Quality Standards Alignment**

The programme complements environments that seek to promote:

- Safety
- Stability
- Emotional development
- Independence

- Positive outcomes
- Participation

Supporting Young Minds does not replace care planning, therapeutic intervention or statutory support.

Instead, it contributes to wider developmental goals through structured wellbeing education and practical emotional learning.

---

## **SEND Alignment**

### **SEND Code of Practice**

Fynix Project recognises that young people engage with learning in different ways.

Supporting Young Minds has therefore been designed with flexibility and accessibility in mind from the outset.

The programme recognises that participation may be influenced by:

- Communication needs
- Learning differences
- Neurodiversity
- Sensory needs
- Emotional regulation needs
- Accessibility requirements

Facilitators are encouraged to adopt flexible and inclusive approaches that enable meaningful participation whilst respecting individual needs and preferences.

The programme does not expect all young people to engage in the same way.

Instead, it seeks to create opportunities for participation that feel safe, achievable and respectful.

Research highlights the importance of this approach.

Penfold (2022) identified emotional literacy as a significant component of meaningful inclusion for children and young people with SEND.

Similarly, Clements (2022) highlighted the importance of whole-school approaches that integrate emotional wellbeing, accessibility and inclusive practice rather than treating them as separate priorities.

Supporting Young Minds has been developed with these principles embedded throughout delivery.

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# Wellbeing Framework Alignment

## Whole-School Approaches to Wellbeing

Supporting Young Minds complements whole-school approaches to emotional wellbeing by contributing to:

- Emotional literacy
- Resilience
- Wellbeing awareness
- Positive relationships
- Prevention-focused support
- Emotional regulation skills

The programme is not intended to function as a standalone solution.

Instead, it is designed to form part of a wider culture that values wellbeing, inclusion and positive development.

The evidence base supporting whole-school approaches is well established.

Weare and Nind (2014) found positive impacts across a broad range of wellbeing, social and emotional outcomes when schools adopted integrated approaches to wellbeing promotion.

More recently, Balasooriya Lekamge and colleagues (2025) found that long-term whole-school wellbeing programmes were associated with improvements in life satisfaction, coping skills, hope and emotional wellbeing across more than 40,000 secondary school students.

These findings reinforce the value of embedding emotional wellbeing learning within wider organisational cultures rather than relying solely on reactive or crisis-based responses.

Supporting Young Minds has been designed to complement and strengthen this wider wellbeing infrastructure.

---

# Public Health Framework Alignment

## Prevention and Early Intervention

Supporting Young Minds aligns with wider public health approaches that recognise the value of:

- Prevention
- Early intervention
- Emotional wellbeing promotion
- Resilience-building
- Community-based support
- Accessible wellbeing education

At Fynix Project, we believe that young people should not have to reach crisis point before they are given opportunities to develop emotional awareness, confidence and practical wellbeing skills.

Research supports this position.

Membride (2016) highlighted the effectiveness of prevention and early intervention approaches in improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

Similarly, Weare and Markham (2005) identified universal, accessible wellbeing programmes as an important component of effective mental health promotion, particularly when delivered within familiar environments that young people already access.

Supporting Young Minds reflects these principles by providing practical, educational and emotionally safe learning opportunities that may help young people build understanding, resilience and confidence before difficulties escalate.

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## Chapter Summary

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been intentionally developed to complement a wide range of educational, wellbeing, safeguarding and youth development frameworks.

The programme aligns with:

- PSHE Education
- RSHE Education
- Ofsted priorities
- National Youth Agency principles
- Children's Homes Regulations
- SEND Code of Practice
- Whole-school wellbeing approaches
- Public health prevention frameworks

This alignment helps ensure that programme delivery remains relevant, accessible and supportive of wider organisational objectives across schools, youth services, residential care settings, local authorities and community organisations.

For Fynix Project, framework alignment is not about compliance alone.

It is about ensuring that young people receive wellbeing education that is practical, evidence-informed, emotionally safe and connected to the wider systems that support them.

Together with the legislative and policy frameworks outlined in previous chapters, these foundations help ensure that Supporting Young Minds remains safe, inclusive, prevention-focused and professionally accountable whilst maintaining its core purpose: helping young people better understand themselves, build resilience and find their ground.

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## **PART 3**

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# **UNDERSTANDING YOUNG PEOPLE**

## **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed with a clear understanding that adolescence is a unique and important stage of life.

Young people are not simply smaller versions of adults. They are navigating a period of rapid growth and development whilst simultaneously building identity, relationships, independence, confidence and their understanding of the world around them.

For many young people, adolescence can be exciting, creative and full of opportunity. It can also bring uncertainty, emotional intensity, changing relationships and increasing expectations.

Understanding these experiences is essential for anyone delivering emotional wellbeing education.

At Fynix Project, we believe that effective wellbeing support begins with understanding. When adults understand the developmental experiences of young people, they are often better placed to respond with empathy, patience and realistic expectations.

The purpose of this section is not to diagnose, categorise or define young people by the challenges they may experience.

Instead, it seeks to build understanding, awareness and compassion.

The chapters that follow explore key areas of adolescent development, emotional growth, neurodiversity, trauma-informed understanding and safeguarding awareness. Together, these themes provide a foundation for creating learning environments that are developmentally appropriate, emotionally safe, inclusive and strengths-based.

Supporting Young Minds is built on the belief that young people are not problems to be solved.

They are individuals navigating one of the most important developmental periods of their lives.

Understanding that journey helps us create environments where learning, growth and wellbeing can flourish.

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## **Chapter 8**

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# **Understanding Adolescence**

## Introduction

Adolescence is a period of significant transition between childhood and adulthood.

During this stage, young people experience rapid physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. These changes do not occur in isolation. They often happen simultaneously, influencing how young people think, feel, behave and relate to the world around them.

For some young people, adolescence may feel exciting and empowering.

For others, it may feel confusing, overwhelming or uncertain.

For many, it is a mixture of both.

Every young person's experience is unique. Development does not follow a straight line, and there is no single "correct" way to experience adolescence.

Supporting Young Minds recognises adolescence as a period of growth, exploration and self-discovery rather than a problem to be managed.

Understanding adolescent development helps facilitators interpret behaviour, emotions and communication through a developmental lens, allowing them to respond with curiosity, compassion and appropriate expectations.

---

## Brain Development

The adolescent brain continues to develop throughout the teenage years and into early adulthood.

During this period, areas of the brain involved in planning, decision-making, impulse control and long-term thinking are still developing. At the same time, areas associated with emotions, reward, motivation and social connection can be particularly active.

This combination can contribute to:

- Strong emotional experiences
- Increased sensitivity to social situations
- Curiosity and exploration
- A growing desire for independence
- Experimentation and risk-taking
- Heightened awareness of peer relationships

Understanding this development is important because it helps us recognise that many adolescent behaviours reflect normal developmental processes rather than deliberate defiance or poor choices.

Research in developmental neuroscience supports this understanding.

Casey, Heller, Gee and Cohen (2017) describe adolescence as a period of significant neurological change during which emotional and cognitive systems continue to develop and integrate. Similarly, Ahmed, Bittencourt-Hewitt and Sebastian (2015) found that emotional regulation develops gradually throughout adolescence, reflecting the ongoing maturation of the brain systems involved in emotional processing and self-regulation.

These findings remind us that many young people are still developing the skills needed to manage complex emotions, navigate social pressures and make decisions under stress.

This is not a weakness.

It is part of healthy development.

For facilitators, understanding brain development can encourage responses rooted in empathy, patience and realistic expectations rather than judgement.

---

## **Identity Formation**

One of the most important developmental tasks of adolescence is identity formation.

As young people grow, they begin exploring questions such as:

- Who am I?
- What matters to me?
- Where do I belong?
- What are my strengths?
- What kind of future do I want?
- How do I want to be seen by others?

Identity is influenced by many factors, including:

- Family
- Culture
- Community
- Values
- Beliefs

- Friendships
- Life experiences
- Personal interests

Identity development is rarely straightforward.

Young people may experiment with different ideas, interests, social groups and ways of expressing themselves as they develop a stronger sense of who they are.

Research suggests that identity development and emotional wellbeing are closely connected.

Jankowski (2013) found a significant relationship between identity development and emotional regulation, with young people who demonstrated stronger identity formation also showing stronger emotional regulation capacities.

This connection reinforces the importance of helping young people recognise their strengths, values and personal qualities alongside developing emotional wellbeing skills.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create opportunities for self-reflection, self-understanding and personal growth without placing pressure on young people to define themselves in any particular way.

---

## **Developing Independence**

A natural part of adolescence involves developing greater independence.

As young people grow, they often seek increasing opportunities to make decisions, express opinions and take responsibility for aspects of their lives.

This process may involve:

- Developing personal views
- Making independent choices
- Testing boundaries
- Exploring autonomy
- Taking greater responsibility
- Learning from experience

Whilst increasing independence can sometimes create tension within families, schools and other relationships, it remains an important part of healthy development.

Developing independence helps young people build confidence, decision-making skills and a stronger sense of self.

Supporting Young Minds encourages independence by creating opportunities for participation, reflection and personal choice whilst maintaining appropriate boundaries and safeguarding considerations.

---

## **Relationships and Belonging**

Relationships become increasingly important during adolescence.

Young people often place greater significance on:

- Friendships
- Peer acceptance
- Social belonging
- Community connections
- Romantic relationships
- Shared interests and identities

Feeling accepted, valued and connected can have a significant impact on emotional wellbeing.

Positive relationships can provide support, encouragement and a sense of belonging during periods of challenge or uncertainty.

Research consistently highlights the importance of relationships as protective factors for wellbeing.

Marquez, Francis-Hew and Humphrey (2023) found that access to positive relationships and supportive social networks was one of the strongest factors associated with resilience amongst adolescents facing adversity.

These findings reinforce an important principle of Supporting Young Minds:

Connection matters.

Creating emotionally safe environments where young people feel respected, heard and included can play an important role in supporting wellbeing and resilience.

---

## **Social Pressures**

Young people today navigate a complex combination of offline and online social environments.

Alongside normal developmental challenges, many young people also experience pressures relating to:

- Academic performance
- Social comparison
- Online engagement
- Appearance and body image
- Peer expectations
- Future aspirations
- Family expectations
- Social identity

These pressures can influence confidence, emotional wellbeing and self-perception.

Whilst some pressure can encourage growth and learning, sustained or overwhelming pressure may contribute to stress, anxiety and emotional distress.

Supporting Young Minds encourages young people to explore these experiences openly whilst developing practical skills that support confidence, emotional awareness and resilience.

---

## **Risk-Taking and Exploration**

Risk-taking is often viewed negatively, yet it forms a normal part of adolescent development.

Many forms of adolescent risk-taking reflect:

- Curiosity
- Learning
- Exploration
- Independence
- Skill development
- Identity formation

Understanding risk-taking through a developmental lens allows adults to distinguish between healthy exploration and situations that may require safeguarding intervention.

Dahl (2001) suggests that many adolescent behaviours are linked to the ongoing development of emotional regulation and self-management skills rather than an absence of care or responsibility.

This perspective encourages adults to respond with guidance and support rather than solely focusing on control or punishment.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that making mistakes, learning from experience and developing judgement are all part of the journey towards adulthood.

---

## **Emotional Growth**

Adolescence creates significant opportunities for emotional growth and development.

Over time, many young people begin developing:

- Greater self-awareness
- Increased emotional vocabulary
- Stronger empathy
- Perspective-taking skills
- Resilience
- Emotional regulation skills
- More effective coping strategies

These skills rarely emerge overnight.

They develop gradually through experience, learning, relationships and supportive environments.

Research consistently demonstrates that emotional awareness and emotional regulation can be strengthened through structured learning opportunities, positive relationships and emotionally safe environments.

This understanding sits at the heart of Supporting Young Minds.

The programme has been designed to provide practical opportunities for young people to build emotional awareness, confidence and resilience in ways that feel accessible, relevant and meaningful to everyday life.

---

## **Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we view adolescence through a strengths-based lens.

Whilst adolescence can involve challenge, uncertainty and emotional intensity, it is also a period of creativity, growth, learning and possibility.

Young people are not unfinished adults waiting to become something else.

They are individuals developing the skills, experiences and understanding that will help shape their futures.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to meet young people where they are, recognising both the challenges they may face and the strengths they already possess.

By understanding adolescence as a developmental journey rather than a problem to be solved, we can create learning environments that help young people build confidence, resilience and a stronger sense of who they are.

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## **Chapter 9**

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# **Emotional Development**

## **Introduction**

Emotional development is the process through which young people learn to understand, express and respond to emotions throughout their lives.

It is a fundamental part of growing up.

Just as young people develop physically, socially and intellectually, they also develop emotionally. Over time, they build greater awareness of their feelings, learn how emotions influence behaviour and develop skills that help them navigate challenges, relationships and everyday experiences.

Emotions are a natural and important part of being human.

They provide information about our experiences, needs, relationships and environment. They can help us recognise what matters to us, understand our reactions and guide decision-making.

At Fynix Project, we believe emotional development is not about controlling emotions or eliminating difficult feelings.

It is about understanding them.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been designed to help young people build emotional awareness, emotional vocabulary and practical emotional wellbeing skills in ways that feel accessible, respectful and relevant to everyday life.

---

## **Emotional Literacy**

Emotional literacy refers to the ability to recognise, understand and communicate emotions.

It involves developing the language and awareness needed to identify emotional experiences and express them appropriately.

Young people who develop emotional literacy may be better equipped to:

- Recognise emotions as they arise
- Communicate feelings and needs
- Build healthy relationships
- Reflect on experiences
- Seek support when needed
- Understand emotional responses in themselves and others

Many young people can recognise whether they feel generally "good" or "bad," but may have had fewer opportunities to develop a wider emotional vocabulary.

Expanding emotional vocabulary can help young people move beyond broad labels and develop a deeper understanding of their experiences.

For example, recognising the difference between feeling frustrated, disappointed, overwhelmed, anxious or embarrassed can support clearer communication and self-awareness.

Supporting Young Minds encourages emotional literacy through discussion, reflection and practical activities that help young people explore the full range of human emotions.

The aim is not to judge emotions as positive or negative.

The aim is to understand them.

---

## Emotional Awareness

Emotional awareness refers to the ability to notice, recognise and understand emotional experiences.

This may include:

- Recognising emotional signals within the body
- Identifying emotional triggers
- Understanding reactions to situations
- Connecting emotions with experiences
- Noticing patterns over time

Emotional awareness often forms the foundation upon which other emotional wellbeing skills are built.

Before young people can effectively respond to emotions, they first need opportunities to recognise what they are experiencing.

Research supports the importance of emotional awareness and emotional regulation skills.

Espenes and colleagues (2024), in a meta-analysis involving nearly 4,000 children and young people, found that structured psychosocial interventions targeting emotional awareness and emotional regulation were associated with significant improvements in emotional wellbeing and broader mental health outcomes.

These findings support the wider principle that emotional skills can be learned, developed and strengthened through structured learning opportunities.

Supporting Young Minds has been informed by these principles and seeks to provide young people with accessible opportunities to build emotional awareness through reflection, discussion and practical learning activities.

---

## Understanding Emotions

Emotions are often described as messages rather than problems.

They provide information about what is happening within us and around us.

For example:

- Fear may alert us to perceived danger.
- Anger may signal that a boundary feels crossed.
- Sadness may reflect loss, disappointment or unmet needs.
- Joy may reinforce experiences of connection, achievement or meaning.

Understanding emotions in this way can help reduce self-judgement and encourage curiosity.

Rather than viewing emotions as something to suppress or avoid, young people can begin to recognise them as valuable sources of information.

Supporting Young Minds encourages participants to explore emotions with openness and curiosity whilst developing skills that support emotional wellbeing and self-understanding.

---

## Emotional Maturity

Emotional maturity develops gradually throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

It is not determined solely by age and does not develop at the same pace for everyone.

Emotional maturity may involve:

- Reflection
- Perspective-taking
- Managing reactions
- Considering consequences
- Developing empathy
- Understanding the experiences of others

Emotional maturity is often shaped by a combination of life experiences, relationships, learning opportunities and personal development.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that young people are at different stages of emotional development and encourages growth without judgement or unrealistic expectations.

The programme seeks to create opportunities for learning and reflection rather than expecting young people to demonstrate perfect emotional control.

## Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to how individuals understand and view themselves.

It includes perceptions relating to:

- Identity
- Strengths
- Values
- Beliefs
- Abilities
- Confidence
- Self-worth

A young person's self-concept can influence how they approach challenges, relationships and opportunities.

Positive self-concept is often associated with greater confidence, resilience and participation.

Conversely, negative self-beliefs can sometimes affect wellbeing, confidence and help-seeking behaviour.

Supporting Young Minds encourages young people to recognise strengths, identify personal qualities and develop a more balanced understanding of themselves.

This strengths-based approach reflects a core Fynix principle:

Young people are more than their difficulties.

Every young person has strengths, qualities and potential worth recognising.

---

## Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation refers to the ability to understand and respond to emotions in ways that feel manageable, helpful and appropriate to the situation.

Importantly, emotional regulation does not mean suppressing emotions or pretending difficult feelings do not exist.

Instead, it involves recognising emotions, understanding their impact and developing strategies that support effective responses.

Emotional regulation may include:

- Recognising emotional experiences
- Pausing before reacting
- Using coping strategies
- Seeking support when needed
- Practising grounding techniques
- Managing stress responses

Research highlights the importance of emotional regulation as a broad wellbeing skill.

Milone and Sesso (2024) describe emotional dysregulation as a transdiagnostic factor that can influence a wide range of mental health outcomes across childhood and adolescence. Their review suggests that strengthening emotional regulation capacities may support wellbeing across diverse experiences and presentations.

Supporting Young Minds therefore approaches emotional regulation as a universal life skill rather than a specialist or clinical intervention.

The programme aims to help young people develop practical tools that support emotional awareness, self-understanding and emotional wellbeing in everyday life.

---

## Emotions and Relationships

Emotional development does not happen in isolation.

Relationships play an important role in shaping how young people understand, express and respond to emotions.

Positive relationships can help young people:

- Feel safe
- Develop trust
- Learn emotional language
- Build confidence
- Practise communication skills
- Seek support during difficult times

Supportive relationships with peers, family members, educators, youth workers and trusted adults can all contribute positively to emotional development.

Supporting Young Minds recognises the importance of relational safety and seeks to create learning environments characterised by respect, inclusion and positive connection.

---

## **Emotional Growth and Resilience**

Emotional development and resilience are closely connected.

As young people develop greater emotional awareness and understanding, they may become better equipped to navigate challenges, setbacks and uncertainty.

Resilience does not mean avoiding difficulty or remaining unaffected by adversity.

Instead, resilience involves adapting, learning and continuing to move forward despite challenges.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to support resilience by helping young people:

- Understand emotions
- Recognise strengths
- Develop coping strategies
- Build confidence
- Strengthen support networks
- Practise emotional awareness

These skills can contribute to wellbeing and help young people feel more capable of responding to life's inevitable challenges.

---

## **Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe emotional development is one of the most important aspects of growing up.

Young people do not need to have all the answers.

They do not need to manage every emotion perfectly.

They do not need to hide difficult feelings in order to be resilient.

Instead, they benefit from opportunities to understand themselves more clearly.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been designed to help young people develop emotional awareness, emotional literacy and emotional wellbeing skills through safe, practical and accessible learning experiences.

The programme is built on a simple belief:

Emotions are not problems to fix.

They are experiences to understand.

When young people are given language for those experiences, opportunities to reflect and practical tools to support themselves, they are often better placed to navigate challenges, build resilience and move forward with greater confidence.

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## **Chapter 10**

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# **Neurodiversity Awareness**

## **Introduction**

Every young person experiences, processes and responds to the world in their own way.

Neurodiversity recognises that differences in thinking, learning, communication, attention, sensory experience and information processing are natural variations within the human population rather than deficits that need to be fixed.

At Fynix Project, we believe that diversity in how people think and experience the world is a strength.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground adopts a strengths-based, inclusive and neurodiversity-affirming approach throughout all aspects of delivery.

The purpose of this chapter is not to provide clinical information, diagnostic guidance or specialist intervention strategies.

Instead, it aims to help facilitators develop a broader understanding of neurodiversity and recognise how different learning, communication and sensory experiences may influence participation, engagement and wellbeing.

Research increasingly supports neurodiversity-affirming approaches within educational and community settings. Harris, Poandl and Awopetu (2026) describe neurodiversity-affirming practice as moving beyond deficit-based narratives and towards recognising, valuing and supporting neurocognitive differences whilst helping young people build upon their strengths.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to reflect these principles by creating learning environments that are flexible, accessible, respectful and inclusive.

---

## **Understanding Neurodiversity**

Neurodiversity is an umbrella term used to describe the natural variation that exists within human brains and nervous systems.

People think, learn, communicate, focus and process information in different ways.

These differences may influence:

- Learning styles
- Communication preferences
- Sensory experiences
- Social interaction
- Emotional processing
- Organisation and planning
- Attention and focus

Neurodiversity does not suggest that everyone experiences the world in the same way.

Instead, it recognises that difference is normal.

Supporting Young Minds encourages facilitators to remain curious, flexible and responsive to individual needs rather than making assumptions about how young people should participate or engage.

---

## **Autism**

Autistic young people may experience differences relating to:

- Communication
- Social interaction
- Sensory processing
- Predictability and routine
- Information processing
- Emotional expression

However, no two autistic young people are the same.

Autism is a spectrum, and experiences can vary significantly between individuals.

At Fynix Project, autism is not viewed as something that needs fixing.

Rather, it is understood as a different way of experiencing and interacting with the world.

Many autistic young people demonstrate strengths including:

- Creativity
- Deep focus
- Honesty
- Attention to detail
- Strong personal interests
- Problem-solving abilities
- Unique perspectives

Research supports the value of strengths-based approaches.

White, McGarry, Williams and Black (2025) found that autistic adolescents reported greater engagement, motivation and confidence when educational environments recognised their strengths, interests and aspirations rather than focusing solely on difficulties or perceived deficits.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments where autistic young people feel respected, included and able to participate in ways that feel comfortable and meaningful to them.

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## **ADHD**

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can influence how young people experience attention, organisation, emotional regulation, activity levels and impulse control.

ADHD may affect:

- Sustained attention
- Time management
- Organisation
- Task initiation
- Emotional regulation
- Working memory
- Impulse management

However, ADHD is not defined solely by challenges.

Many young people with ADHD demonstrate strengths including:

- Creativity
- Adaptability
- Innovation
- Curiosity
- High energy
- Problem-solving abilities
- Entrepreneurial thinking

Fung (2022) highlights the importance of recognising strengths associated with neurodivergent ways of thinking, arguing that educational and wellbeing environments are often most effective when they build upon existing assets rather than focusing exclusively on areas of difficulty.

Supporting Young Minds adopts this strengths-based perspective and seeks to create learning opportunities that recognise both the challenges and strengths that may accompany ADHD.

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## **Executive Functioning**

Executive functioning refers to a range of mental processes that help people plan, organise, prioritise, remember information and manage tasks.

Executive functioning supports activities such as:

- Planning
- Organisation
- Time management
- Attention
- Memory
- Prioritisation

- Task completion

Young people differ significantly in their executive functioning abilities.

Some may find it easier to organise information, manage time or transition between activities than others.

These differences do not reflect intelligence, motivation or willingness to participate.

They simply reflect differences in how individuals process and manage information.

Supporting Young Minds has therefore been designed to remain flexible and accessible.

Facilitators are encouraged to provide clear instructions, allow processing time and create opportunities for participation that accommodate different learning and organisational styles.

---

## **Sensory Processing**

Young people experience sensory information in different ways.

Some may be highly sensitive to sensory input, whilst others may seek additional sensory stimulation.

Sensory experiences may include responses to:

- Noise
- Light
- Movement
- Temperature
- Textures
- Crowded environments
- Visual stimulation

Sensory experiences can influence concentration, participation, emotional regulation and overall wellbeing.

Supporting Young Minds encourages facilitators to remain aware of environmental factors that may affect comfort and engagement.

Creating flexible learning environments can help support participation and reduce unnecessary barriers.

This does not require eliminating all sensory stimuli.

Rather, it involves recognising that different young people may have different sensory needs.

---

## **Communication Differences**

Communication styles vary considerably between individuals.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that there is no single "correct" way to communicate.

Some young people may:

- Prefer verbal communication
- Prefer written communication
- Need additional processing time
- Communicate more comfortably in smaller groups
- Express themselves through behaviour or creative activities
- Prefer observation before participation

All communication styles deserve respect.

Research by Sewell and Park (2021) found that strengths-based educational approaches that adapt to individual communication and learning preferences create more inclusive and effective learning environments than approaches that prioritise conformity to a single communication style.

Supporting Young Minds encourages facilitators to value different forms of participation and avoid placing pressure on young people to engage in ways that feel uncomfortable or inaccessible.

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## **Inclusion in Practice**

Creating neurodiversity-affirming environments does not require facilitators to become specialists in every neurodevelopmental condition.

Instead, it involves adopting principles that support participation for all young people.

These principles may include:

- Using clear and accessible language
- Providing predictable session structures
- Offering flexibility where possible
- Allowing processing time
- Respecting communication preferences
- Reducing unnecessary pressure
- Valuing different forms of participation
- Recognising strengths alongside challenges

Many of these approaches benefit all young people, not only those who identify as neurodivergent.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create learning environments where young people can engage in ways that feel safe, achievable and meaningful.

---

## **Strengths-Based Practice**

A strengths-based approach sits at the heart of Fynix Project's philosophy.

Rather than focusing solely on what young people find difficult, strengths-based practice encourages us to recognise:

- Talents
- Interests
- Abilities
- Aspirations
- Personal qualities
- Existing coping strategies

Every young person has strengths.

Sometimes those strengths are obvious.

Sometimes they require time, patience and encouragement to recognise.

Supporting Young Minds encourages facilitators to look beyond labels and diagnoses and remain curious about what helps each young person thrive.

This approach promotes confidence, self-belief and positive identity development whilst helping young people feel seen for who they are rather than defined by perceived challenges.

---

## **Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe inclusion is not about helping young people fit into a predefined mould.

It is about creating environments where different ways of thinking, learning, communicating and experiencing the world are welcomed and respected.

Neurodiversity is not something to be overcome.

It is part of the rich diversity that exists within every community, classroom, youth group and organisation.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground seeks to create learning environments where young people can participate authentically, build confidence in who they are and develop wellbeing skills without feeling pressure to hide or change important parts of themselves.

The programme is built on a simple principle:

Different does not mean less.

When young people are supported to understand their strengths, recognise their value and engage in ways that work for them, they are often better placed to develop confidence, resilience and a stronger sense of belonging.

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## **Chapter 11**

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### **Trauma-Informed Understanding**

#### **Introduction**

Trauma-informed practice is a core principle of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

At Fynix Project, we recognise that young people come to learning environments with different experiences, backgrounds, strengths and challenges. Some may have experienced adversity, loss, instability, significant stress or other difficult life

events that continue to influence how they feel, think and respond to the world around them.

Importantly, Supporting Young Minds is not designed to explore, process or treat trauma.

The programme is educational rather than therapeutic.

Its purpose is not to ask young people to disclose personal experiences or revisit difficult events. Instead, it seeks to create emotionally safe learning environments that support wellbeing, participation, confidence and self-understanding.

Trauma-informed practice is not about assuming that every young person has experienced trauma.

It is about recognising that we often do not know what experiences a young person may have faced and therefore creating environments that are safe, respectful, predictable and supportive for everyone.

Research consistently identifies safety, empowerment, collaboration and strengths-based practice as key features of effective trauma-informed environments. Watson and Astor (2025) identified these themes as common features across trauma-informed educational settings. Similarly, Maynard, Farina, Dell and Kelly (2019) distinguish trauma-informed approaches from trauma-specific interventions, emphasising that trauma-informed practice focuses on creating safe environments and building awareness rather than delivering treatment.

Supporting Young Minds operates firmly within this trauma-informed framework.

---

## **Understanding Trauma**

Trauma can occur when experiences overwhelm an individual's ability to cope.

Whilst certain events are commonly associated with trauma, trauma is not defined solely by what happened.

It is also shaped by how an experience is perceived, processed and supported.

This means that two young people may experience similar events but respond very differently.

Trauma is therefore highly individual.

Experiences that may contribute to trauma can include:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic violence
- Serious accidents
- Bereavement
- Community violence
- Exploitation
- Significant instability
- Exposure to frightening or distressing events

Not every difficult experience results in trauma, and not every young person who experiences adversity will experience lasting difficulties.

Supporting Young Minds avoids making assumptions about young people's experiences whilst recognising that adversity and trauma can influence wellbeing, behaviour, learning and relationships.

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## Understanding Adversity

Adversity refers to experiences that may create significant challenge, stress or disruption in a young person's life.

Examples may include:

- Bereavement
- Family conflict
- Housing instability
- Care experience
- Poverty
- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Community violence
- Relationship difficulties
- Significant life changes

Adversity is a common part of many young people's lives.

However, experiences of adversity do not define a young person's future.

Research highlights the complex relationship between adversity and wellbeing.

Russell, Heyn, Peverill and colleagues (2024), analysing longitudinal data from almost 12,000 young people, found that different forms of adversity can influence emotional wellbeing and mental health in different ways across adolescence.

Similarly, Soleimanpour, Geierstanger and Brindis (2017) highlighted the importance of recognising the unique developmental needs of young people who have experienced adversity and the value of supportive, cross-system responses.

These findings reinforce the importance of creating environments that are safe, predictable and non-judgemental.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to provide such environments whilst remaining firmly within educational and safeguarding boundaries.

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## Trauma and Development

Experiences of trauma and adversity can influence many aspects of development.

These experiences may affect:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Relationships
- Confidence
- Trust
- Learning
- Behaviour
- Participation
- Stress responses

However, it is important to avoid viewing trauma as the sole explanation for behaviour or assuming that young people are defined by difficult experiences.

Every young person remains an individual with strengths, interests, abilities and potential.

Trauma-informed practice encourages curiosity rather than assumptions.

Instead of asking:

*"What is wrong with this young person?"*

Trauma-informed practice encourages us to consider:

*"What might this young person be experiencing?"*

This shift in perspective helps create environments characterised by empathy, understanding and respect.

---

# Understanding Stress Responses

When people experience threat, overwhelm or significant stress, the nervous system may activate protective survival responses.

These responses are normal human reactions designed to support safety and survival.

They are not signs of weakness or failure.

The most commonly recognised responses include:

## **Fight**

The fight response may involve attempting to confront, challenge or resist a perceived threat.

This can sometimes appear as:

- Anger
- Defensiveness
- Argumentative behaviour
- Frustration

## **Flight**

The flight response involves attempting to escape or avoid a perceived threat.

This may appear as:

- Withdrawal
- Avoidance
- Leaving situations
- Difficulty engaging

## **Freeze**

The freeze response may occur when a person feels unable to fight or escape.

This can sometimes appear as:

- Silence
- Inactivity
- Disengagement
- Difficulty responding

## **Fawn**

The fawn response involves prioritising the needs of others in an attempt to maintain safety or reduce conflict.

This may appear as:

- Excessive people-pleasing
- Difficulty expressing needs
- Avoidance of disagreement
- Seeking approval

Understanding these responses can help facilitators interpret behaviour through a trauma-informed and developmental lens.

Rather than immediately viewing behaviour as challenging, non-compliant or problematic, facilitators can remain curious about what a young person may be communicating through their behaviour.

Berger and Martin (2021) suggest that understanding stress responses and trauma reactions can support more empathetic and effective responses within educational environments by encouraging adults to view behaviour as communication rather than simply rule-breaking.

---

## Trauma-Informed Principles in Practice

Supporting Young Minds is guided by a number of trauma-informed principles that help create emotionally safe learning environments.

### **Safety**

Young people should feel physically and emotionally safe during programme delivery.

This includes:

- Clear boundaries
- Consistent expectations
- Respectful communication
- Predictable session structures

### **Choice**

Participation should never feel forced.

Where possible, young people should be offered appropriate choices about how they engage with activities and discussions.

## **Respect**

Every young person deserves to be treated with dignity, respect and compassion.

Different experiences, perspectives and communication styles should be welcomed without judgement.

## **Predictability**

Knowing what to expect can help reduce uncertainty and anxiety.

Supporting Young Minds therefore uses clear structures, explanations and transitions throughout delivery.

## **Empowerment**

Young people benefit when their strengths, abilities and perspectives are recognised.

The programme encourages participation, self-reflection and personal growth whilst helping young people recognise existing strengths.

## **Collaboration**

Learning is most effective when young people feel involved rather than directed.

Supporting Young Minds encourages curiosity, discussion and shared learning wherever appropriate.

---

## **Trauma-Informed Communication**

The language used by facilitators can significantly influence how safe and supported young people feel.

Trauma-informed communication seeks to be:

- Respectful
- Non-judgemental
- Clear
- Compassionate
- Inclusive

- Strengths-based

Facilitators are encouraged to avoid language that shames, labels or pathologises young people.

Instead, communication should focus on understanding, encouragement and respect.

The goal is not to minimise accountability or expectations.

Rather, it is to create conditions where learning and participation feel safer and more accessible.

---

## **Boundaries of the Programme**

Supporting Young Minds is trauma-informed.

It is not trauma therapy.

The programme does not:

- Process trauma
- Explore traumatic experiences in detail
- Deliver clinical intervention
- Replace therapeutic services
- Replace safeguarding systems

Young people are never required to disclose personal experiences.

If disclosures occur, facilitators respond in accordance with safeguarding procedures and organisational policy.

This distinction is important.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments that are safe for young people who may have experienced adversity whilst remaining firmly within educational and psychoeducational boundaries.

---

## **Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, trauma-informed practice begins with a simple belief:

Every young person deserves to feel safe, respected and understood.

We may never know the full story behind a young person's experiences.

We may never fully understand what challenges they have faced, what pressures they are carrying or what they have overcome to be present in the room.

What we can do is create environments that reduce unnecessary barriers, promote psychological safety and treat young people with dignity and compassion.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is not about asking young people to revisit the past.

It is about helping them build understanding, confidence and practical wellbeing skills in the present.

The programme seeks to create learning experiences where young people feel able to participate without judgement, explore wellbeing without pressure and recognise strengths that may already exist within them.

Because trauma-informed practice is not simply about understanding adversity.

It is also about recognising possibility, resilience and growth.

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## **Chapter 12**

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# **Safeguarding Context for Young People**

## **Introduction**

Safeguarding is central to all aspects of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

Whilst the programme is not a safeguarding intervention, it is delivered within safeguarding-aware environments and recognises the importance of promoting safety, wellbeing and appropriate support for young people.

At Fynix Project, safeguarding is not viewed solely as a process for responding to risk.

It is also about creating environments where young people feel safe, respected, valued and able to access support when they need it.

Supporting Young Minds contributes to this wider safeguarding culture by helping young people develop emotional awareness, confidence, communication skills and understanding of support networks.

The programme does not replace safeguarding systems, specialist services or statutory responsibilities.

Instead, it operates alongside them, helping to strengthen the protective factors that support wellbeing, resilience and help-seeking.

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## **Understanding Vulnerability**

Vulnerability is influenced by many different factors.

It is not a fixed characteristic and should never be viewed as a weakness.

Young people may experience increased vulnerability due to factors such as:

- Age and developmental stage
- Life experiences
- Family circumstances
- Social and environmental factors
- Disability or additional needs
- Experiences of adversity or trauma
- Limited access to support networks

Importantly, vulnerability can change over time.

A young person may feel well-supported and resilient in one area of their life whilst experiencing challenges in another.

Supporting Young Minds encourages facilitators to view vulnerability through a compassionate and strengths-based lens rather than making assumptions about capability or resilience.

Young people should never be defined solely by the challenges they face.

---

## Protective Factors

Protective factors are experiences, relationships and resources that can help support wellbeing and resilience.

Protective factors do not eliminate difficulties, but they can help young people navigate challenges more effectively and reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes.

Examples of protective factors include:

- Positive relationships
- Trusted adults
- Supportive learning environments
- Community connection
- Emotional awareness
- Problem-solving skills
- Opportunities for participation
- Positive peer relationships
- Access to support services
- A sense of belonging

Research consistently highlights the importance of protective factors in promoting resilience and wellbeing.

Grych, Taylor, Banyard and Hamby (2020) found that amongst adolescents experiencing adversity, the strongest predictors of positive wellbeing were often the presence of personal strengths and supportive external resources rather than the absence of difficulty itself.

Similarly, Marquez, Francis-Hew and Humphrey (2023) identified positive relationships, social support and access to external resources as key protective factors associated with resilience during adolescence.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to strengthen these protective factors by creating opportunities for connection, emotional learning, confidence-building and help-seeking awareness.

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## The Importance of Trusted Relationships

One of the most consistent findings within youth wellbeing research is the importance of trusted relationships.

Young people are more likely to seek support, share concerns and access help when they have relationships characterised by trust, safety and respect.

Trusted adults may include:

- Parents and carers
- Family members
- Teachers
- Youth workers
- Social workers
- Coaches
- Mentors
- Community leaders

Not every young person has the same support network.

However, helping young people recognise trusted individuals within their lives can be an important protective factor.

Supporting Young Minds encourages participants to reflect on who they can turn to for support and how healthy relationships contribute to wellbeing.

The programme recognises that connection and belonging are important foundations for both wellbeing and safeguarding.

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## **Online Safety and Digital Wellbeing**

Digital environments play a significant role in the lives of many young people.

Online spaces can offer opportunities for learning, connection, creativity and community. However, they can also present risks.

Potential online risks may include:

- Cyberbullying
- Harmful content
- Exploitation
- Grooming
- Online harassment
- Misinformation
- Privacy concerns
- Excessive social comparison

Supporting Young Minds recognises that digital wellbeing forms an important part of modern wellbeing education.

Research by Pan and colleagues (2024) found that digital resilience was positively associated with digital literacy, supportive relationships and opportunities to develop skills for navigating online environments safely.

Whilst Supporting Young Minds is not a digital safety programme, the emotional awareness, communication skills and confidence developed through the programme may contribute to broader protective factors that support safe online engagement.

Young people are encouraged to think critically about online experiences and recognise when support may be needed.

---

## **Exploitation Awareness**

Young people may be vulnerable to different forms of exploitation.

These risks can exist in both online and offline environments.

Supporting Young Minds does not provide specialist exploitation training. However, facilitators remain aware that exploitation can affect young people from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances.

Where concerns arise, facilitators follow established safeguarding procedures and reporting pathways.

The programme contributes to safeguarding by promoting self-awareness, confidence, communication and understanding of support networks.

These skills can help young people recognise when situations feel unsafe and identify trusted adults they can approach for support.

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## **Peer Relationships and Peer-on-Peer Harm**

Relationships with peers become increasingly important during adolescence.

Whilst peer relationships can provide connection, support and belonging, they can also involve conflict, pressure or harm.

Peer-on-peer harm may include:

- Bullying
- Harassment

- Coercion
- Emotional abuse
- Social exclusion
- Online abuse

Supporting Young Minds promotes respectful communication, empathy and healthy relationship skills throughout programme delivery.

The programme seeks to create environments where young people feel safe, valued and able to participate without fear of judgement or exclusion.

Psychological safety is not only important for learning.

It is also an important part of safeguarding.

---

## **Self-Harm Awareness**

Supporting Young Minds recognises that some young people may experience significant emotional distress.

Whilst the programme does not provide therapy, crisis intervention or clinical support, facilitators remain alert to safeguarding concerns that may emerge during delivery.

Any concerns relating to self-harm must be managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures and organisational policy.

Young people are never expected to disclose personal experiences.

However, if concerns arise, facilitators have a responsibility to respond appropriately and prioritise safety.

The programme aims to promote emotional awareness, coping skills and help-seeking behaviours whilst remaining within clear professional boundaries.

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## **Suicide Awareness**

Supporting Young Minds recognises the importance of maintaining awareness of suicide-related concerns whilst remaining within the programme's educational remit.

Facilitators are not expected to assess suicide risk or provide crisis intervention.

However, any concerns relating to suicidal thoughts, statements or behaviours must be treated seriously and managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Young people should never be left carrying significant concerns alone.

Where risk is identified, appropriate safeguarding pathways must be followed immediately.

Maintaining clear boundaries helps ensure that young people receive support from the most appropriate professionals and services.

---

## Help-Seeking Behaviour

A central aim of Supporting Young Minds is helping young people recognise that seeking support is a strength.

Many young people experience challenges at some point in their lives.

Knowing when and how to seek support can be an important protective factor.

The programme encourages young people to recognise:

- Trusted adults
- Supportive relationships
- Available services
- Community resources
- Appropriate support pathways

Research consistently highlights the importance of help-seeking.

Gulliver, Griffiths and Christensen (2010), in a systematic review of adolescent and young adult help-seeking, found that stigma, limited mental health literacy and a preference for self-reliance were among the most significant barriers to accessing support.

The same review found that trusted relationships, encouragement from others and positive experiences of support were among the strongest facilitators of help-seeking.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to address these barriers by normalising emotional experiences, building wellbeing literacy and encouraging young people to recognise that asking for support is a sign of strength rather than weakness.

---

## **Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe safeguarding is about more than responding to risk.

It is also about creating the conditions that help young people feel safe enough to learn, grow and ask for support when they need it.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground does not replace safeguarding systems, mental health services or specialist intervention.

Its role is educational.

By helping young people develop emotional awareness, confidence, communication skills and understanding of support pathways, the programme seeks to strengthen protective factors that support wellbeing, resilience and help-seeking.

Research consistently highlights the importance of trusted relationships, emotional understanding and access to support as protective factors for young people's wellbeing (Grych et al., 2020; Marquez et al., 2023; Gulliver et al., 2010).

At Fynix Project, we believe that helping young people understand themselves is not separate from safeguarding.

It is part of safeguarding.

When young people have language for their experiences, confidence to seek support and trusted adults they can turn to, they are often better placed to navigate challenges, access help when needed and move forward with greater confidence and resilience.

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## **PART 4**

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## **CORE LEARNING PILLARS**

# Introduction

The Core Learning Pillars form the foundation of *Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground*.

Together, they provide a structured and progressive framework that supports young people to develop emotional awareness, confidence, resilience, communication skills and practical wellbeing strategies in ways that feel accessible, relevant and meaningful to everyday life.

At Fynix Project, we believe that understanding comes before change.

Before young people can build confidence, strengthen resilience or develop coping strategies, they first need opportunities to better understand themselves, recognise their strengths and develop practical tools they can use in everyday situations.

This philosophy sits at the heart of the Fynix approach:

**Find Your Ground. Recognise Your Strengths. Build Your Toolkit. Move Forward With Confidence.**

The programme therefore follows a deliberate learning journey. Participants begin by developing awareness of emotions, stress and self-understanding before progressing towards grounding skills, confidence, communication, relationships and resilience. Each pillar builds upon the one before it, creating a psychologically safe and developmentally appropriate learning experience.

Research supports the value of structured and progressive approaches to emotional wellbeing education. In a meta-analysis involving almost 4,000 children and young people, Espenes et al. (2024) found that interventions targeting emotional awareness and emotional regulation were associated with significant improvements in emotional wellbeing and broader mental health outcomes. Similarly, Weare and Nind (2014), reviewing 52 school-based wellbeing reviews, concluded that the most effective programmes developed social and emotional skills in a structured and sequential manner rather than treating them as isolated topics.

These findings support a principle that underpins the entire programme:

**Self-awareness creates the foundation for confidence, resilience and wellbeing.**

Supporting Young Minds remains educational and preventative throughout delivery.

Activities are designed to promote reflection, discussion, curiosity and skill development rather than therapy, counselling or emotional processing. Young people are never expected to share personal experiences and remain in control of their level of participation at all times.

Each pillar has been developed using evidence-based foundations and delivered through a trauma-informed, strengths-based and safeguarding-aware approach.

Together, the six pillars help young people:

- Find their ground through greater self-awareness
- Recognise their strengths and personal capabilities
- Build a practical toolkit of wellbeing strategies
- Move forward with greater confidence and resilience

The pillars are not designed to tell young people who they should become.

They are designed to help young people better understand who they already are.

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## **PILLAR 1**

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# **UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS**

## **Overview**

Emotions influence how we think, feel, behave, communicate and respond to the world around us.

Yet despite being a fundamental part of everyday life, many young people receive limited education about emotions and emotional wellbeing. They are often expected to manage increasingly complex emotional experiences without first being given the language, understanding or practical skills to do so.

At Fynix Project, we encourage young people to view emotions as information rather than problems.

Emotions can provide important clues about our experiences, relationships, needs, values and environment. Learning to recognise and understand emotions is often the first step towards understanding ourselves more clearly.

This pillar introduces emotional awareness and emotional literacy in a practical, accessible and non-judgemental way.

The aim is not to categorise emotions as good or bad.

The aim is to help young people understand that all emotions serve a purpose and that every emotional experience can provide valuable information.

Research supports the importance of emotional literacy and emotional awareness. Aryani et al. (2025) found that psychoeducational approaches focusing on emotional regulation significantly improved emotional understanding amongst adolescents. Similarly, Garcia Blanc et al. (2024) found that a structured emotional competencies programme delivered within secondary schools produced improvements in emotional awareness, resilience and academic performance.

These findings suggest that emotional awareness is not simply something young people either possess or lack.

It is a skill that can be learned, strengthened and developed through structured learning opportunities.

Supporting Young Minds has been designed with this principle at its core.

---

## **Why Emotional Awareness Matters**

Emotional awareness refers to the ability to recognise, identify and understand emotions as they occur.

This may include:

- Recognising emotional experiences
- Identifying emotional triggers
- Understanding emotional responses
- Noticing patterns over time
- Connecting emotions with experiences
- Recognising emotional signals within the body

Developing emotional awareness helps young people better understand themselves and communicate more effectively with others.

Research suggests that emotional awareness forms an important foundation for emotional regulation and wellbeing. Espenes et al. (2024) found that interventions supporting emotional awareness and emotional regulation were

associated with improvements in wellbeing and broader emotional outcomes amongst children and adolescents.

These findings support a key principle of Supporting Young Minds:

**Awareness comes before action.**

Before young people can effectively respond to emotions, they first need opportunities to recognise what they are experiencing.

---

## Understanding Emotions

Emotions are often described as messages rather than problems.

Rather than viewing emotions as something to suppress, avoid or fix, young people can learn to recognise them as valuable sources of information.

For example:

- Fear may alert us to danger or uncertainty.
- Anger may signal that a boundary feels crossed.
- Sadness may reflect loss, disappointment or unmet needs.
- Joy may reinforce connection, achievement or positive experiences.
- Anxiety may highlight situations that feel important, uncertain or challenging.

Understanding emotions in this way can reduce self-judgement and encourage curiosity.

Supporting Young Minds encourages participants to explore emotions with openness and self-compassion whilst developing greater awareness of how emotions influence thoughts, behaviours and experiences.

---

## Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy refers to the ability to recognise, understand and communicate emotions using accurate language.

Many young people can identify whether they feel generally "good" or "bad", yet emotional experiences are often far more complex than these broad categories.

Developing emotional vocabulary can help young people:

- Communicate more effectively
- Understand experiences more clearly
- Improve self-awareness
- Build stronger relationships
- Seek support when needed

For example, recognising the difference between feeling:

- Frustrated
- Disappointed
- Embarrassed
- Overwhelmed
- Nervous
- Lonely
- Hopeful
- Relieved

can support a much deeper understanding of emotional experiences.

Garcia Blanc et al. (2024) found that structured emotional competencies programmes helped improve emotional awareness and emotional understanding amongst secondary school students, highlighting the value of explicitly teaching emotional language and emotional literacy skills.

---

## **Emotions and the Body**

Emotions are not experienced solely in the mind.

They are often experienced physically as well.

Young people may notice:

- Butterflies in the stomach
- Tightness in the chest
- Changes in breathing
- Increased heart rate
- Muscle tension
- Restlessness
- Changes in energy levels

Recognising these physical signs can help young people become more aware of emotions before they become overwhelming.

Developing awareness of emotional signals within the body also creates opportunities for earlier support, reflection and self-regulation.

Supporting Young Minds encourages participants to explore these connections through practical and age-appropriate activities that build self-awareness without requiring personal disclosure.

---

## Feelings and Behaviours

An important aspect of emotional development involves understanding the difference between emotions and behaviours.

Emotions are experiences.

Behaviours are responses.

Whilst emotions can influence behaviour, they do not determine it.

Helping young people understand this distinction can support greater emotional awareness, responsibility and choice.

The programme therefore encourages participants to explore how emotions may influence actions whilst recognising that different responses remain possible.

This approach promotes understanding rather than blame and encourages young people to reflect on choices without judgement.

---

## Key Learning Messages

By the end of this pillar, participants should understand that:

- Emotions are a normal part of being human.
- All emotions provide information.
- There are no "good" or "bad" emotions.
- Emotional awareness can be developed.
- Emotional vocabulary supports communication and self-understanding.
- Emotions are often experienced physically as well as emotionally.
- Emotions and behaviours are connected but not the same thing.
- Understanding emotions is the first step towards understanding ourselves.

This pillar represents the beginning of the Fynix journey.

Before we can build resilience, confidence or coping strategies, we must first learn to recognise what is happening within ourselves.

Finding your ground begins with awareness.

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## **PILLAR 2**

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# **UNDERSTANDING STRESS**

## **Understanding Your Responses**

### **Overview**

Stress is a normal part of life.

Every young person will experience stress at different points throughout adolescence and beyond. Stress can arise from school, friendships, family life, exams, social situations, future plans, change, uncertainty and many other everyday experiences.

Despite this, many young people receive little education about what stress actually is, how it affects the body and mind or how to recognise when stress may be building.

At Fynix Project, we believe that understanding stress is often more helpful than fearing it.

Stress is not automatically harmful.

In many situations, stress can help us respond to challenges, stay focused, adapt to change and prepare for important events.

Difficulties often arise when stress becomes prolonged, overwhelming or poorly understood.

This pillar helps participants explore stress in a practical, accessible and non-judgemental way.

The focus is not on eliminating stress.

The focus is on recognising it, understanding it and developing awareness of how it may influence thoughts, emotions, behaviour and wellbeing.

Research supports the value of structured stress education for young people. Zisopoulou and Varvogli (2022) found that psychoeducational approaches focused on stress management were associated with improvements in stress awareness, coping skills and emotional wellbeing amongst children and adolescents. Similarly, Mason, Burkhart and Lazebnik (2019) found that a structured adolescent stress-management programme produced meaningful improvements in both perceived stress and physiological indicators of stress.

These findings support an important principle of Supporting Young Minds:

**Understanding stress helps us respond to it more effectively.**

Before young people can use grounding techniques, coping strategies or wellbeing tools, they first need opportunities to recognise what stress looks and feels like for them.

---

## Why Understanding Stress Matters

Stress can affect how young people:

- Think
- Feel
- Learn
- Communicate
- Behave
- Sleep
- Concentrate
- Connect with others

When stress builds gradually, it is not always immediately obvious.

Young people may notice changes in mood, motivation, concentration, energy levels or confidence without recognising stress as a contributing factor.

Developing awareness of stress can help young people:

- Recognise early warning signs
- Understand emotional responses
- Identify personal triggers
- Seek support earlier
- Use practical coping strategies

- Develop greater self-awareness

Within the Fynix approach, understanding stress represents the next step after emotional awareness.

Once young people begin recognising emotions, they can start exploring how stress influences those experiences and how they may respond in helpful ways.

---

## What Is Stress?

Stress is the body's natural response to challenge, pressure, uncertainty or change.

When we encounter situations that feel demanding, important or difficult, the body and brain work together to help us respond.

This response is often referred to as the stress response.

Stress can occur in many situations, including:

- Exams
- Deadlines
- Friendships
- Family difficulties
- Public speaking
- Sporting events
- Moving schools
- Conflict
- Significant life changes

Not all stress is negative.

Some stress can be motivating and help people prepare, focus and perform.

Problems are more likely to arise when stress becomes intense, prolonged or feels difficult to manage.

Supporting Young Minds helps young people understand that stress is a normal human experience rather than a personal weakness.

---

## Stress in the Body

Stress often creates physical changes within the body.

Young people may notice:

- Faster breathing
- Increased heart rate
- Muscle tension
- Sweaty palms
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Restlessness
- Stomach discomfort
- Changes in sleep

These responses are part of the body's natural stress system.

They are designed to help us respond to situations that feel important, uncertain or challenging.

Understanding these physical responses can help young people recognise that many stress reactions are normal biological responses rather than signs that something is wrong with them.

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## **Stress in the Mind**

Stress can also influence thinking.

Young people may notice:

- Racing thoughts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Overthinking
- Worrying about future events
- Forgetfulness
- Self-doubt
- Difficulty making decisions

These experiences can sometimes make challenges feel larger or more overwhelming than they actually are.

Developing awareness of stress-related thinking patterns can help young people recognise when stress may be influencing how they view a situation.

# Stress and Emotions

Stress and emotions are closely connected.

When stress increases, young people may notice emotions such as:

- Anxiety
- Frustration
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Worry
- Anger
- Overwhelm

This does not mean the emotions are wrong.

It simply means that stress can influence emotional experiences.

Understanding this connection helps young people recognise that emotional reactions often make more sense when viewed within the wider context of what is happening in their lives.

---

## Triggers

A trigger is something that contributes to a stress response.

Triggers are different for everyone.

Examples may include:

- School pressures
- Exams
- Social situations
- Conflict
- Change
- Uncertainty
- Noise
- Crowded environments
- Performance expectations
- Online pressures

Recognising triggers does not mean avoiding them completely.

Instead, it helps young people develop awareness of situations that may require additional support, preparation or coping strategies.

---

## **Early Warning Signs**

Stress often provides clues before overwhelm develops.

These clues may be physical, emotional, behavioural or cognitive.

Examples may include:

- Feeling more emotional than usual
- Becoming irritable
- Difficulty sleeping
- Increased worry
- Reduced concentration
- Avoiding activities
- Changes in motivation
- Feeling tired more often

Recognising these early signs can help young people respond sooner rather than waiting until stress becomes overwhelming.

This awareness forms an important part of emotional wellbeing and self-regulation.

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## **Stress, Safety and the Nervous System**

When stress increases, the nervous system may move into a more activated state.

Young people may notice:

- Feeling on edge
- Becoming reactive
- Wanting to avoid situations
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Struggling to focus
- Feeling emotionally sensitive

Understanding these responses can help young people recognise that stress responses are often linked to how the body is attempting to manage challenge or uncertainty.

This understanding provides an important foundation for Pillar 3: Finding Your Ground.

Before we can learn grounding skills, we first need to understand what happens when stress begins to build.

---

## **Building Awareness**

The aim of this pillar is not to eliminate stress.

The aim is to build awareness.

Young people are encouraged to become curious about:

- What stress feels like for them
- What situations increase stress
- What warning signs they notice
- What helps them feel supported
- What strategies may be useful

This awareness creates opportunities for choice.

And choice creates opportunities for growth.

---

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this pillar, participants will be able to:

- Understand stress as a normal human response
  - Recognise signs of stress within the body and mind
  - Identify personal stress triggers
  - Recognise early warning signs of overwhelm
  - Understand the connection between stress, emotions and behaviour
  - Develop greater self-awareness
  - Prepare for practical grounding strategies introduced later in the programme
- 

## **Key Learning Topics**

## **What Is Stress?**

Understanding stress as a normal and natural response to challenge, pressure and change.

## **Stress in the Body**

Recognising physical signs that stress may be building.

## **Stress in the Mind**

Understanding how stress can influence thoughts, concentration and decision-making.

## **Stress and Emotions**

Exploring the relationship between stress and emotional experiences.

## **Triggers**

Identifying situations, environments and experiences that may contribute to stress.

## **Early Warning Signs**

Recognising signs that stress may be increasing before overwhelm develops.

## **Stress and Safety**

Understanding how the nervous system responds to challenge and uncertainty.

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# **Activities**

## **Stress Thermometer**

Participants explore different levels of stress and identify how stress may feel at different points along the scale.

## **Pressure Bucket**

A visual activity exploring how multiple pressures can build over time and affect wellbeing.

## **Trigger Mapping**

Identifying common stress triggers and exploring personal patterns of stress.

## **Warning Signs Reflection**

Recognising early indicators that stress may be increasing.

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## **Facilitator Notes**

Discussions about stress should remain educational and awareness-focused.

Young people should never feel pressured to disclose personal experiences or challenging life events.

Examples can be explored through hypothetical situations, everyday experiences and group discussion.

The facilitator's role is to support understanding rather than encourage disclosure.

The focus should remain on building awareness, normalising stress responses and preparing participants for the grounding skills introduced within Pillar 3.

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## **Workbook Content**

Suggested workbook pages:

- My Stress Thermometer
- Pressure Bucket Activity
- Trigger Tracker
- Early Warning Signs Reflection
- Understanding My Stress Responses

Approx. 4–6 pages

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## **Key Learning Messages**

By the end of this pillar, participants should understand that:

- Stress is a normal human response.

- Stress is not a weakness.
- Stress can affect thoughts, emotions, behaviour and physical wellbeing.
- Everyone experiences stress differently.
- Triggers vary from person to person.
- Early warning signs can help identify stress before overwhelm develops.
- Understanding stress creates opportunities for choice and self-awareness.
- Awareness is the first step towards effective self-regulation.

Understanding stress helps young people recognise what is happening within themselves.

Finding Your Ground helps them decide what to do next.

Together, these pillars help transform awareness into action.

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## **PILLAR 3**

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# **FINDING YOUR GROUND**

## **Signature Fynix Pillar — The Heart of the Programme**

### **Overview**

Finding Your Ground sits at the heart of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

Life can sometimes feel overwhelming, uncertain or emotionally intense. Young people may experience moments where their thoughts feel busy, emotions feel strong or their body feels activated by stress, pressure or anxiety.

Finding Your Ground is about helping young people recognise these experiences and learn practical ways to reconnect with the present moment.

The focus is not on controlling emotions or making difficult feelings disappear.

The focus is on noticing what is happening, creating space, using practical tools and choosing the next helpful step.

At Fynix Project, we believe grounding is not about ignoring challenges.

It is about helping young people feel steadier while they navigate them.

This pillar introduces grounding, nervous system awareness and self-regulation in a practical, accessible and non-clinical way. Participants are encouraged to explore strategies that may help them feel calmer, more present and more connected to themselves.

Research supports the value of grounding, breathing and present-moment awareness techniques as part of young people's wellbeing education. Yonaevy and Prananingrum (2024) found that grounding technique psychoeducation was associated with significant reductions in anxiety among adolescents aged 14–17. Moghadam (2025) found that structured mindfulness and present-moment awareness training with adolescents supported improvements in emotional regulation and psychological resilience. Emerging reviews of breathing and relaxation techniques also suggest that structured breath-based approaches may support stress and anxiety reduction in adolescent populations (Peleckis et al., 2026; Islam et al., 2025).

These findings support the inclusion of grounding as a practical wellbeing skill.

Supporting Young Minds does not present grounding as therapy or clinical treatment.

It presents grounding as a learnable tool that young people can practise, adapt and use in everyday life.

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## Why Finding Your Ground Matters

When young people feel overwhelmed, it can become difficult to think clearly, communicate needs, make decisions or respond in ways that feel helpful.

Grounding provides a way to pause and reconnect with the present moment.

This can support young people to notice:

- What they are feeling
- What their body may be communicating
- What they need in that moment
- What tool or support may help
- What next step feels manageable

Grounding does not remove every difficulty.

It helps create enough steadiness to respond.

This links directly to the wider Fynix approach:

**Find Your Ground. Recognise Your Strengths. Build Your Toolkit. Move Forward With Confidence.**

Finding Your Ground is the point where young people begin turning awareness into practical action.

---

## The Nervous System

The nervous system helps the body respond to the world around us.

When we feel safe, supported or settled, the body may feel calmer, more open and more able to learn.

When we feel stressed, threatened, embarrassed, overwhelmed or under pressure, the body may activate protective responses. These responses are normal and are designed to keep us safe.

Young people may notice:

- A faster heartbeat
- Tense muscles
- Changes in breathing
- Racing thoughts
- Restlessness
- Feeling frozen or stuck
- Wanting to leave or avoid a situation
- Feeling emotional or reactive

Understanding the nervous system can help young people recognise that stress responses are not signs of weakness.

They are signs that the body is trying to respond to something it experiences as difficult, uncertain or unsafe.

This understanding supports the trauma-informed principle that behaviour is communication. It encourages curiosity rather than judgement.

---

## Regulation

Regulation refers to the process of moving towards a steadier emotional and physical state.

It does not mean feeling calm all the time.

It does not mean never becoming upset, stressed or overwhelmed.

Regulation means developing awareness of emotional and physical states and learning tools that may help the body and mind return to a more manageable place.

Young people may begin to recognise:

- What overwhelm feels like
- What calm feels like
- What helps them settle
- What makes things harder
- What support they may need
- What tools feel useful to them

Research suggests that emotional regulation skills can be developed through structured learning. Espenes et al. (2024) found that psychosocial interventions targeting emotional regulation produced significant improvements in emotion regulation outcomes among children and young people.

Supporting Young Minds builds on this principle by helping young people explore regulation through practical, non-clinical tools.

---

## Grounding

Grounding means using the senses, body, breath or attention to reconnect with the present moment.

Grounding techniques may include:

- Noticing what can be seen, heard or felt
- Focusing on breathing
- Using an anchor object
- Naming what is happening
- Feeling feet on the floor
- Paying attention to the environment
- Using safe imagery or visualisation

Different strategies work for different people.

There is no single grounding technique that works for everyone.

Supporting Young Minds encourages participants to explore a range of grounding tools and notice which ones feel helpful, comfortable or realistic for them.

This supports a key Fynix message:

**No single strategy works for everyone. Build your toolkit.**

---

## Returning to the Present

When emotions or stress feel intense, thoughts can sometimes move quickly into the past, the future or imagined outcomes.

Grounding supports young people to return attention to the present moment.

This may help them notice:

- Where they are
- What is happening now
- What is within their control
- What support is available
- What next step feels possible

Returning to the present does not invalidate what a young person is feeling.

It simply helps create space around the feeling.

This space can support reflection, choice and steadier decision-making.

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## The Fynix Finding Your Ground Model

The Finding Your Ground model provides a simple five-step process that young people can remember and practise.

### **Notice**

Recognise what is happening.

This may include noticing thoughts, feelings, body signals or stress responses.

### **Pause**

Create space before reacting.

A pause may be as simple as taking one breath, looking around the room or giving yourself a moment.

## **Ground**

Reconnect with the present moment.

This may involve breathing, sensory awareness, movement, an anchor object or another grounding strategy.

## **Reset**

Use a practical wellbeing tool.

This may include taking a break, speaking to someone, changing environment, using breathing techniques or choosing a coping strategy.

## **Move Forward**

Choose the next helpful step.

This does not need to be a big step. It may simply be asking for support, returning to the activity, taking a break or making one manageable choice.

The model is not about perfection.

It is about giving young people a practical sequence they can return to when life feels difficult.

---

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this pillar, participants will be able to:

- Understand grounding as a practical wellbeing tool
  - Develop awareness of nervous system responses
  - Recognise signs of overwhelm
  - Explore practical grounding techniques
  - Identify strategies that may help them feel steadier
  - Build confidence using wellbeing tools
  - Understand that different strategies work for different people
-

# Key Learning Topics

## The Nervous System

Understanding how the body responds to stress, safety, pressure and overwhelm.

## Stress and Safety

Recognising that the body responds differently depending on how safe, supported or overwhelmed a person feels.

## Regulation

Understanding regulation as the process of returning towards steadiness, not feeling calm all the time.

## Grounding

Learning practical techniques that support present-moment awareness.

## Returning to the Present

Exploring how grounding may support emotional steadiness and help young people identify next steps.

## Building a Toolkit

Recognising that different tools work for different people and that young people can choose strategies that feel useful for them.

---

# Activities

## Box Breathing

A structured breathing activity that introduces breath awareness and rhythm.

Participants are invited to breathe in, hold, breathe out and pause in a simple repeated pattern.

This activity supports awareness of breathing and may help some young people feel steadier.

## 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

A sensory grounding activity that encourages participants to notice:

- Five things they can see
- Four things they can feel
- Three things they can hear
- Two things they can smell
- One thing they can taste

This activity supports present-moment awareness through the senses.

## **Anchor Objects**

Participants explore how objects, textures or meaningful items may support grounding.

The focus is on identifying what feels helpful, personal and realistic.

## **Safe Place Exercise**

A guided visualisation and reflection activity that invites participants to imagine a place, real or imagined, that feels safe, steady or peaceful.

Participants are never required to share personal details and may adapt the activity in a way that feels comfortable.

---

## **Facilitator Notes**

Grounding techniques should always be presented as wellbeing tools rather than therapeutic interventions.

Participants should be encouraged to explore strategies that feel comfortable, useful and appropriate for them.

Not every young person will find every technique helpful.

This should be normalised.

Facilitators should avoid presenting grounding as a guaranteed way to remove anxiety, distress or overwhelm. Instead, grounding should be explained as one possible way to reconnect with the present moment and support steadiness.

Participation must remain voluntary.

Young people should never be forced to close their eyes, engage in visualisation or take part in breathing activities if they do not wish to.

Alternative options should always be available, such as quiet observation, doodling, grounding through objects or simply listening.

---

## **Workbook Content**

Suggested workbook pages:

- My Grounding Toolkit
- Grounding Reflection
- Sensory Awareness Worksheet
- Nervous System Awareness
- Finding My Anchor
- Box Breathing Guide
- Safe Place Reflection

Approx. 5–8 pages

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## **Key Learning Messages**

By the end of this pillar, participants should understand that:

- Grounding is a practical wellbeing tool.
- The nervous system responds to stress and safety.
- Feeling overwhelmed is not a weakness.
- Different grounding tools work for different people.
- Grounding does not erase emotions, but it can support steadiness.
- Breathing, sensory awareness and anchor objects can help reconnect with the present moment.
- Young people can build their own personal wellbeing toolkit.
- Small steps can support meaningful change.

Finding Your Ground is the heart of the programme because it helps young people move from awareness into action.

It gives them practical tools they can return to beyond the session, beyond the workbook and beyond the programme itself.

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## **PILLAR 4**

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# CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM

## Overview

Confidence and self-esteem influence how young people see themselves, approach challenges and engage with opportunities.

During adolescence, young people are developing a stronger sense of identity, belonging and self-worth. This can be an exciting stage of growth, but it can also be a time when self-doubt, comparison, pressure and negative self-talk become more noticeable.

At Fynix Project, we believe young people are more than their difficulties.

Every young person carries strengths, qualities, skills and potential, even if they do not always recognise them.

This pillar helps participants explore confidence and self-esteem through a strengths-based lens. The aim is not to create unrealistic positivity or pretend that challenges do not exist.

The aim is to help young people develop a more balanced and compassionate understanding of themselves.

Research supports the value of structured approaches that develop resilience, confidence-related skills and emotional intelligence. Cardona-Isaza et al. (2025) found that a structured emotional intelligence programme with adolescents was associated with improvements in resilience, emotional stability and subjective wellbeing. Adibsereshki et al. (2019) found that a resilience intervention programme produced improvements in resilience and emotional intelligence among adolescent participants. Cerit and Simsek (2021) also reported that structured skills-based programmes may support psychological resilience and emotional intelligence over time, although findings should be interpreted cautiously due to mixed post-intervention results.

These studies support the wider principle that confidence, self-awareness and resilience-related skills can be developed through structured learning.

Supporting Young Minds translates these principles into practical, reflective and accessible activities for young people.

## Why Confidence Matters

Confidence affects how young people approach everyday life.

It can influence whether they:

- Try something new
- Ask for help
- Join in
- Speak up
- Set goals
- Recover from setbacks
- Believe change is possible

Confidence does not mean feeling brave all the time.

It does not mean never feeling nervous or unsure.

Confidence often grows through small experiences of trying, learning, reflecting and recognising progress.

Supporting Young Minds encourages young people to see confidence as something that can develop over time rather than something they either have or do not have.

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## Understanding Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to how a person values and views themselves.

A young person's self-esteem may be influenced by:

- Relationships
- School experiences
- Family messages
- Peer comparison
- Social media
- Achievements
- Setbacks
- Identity
- Belonging
- Past experiences

Self-esteem can affect how young people speak to themselves, how they respond to mistakes and how they interpret challenges.

Low self-esteem may make it harder for young people to recognise strengths or believe they are capable of growth.

This pillar supports young people to begin noticing personal qualities, achievements and strengths that may otherwise be overlooked.

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## **Strengths Awareness**

Strengths are not only talents, achievements or things someone is naturally good at.

Strengths can also be qualities that help a young person keep going.

Strengths may include:

- Kindness
- Curiosity
- Humour
- Determination
- Creativity
- Honesty
- Courage
- Patience
- Loyalty
- Being a good listener
- Asking for help
- Trying again

The Participant Activity & Reflection Journal reflects this through strengths-based activities such as Create Your Phoenix, My Shield of Strength and My Superpower, where young people are encouraged to recognise qualities, support systems and experiences that help them move forward.

This aligns with the Fynix belief that young people already carry strengths within them.

The role of the programme is to help them notice, name and build upon those strengths.

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## **Self-Talk**

Self-talk refers to the way people speak to themselves internally.

Young people may experience supportive self-talk, critical self-talk or a mixture of both.

An inner critic may say:

- “I can’t do this.”
- “I always mess things up.”
- “Everyone else is better than me.”
- “There is no point trying.”

An inner coach may say:

- “This is difficult, but I can take one step.”
- “I am still learning.”
- “I can ask for help.”
- “One mistake does not define me.”

The aim is not to force young people to think positively all the time.

The aim is to help them notice unhelpful self-talk and practise developing a more supportive internal voice.

This supports emotional awareness, confidence and resilience.

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## **Growth Mindset**

Growth mindset is the belief that skills, confidence and abilities can develop through effort, support, practice and learning.

This does not mean everything is easy.

It means growth is possible.

A growth-focused approach helps young people understand that:

- Mistakes can support learning.
- Confidence can grow through practice.
- Setbacks do not define identity.
- Asking for help is part of development.
- Small steps still count.

This aligns strongly with the Fynix message:

**Growth takes time.**

Young people do not need to have everything figured out in order to take the next step.

---

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this pillar, participants will be able to:

- Recognise personal strengths
  - Build self-awareness
  - Explore confidence-building strategies
  - Understand self-talk
  - Identify supportive and unhelpful internal messages
  - Develop a growth-focused approach
  - Reflect on achievements, values and personal qualities
- 

## **Key Learning Topics**

### **What Is Confidence?**

Understanding confidence as something that can grow through learning, practice and support.

### **Understanding Self-Esteem**

Exploring how young people view themselves and what may influence self-worth.

### **Strengths Awareness**

Recognising qualities, skills, values and experiences that support confidence and resilience.

### **Self-Talk**

Exploring the difference between inner critic messages and inner coach responses.

### **Growth Mindset**

Understanding that learning, confidence and resilience can develop over time.

---

# Activities

## Strengths Tree

Participants identify sources of support, personal strengths, achievements and future goals using a tree metaphor.

This activity encourages young people to recognise what helps them grow.

## Confidence Ladder

Participants choose a goal and break it down into smaller, manageable steps.

This helps demonstrate that confidence often grows through gradual action rather than one big leap.

## Inner Coach vs Inner Critic

Participants explore examples of unhelpful self-talk and practise creating more supportive inner coach responses.

The focus is on awareness, compassion and realistic encouragement.

---

## Facilitator Notes

Confidence and self-esteem activities should remain strengths-based, reflective and non-pressured.

Young people should never be asked to disclose personal insecurities, difficult experiences or private details.

Some participants may find it difficult to identify strengths.

Facilitators should normalise this and offer examples gently.

The aim is not to force confidence.

The aim is to create opportunities for young people to notice strengths, recognise progress and develop a more balanced view of themselves.

Facilitators should avoid empty praise or unrealistic positivity.

Instead, focus on specific strengths, effort, qualities, progress and courage.

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## Workbook Content

Suggested workbook pages:

- Strengths Inventory
- Confidence Ladder
- Positive Self-Talk Worksheet
- Growth Reflection

Approx. 4–6 pages

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## Key Learning Messages

By the end of this pillar, participants should understand that:

- Confidence can grow over time.
- Self-esteem can be influenced by experiences, relationships and self-talk.
- Everyone has strengths, even if they do not always notice them.
- Strength is not only about being brave or confident.
- Asking for help can be a strength.
- Self-talk can affect confidence and wellbeing.
- Growth does not require perfection.
- Small steps can support meaningful change.

This pillar supports young people to recognise their strengths, build confidence and develop a more compassionate understanding of themselves.

At Fynix Project, we do not believe young people need to become someone different in order to grow.

We believe they need opportunities to recognise who they already are, what they already carry and what they are capable of becoming

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## PILLAR 5

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## COMMUNICATION & RELATIONSHIPS

## Overview

Relationships play an important role in the wellbeing, development and resilience of young people.

Throughout adolescence, young people are learning how to communicate their thoughts, feelings and needs whilst also developing skills that help them build healthy relationships with others.

Positive relationships can provide support, encouragement, belonging and protection during difficult times. Equally, communication difficulties, conflict or unhealthy relationships can contribute to stress, isolation and emotional challenges.

At Fynix Project, we believe communication is more than simply talking.

Communication is about connection.

It is about understanding ourselves, expressing our needs, listening to others and building relationships based on respect, trust and empathy.

This pillar helps young people develop greater awareness of communication, healthy relationships and the role that connection plays in wellbeing.

Research consistently highlights the importance of relationships as protective factors during adolescence. Marquez, Francis-Hew and Humphrey (2023) found that positive relationships and supportive social networks were among the strongest contributors to resilience amongst young people facing adversity. Similarly, Grych et al. (2020) found that supportive relationships were strongly associated with positive wellbeing outcomes even in the presence of significant life challenges.

These findings reinforce a key principle of Supporting Young Minds:

### **Connection matters.**

Relationships do not remove every challenge.

But healthy relationships can make challenges easier to navigate.

---

## Why Communication Matters

Communication influences almost every aspect of life.

It affects how we:

- Express emotions
- Build relationships
- Resolve disagreements
- Seek support
- Understand others
- Feel heard and valued

Communication is not limited to words.

Young people communicate through:

- Speech
- Behaviour
- Body language
- Facial expressions
- Creativity
- Digital communication
- Actions

Supporting Young Minds encourages young people to recognise that communication is a skill that can be developed through awareness, reflection and practice.

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## Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships are characterised by:

- Respect
- Trust
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Boundaries
- Communication
- Safety
- Mutual support

Healthy relationships do not require perfection.

Disagreements and misunderstandings are a normal part of relationships.

What matters is how people respond, communicate and repair when difficulties occur.

This pillar encourages young people to explore the qualities that contribute to healthy relationships whilst recognising the importance of respect for themselves and others.

---

## **Listening and Understanding**

Communication involves both speaking and listening.

Feeling listened to can have a significant impact on wellbeing and belonging.

Young people are encouraged to explore:

- Active listening
- Curiosity
- Respectful disagreement
- Empathy
- Perspective-taking

Learning to understand different perspectives can help strengthen relationships and reduce conflict.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that everyone experiences the world differently and that understanding often begins with listening.

---

## **Boundaries**

Boundaries help create healthy and respectful relationships.

Boundaries may involve:

- Personal space
- Privacy
- Emotional limits
- Digital boundaries
- Respectful communication

Young people are encouraged to recognise that boundaries are not barriers.

They are ways of protecting wellbeing, safety and mutual respect.

Learning about boundaries can help support confidence, self-respect and healthy relationships throughout life.

---

## Help-Seeking and Connection

One of the most important communication skills is knowing when to ask for support.

Many young people experience challenges at some point in their lives.

Being able to identify trusted adults, supportive relationships and available sources of help can act as an important protective factor.

Gulliver, Griffiths and Christensen (2010) found that trusted relationships were among the strongest facilitators of help-seeking behaviour amongst young people.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to normalise asking for support and reinforce the message that seeking help is a sign of strength rather than weakness.

---

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this pillar, participants will be able to:

- Understand the role of communication in wellbeing
  - Recognise qualities of healthy relationships
  - Explore listening and empathy skills
  - Understand the importance of boundaries
  - Identify trusted relationships and support networks
  - Develop confidence in help-seeking
- 

## Activities

### Relationship Circles

Participants reflect on different sources of support within their lives and identify trusted individuals.

### Listening Pairs

A structured activity exploring listening, understanding and respectful communication.

## **My Support Network**

Participants create a visual map of supportive relationships and available sources of help.

## **Boundary Scenarios**

Exploring healthy boundaries through age-appropriate examples and discussion.

---

## **Facilitator Notes**

Discussions should remain educational and strengths-based.

Participants should never feel pressured to disclose personal relationships, safeguarding concerns or private experiences.

Examples should remain hypothetical, general or scenario-based where appropriate.

The aim is to help young people develop awareness and communication skills rather than explore personal difficulties in depth.

---

## **Workbook Content**

Suggested workbook pages:

- Relationship Mapping
- My Support Network
- Healthy Relationships Reflection
- Listening Skills Activity
- Boundary Awareness Worksheet

Approx. 4–6 pages

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## **Key Learning Messages**

Participants should understand that:

- Communication is a skill that can be developed.

- Healthy relationships are built on respect and trust.
  - Boundaries help support wellbeing and safety.
  - Listening is an important part of communication.
  - Support networks matter.
  - Asking for help is a strength.
  - Connection can support resilience and wellbeing.
- 

## PILLAR 6

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# RESILIENCE & GROWTH

## Overview

Resilience is often misunderstood.

It is sometimes described as toughness, independence or the ability to cope without support.

At Fynix Project, we see resilience differently.

Resilience is not about never struggling.

It is not about carrying everything alone.

Resilience is about adapting, learning, recovering and continuing to move forward despite challenges.

It is influenced by strengths, relationships, opportunities, support and life experiences.

Supporting Young Minds approaches resilience through a strengths-based and realistic lens.

The aim is not to teach young people to ignore difficulties.

The aim is to help them recognise the strengths, skills and support systems that can help them navigate those difficulties.

Research supports this understanding of resilience. Grych et al. (2020) found that resilience amongst adolescents was strongly associated with both internal

strengths and external resources. Similarly, Matheus Pinto et al. (2021) found that resilience-focused psychoeducational interventions were associated with improvements in emotional wellbeing and resilience-related outcomes amongst adolescents.

These findings suggest that resilience is not simply a personality trait.

It can be developed and strengthened over time.

---

## **Understanding Resilience**

Resilience involves:

- Adapting to challenges
- Learning from experiences
- Recovering from setbacks
- Using strengths and support
- Continuing to move forward

Resilience does not remove difficulties.

It helps people navigate them.

Young people are encouraged to recognise that setbacks, mistakes and challenges are a normal part of growth and development.

---

## **Growth and Learning**

Growth often happens through experience.

Sometimes experiences are positive.

Sometimes they are difficult.

Both can provide opportunities for learning.

Supporting Young Minds encourages young people to explore:

- What they have learned
- What strengths they have developed
- How they have overcome challenges
- What support has helped them

This approach promotes reflection, self-awareness and personal growth.

---

## **Strengths and Support**

Resilience is rarely built in isolation.

Supportive relationships, opportunities and environments all contribute.

Young people are encouraged to recognise:

- Personal strengths
- Trusted relationships
- Community support
- Existing coping skills
- Sources of encouragement

This reflects the wider Fynix message that resilience grows through connection as well as personal strengths.

---

## **Looking Forward**

A key part of resilience involves maintaining hope and recognising future possibilities.

Young people are encouraged to reflect on:

- Personal goals
- Future aspirations
- Strengths they can build upon
- Positive next steps

The focus is not on creating unrealistic expectations.

It is on helping young people recognise that growth remains possible even during challenging times.

---

## **The Phoenix Perspective**

The phoenix sits at the heart of the Fynix identity.

It represents growth, renewal and the ability to move forward after difficulty.

The phoenix does not symbolise perfection.

It symbolises possibility.

This imagery helps reinforce an important message:

Challenges do not define who we are.

How we learn, adapt and move forward matters.

Supporting Young Minds encourages young people to recognise that resilience is not about becoming someone different.

It is about discovering strengths that already exist and continuing to build upon them.

---

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this pillar, participants will be able to:

- Understand resilience as a learnable skill
  - Recognise personal strengths and protective factors
  - Reflect on growth and learning experiences
  - Identify supportive relationships and resources
  - Develop a future-focused mindset
  - Build confidence in their ability to navigate challenges
- 

## **Activities**

### **My Phoenix Journey**

Participants reflect on strengths, learning experiences and future aspirations using the Fynix phoenix framework.

### **Resilience Reflection**

Exploring examples of challenges that have been overcome and what helped.

### **Strengths and Supports Map**

Identifying internal strengths and external support systems.

## **Future Steps**

Setting small, realistic and achievable next steps.

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## **Facilitator Notes**

Resilience should never be presented as an expectation to cope without support.

Facilitators should reinforce that seeking help, building relationships and accessing support are all examples of resilience.

Activities should remain strengths-based, hopeful and realistic.

Young people should not feel pressure to disclose personal difficulties.

The focus remains on learning, growth and future possibilities.

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## **Workbook Content**

Suggested workbook pages:

- My Phoenix Journey
- Resilience Reflection
- Strengths and Supports Map
- Future Goals Worksheet

Approx. 4–6 pages

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## **Key Learning Messages**

Participants should understand that:

- Resilience is not about being unaffected by difficulty.
- Everyone experiences challenges.
- Strengths can be developed.
- Support is part of resilience.
- Growth takes time.
- Setbacks do not define identity.

- Small steps matter.
- Hope and possibility remain important.

Resilience is not about never falling.

It is about learning how to rise.

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## **PART 4 SUMMARY**

### **The Fynix Perspective**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is built upon a simple belief:

Young people do not need to be fixed.

They need opportunities to understand themselves, recognise their strengths and develop practical skills that support wellbeing.

The six learning pillars provide those opportunities.

Together, they help young people:

- Understand emotions
- Recognise stress responses
- Find their ground
- Build confidence
- Strengthen communication
- Develop healthy relationships
- Grow resilience

Each pillar contributes something important on its own.

Together, they create a framework that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Research examining effective wellbeing programmes consistently highlights the value of structured, multi-component approaches that combine emotional, social and practical skill development (Weare & Nind, 2014; Espenes et al., 2024).

Supporting Young Minds has been intentionally designed around this principle.

Through a trauma-informed, strengths-based and safeguarding-aware approach, the programme seeks to create learning experiences that are practical, accessible and meaningful for young people.

Ultimately, Supporting Young Minds is not about teaching young people how to become someone different.

It is about helping them better understand who they already are, recognise the strengths they already carry and develop tools that may help them navigate life's challenges with greater confidence, awareness and resilience.

**Find Your Ground. Recognise Your Strengths. Build Your Toolkit. Move Forward With Confidence.**

That is the journey at the heart of Supporting Young Minds.

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## **PART 5**

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# **DELIVERY FRAMEWORK**

## **Introduction**

The quality of a wellbeing programme is determined not only by what is delivered, but by how it is delivered.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been designed around the belief that emotionally safe, respectful and inclusive learning environments are essential for meaningful participation, engagement and learning.

Young people learn best when they feel safe, respected, listened to and free from judgement.

At Fynix Project, we believe that delivery is not simply about presenting information.

It is about creating the conditions that allow young people to engage, reflect, participate and grow.

The Delivery Framework provides guidance for facilitators, partner organisations and commissioners on the principles, standards and expectations that underpin programme delivery.

The framework promotes consistency whilst allowing flexibility to respond to the needs of different groups, settings and participants.

All delivery should remain:

- Trauma-informed
- Safeguarding-aware
- Strengths-based
- Developmentally appropriate
- Inclusive
- Psychologically safe

Research consistently suggests that how a programme is delivered can influence participant experience as significantly as programme content itself. Macdonald, Bottrell and Johnson (2018), exploring wellbeing within flexible learning environments, found that positive staff relationships, individual responsiveness and experiences of genuine respect were central to young people's engagement and wellbeing. Environments characterised by supportive relationships, consistent boundaries and individualised support were associated with more meaningful participation and positive experiences.

These findings reflect a core Fynix principle:

**Young people engage more fully when they feel safe, respected and understood.**

The Delivery Framework exists to help create those conditions throughout every stage of programme delivery.

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## Chapter 13

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# Psychological Safety

## Introduction

Psychological safety refers to the creation of environments where individuals feel able to participate, contribute, learn and express themselves without fear of humiliation, shame, judgement or exclusion.

Within youth wellbeing education, psychological safety is essential.

Young people are more likely to engage, reflect, ask questions and participate when they feel emotionally secure and respected.

At Fynix Project, psychological safety is not viewed as an optional addition to delivery.

It is viewed as a foundation.

Before meaningful learning can take place, young people need to feel safe enough to participate.

Research supports the importance of psychological safety within learning environments. Gonda, Tirpakova, Pavlovicova and Duris (2024), studying classroom teamwork and engagement, found that students who experienced greater psychological safety demonstrated higher levels of active participation and engagement. The authors also identified facilitator behaviour as a significant factor influencing whether participants experienced their environment as safe and trustworthy.

Similarly, Bacon and Lohmeyer (2025), exploring young people's experiences within a trauma-informed programme, identified safety, trust and choice as recurring themes in how participants described positive experiences of engagement.

These findings reinforce an important principle of Supporting Young Minds:

**Safety supports participation.**

When young people feel safe, they are often more able to engage in learning, reflection and personal development.

---

## **What Psychological Safety Means**

Psychological safety does not mean the absence of challenge.

Nor does it mean that participants will always feel comfortable.

Learning, reflection and personal growth can sometimes involve uncertainty, vulnerability or new experiences.

Instead, psychological safety means creating an environment where young people feel able to engage with those experiences without fear of ridicule, rejection or shame.

Young people should feel able to:

- Ask questions
- Share ideas
- Express opinions
- Participate at their own pace
- Make mistakes
- Learn without judgement

Psychological safety supports curiosity, confidence and meaningful participation.

---

## **Creating Safe Spaces**

Safe spaces are not environments where difficult topics never arise.

They are environments where young people know they will be treated with respect, consistency and dignity.

Creating safe spaces involves:

- Maintaining respectful communication
- Establishing clear boundaries
- Creating predictable structures
- Supporting inclusion
- Encouraging participation without pressure
- Responding consistently
- Valuing different perspectives

Safety begins from the first interaction and continues throughout programme delivery.

Research by Robertson, Kennedy, McIntosh and McKechnie (2025), examining trauma-informed co-design with young people, found that feelings of safety were strongly linked to choice, predictability, respect and opportunities for ownership. Young people consistently identified having a sense of influence over their environment as an important contributor to feeling safe and included.

These findings highlight that safety is not something facilitators create alone.

It is something that develops through relationships, trust and participation.

---

## **Emotional Containment**

Emotional containment refers to the facilitator's ability to create a stable and supportive environment that promotes emotional safety without becoming therapeutic.

Supporting Young Minds is an educational programme.

It is not therapy.

Facilitators are therefore responsible for creating emotionally safe learning environments whilst remaining within appropriate professional boundaries.

This may involve:

- Remaining calm during discussions
- Maintaining structure
- Offering reassurance where appropriate
- Managing group dynamics
- Redirecting conversations when necessary
- Following safeguarding procedures where concerns arise

Facilitators should not attempt to:

- Provide counselling
- Deliver therapy
- Process trauma
- Explore traumatic experiences in detail

Shevrin Venet (2019) emphasises the importance of maintaining clear role boundaries within trauma-informed educational environments, arguing that safety is strengthened when facilitators provide consistency, connection and support whilst remaining within their professional role.

At Fynix Project, we view role clarity as an important part of emotional safety.

Young people should know what facilitators can do, what they cannot do and how support can be accessed when needed.

---

## **Participation Choice**

Choice is a key component of trauma-informed practice.

Young people should be encouraged to participate but never forced.

Different young people engage in different ways.

Some may feel comfortable contributing verbally.

Others may prefer writing, reflection, observation, creative activities or smaller group discussions.

Supporting Young Minds encourages facilitators to provide opportunities for participation that recognise these differences.

This may include:

- Speaking
- Writing
- Drawing
- Reflection
- Pair work
- Small group discussion
- Observation

Providing choice can support emotional safety, autonomy and engagement.

Watson and Astor (2025) identify choice and empowerment as central features of trauma-informed environments, whilst Maynard, Farina, Dell and Kelly (2019) highlight the importance of participant agency within trauma-informed educational approaches.

These findings support a simple Fynix principle:

**Participation should be invited, not demanded.**

---

## Psychological Safety in Practice

Creating psychologically safe environments requires consistent and intentional practice.

Facilitators should seek to:

- Use respectful language
- Model non-judgement
- Encourage curiosity
- Validate participation
- Maintain clear boundaries
- Respond consistently
- Recognise individual differences
- Promote inclusion

Psychological safety is not created through a single activity or conversation. It is created through repeated experiences of respect, consistency and trust. Every interaction contributes to the environment that young people experience.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, psychological safety is the foundation upon which all learning is built.

Before young people can develop emotional awareness, confidence, communication skills or resilience, they need to feel safe enough to engage.

This does not mean removing all challenge.

It means creating environments where challenge can be explored without fear of shame, judgement or exclusion.

We believe that young people learn best when they experience:

- Safety before content
- Connection before correction
- Curiosity before judgement
- Choice before compliance

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create learning environments where young people feel respected, heard and valued.

Because when young people feel safe, meaningful learning becomes possible.

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# **Chapter 14**

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## **Facilitation Principles**

### **Introduction**

Facilitators play a central role in shaping the experience of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

The activities, resources and workbook pages provide structure, but it is the facilitator who creates the environment in which young people feel able to engage, reflect and learn.

At Fynix Project, we believe facilitation is not simply about delivering content.

It is about creating safety, connection and meaningful participation.

The facilitator's role is to guide learning, support reflection, maintain appropriate boundaries and create an environment where young people feel respected, included and able to take part in ways that feel comfortable for them.

Supporting Young Minds is delivered through a facilitation model that prioritises:

- Safety
- Trust
- Choice
- Inclusion
- Participation
- Respect
- Curiosity
- Emotional containment

Research supports the importance of facilitator behaviour in creating psychologically safe learning environments. McClintock, Fainstad and Jauregui (2022) found that facilitator behaviours such as warmth, consistency, clear expectations and genuine interest were important factors in whether learners experienced an environment as safe and supportive. Although this study was conducted within medical education, its findings are consistent with broader principles of relational safety and effective facilitation.

Within Supporting Young Minds, the facilitator's approach should reflect the core Fynix principles:

**Safety before content.**

**Connection before correction.**

**Curiosity before judgement.**

**Choice before compliance.**

These principles help ensure that young people are supported to participate without pressure, learn without shame and reflect without being pushed into disclosure.

# The Role of the Facilitator

The facilitator's role is to create the conditions for learning.

Facilitators are responsible for:

- Introducing concepts clearly
- Supporting group participation
- Maintaining psychological safety
- Encouraging reflection
- Managing group dynamics
- Modelling respectful communication
- Offering choice where appropriate
- Following safeguarding procedures
- Remaining within professional boundaries

Facilitators are not responsible for fixing, diagnosing, counselling or assessing young people.

Supporting Young Minds is an educational and psychoeducational programme.

It is not therapy, counselling, crisis intervention or clinical treatment.

The facilitator's role is to support understanding, awareness and skill development within a safe and structured learning environment.

---

## Group Management

Effective group management creates predictability, consistency and emotional safety.

Young people are more likely to participate when they understand what is expected, what will happen next and how the group will be supported.

Facilitators should:

- Establish expectations early
- Maintain consistent boundaries
- Encourage respectful behaviour
- Address disruption calmly
- Promote inclusion
- Support different participation styles
- Keep the group focused without using shame or criticism

The aim of group management is not to control young people.

The aim is to create an environment where everyone has the opportunity to learn safely.

At Fynix Project, we approach group management through connection rather than correction.

Where behaviour becomes disruptive, facilitators should remain curious and calm, recognising that behaviour may communicate discomfort, uncertainty, overwhelm or unmet needs.

This does not mean ignoring behaviour that affects the group.

It means responding in a way that maintains dignity, safety and boundaries.

---

## **Active Facilitation**

Active facilitation means creating opportunities for young people to participate in the learning process rather than simply receiving information.

Supporting Young Minds should feel interactive, reflective and engaging.

Facilitators should:

- Ask open and reflective questions
- Encourage discussion
- Use practical activities
- Adapt delivery where needed
- Monitor energy and engagement
- Offer different ways to participate
- Connect learning to everyday experiences

Young people should not feel that they are being lectured.

They should feel invited into a learning process.

Active facilitation supports curiosity, confidence and ownership. It also allows young people to connect ideas to their own lives without being pressured to disclose personal experiences.

---

## **Youth Engagement**

Young people engage in different ways.

Some may speak confidently in a group.

Some may prefer writing, drawing, listening or observing.

Some may need time to build trust before participating more actively.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that engagement does not always look the same for every young person.

Facilitators should:

- Use accessible language
- Create variety in activities
- Recognise different learning styles
- Encourage participation without pressure
- Build rapport respectfully
- Avoid assumptions about disengagement
- Notice quieter forms of participation

Macdonald, Bottrell and Johnson (2018) found that young people in flexible learning environments valued staff relationships, individual responsiveness and being respected as individuals. This supports the importance of facilitation that is relational, flexible and responsive rather than rigid or overly directive.

At Fynix Project, we do not measure engagement only by how much a young person speaks.

Listening, observing, writing, reflecting and quietly participating are all valid forms of engagement.

Participation before perfection.

---

## **Trauma-Informed Facilitation**

Trauma-informed facilitation is central to Supporting Young Minds.

This does not mean assuming every young person has experienced trauma.

It means recognising that we may not know what a young person has experienced and therefore creating environments that are safe, predictable, respectful and empowering for everyone.

Facilitators should seek to:

- Build trust gradually
- Offer choice
- Reduce unnecessary pressure
- Maintain predictability
- Use clear communication
- Promote empowerment
- Avoid forced disclosure
- Respond to behaviour with curiosity

Berger and Martin (2021) describe trauma-informed educational practice as involving understanding of stress responses, empathy, relational safety and responses that avoid judgement. This aligns with the Fynix approach of recognising behaviour as communication rather than immediately interpreting it as resistance or defiance.

Trauma-informed facilitation does not remove expectations.

It means expectations are held with compassion, clarity and consistency.

---

## Facilitator Language

Language shapes the emotional tone of a session.

Facilitators should use language that is:

- Respectful
- Clear
- Non-judgemental
- Inclusive
- Strengths-based
- Age-appropriate
- Emotionally safe

Helpful language may include:

- “You can share if you feel comfortable.”
- “It is okay to pass.”
- “There are no right or wrong answers here.”
- “Different people experience this differently.”
- “Let’s stay curious about that.”
- “You do not have to have everything figured out.”
- “Asking for support is a strength.”

Facilitators should avoid language that shames, labels or pressures young people.

The aim is to create an environment where young people feel able to explore ideas without fear of embarrassment or judgement.

---

## **Flexibility Within Structure**

Supporting Young Minds has a clear structure, but delivery should remain responsive to the needs of the group.

Facilitators should follow the programme framework while adapting pacing, examples, discussion style and participation methods where appropriate.

Flexibility may include:

- Allowing additional processing time
- Offering written rather than verbal responses
- Shortening discussions if energy drops
- Using more grounding if the group feels activated
- Offering movement or sensory breaks
- Using hypothetical examples rather than personal reflection

Structure creates safety.

Flexibility creates accessibility.

Both are needed.

---

## **Facilitator Boundaries**

Facilitators should remain warm, supportive and relational while maintaining clear professional boundaries.

This includes:

- Staying within the educational role
- Not providing therapy or counselling
- Not encouraging trauma disclosure
- Not promising confidentiality where safeguarding concerns exist
- Signposting where appropriate
- Following safeguarding procedures
- Seeking support from organisational leads where needed

Professional boundaries protect young people, facilitators and partner organisations.

They help ensure that care remains safe, appropriate and accountable.

---

## **Key Facilitation Messages**

Facilitators should remember:

- The environment matters as much as the content.
- Young people engage in different ways.
- Participation should be invited, not forced.
- Behaviour may communicate unmet needs, discomfort or overwhelm.
- Psychological safety must be maintained throughout delivery.
- Clear boundaries support trust.
- The facilitator's role is educational, not therapeutic.
- Connection supports learning.

Supporting Young Minds is not about perfect delivery.

It is about safe, respectful and meaningful delivery.

---

## **Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, facilitation is about more than standing at the front of a room.

It is about creating a space where young people feel safe enough to learn, respected enough to participate and valued enough to believe their voice matters.

The facilitator sets the tone.

How we speak, respond, listen, pause and hold boundaries all shape the experience young people have.

A strong facilitator does not need to have every answer.

They need to create an environment where young people can explore questions safely.

Facilitation should reflect the heart of the Fynix approach:

**Find Your Ground.**  
**Recognise Your Strengths.**  
**Build Your Toolkit.**  
**Move Forward With Confidence.**

When facilitators model calm, respect, curiosity and compassion, they help young people experience those qualities for themselves.

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## Chapter 15

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# Group Agreements

## Introduction

Group agreements establish shared expectations that support safety, respect and participation.

They help create a positive group culture and provide clarity about how participants, facilitators and partner organisations will contribute to a safe learning environment.

At Fynix Project, group agreements are not about control.

They are about creating shared safety.

They help young people understand what they can expect from the space and what is expected from everyone within it.

Where appropriate, group agreements should be developed collaboratively with participants. This encourages ownership, voice and shared responsibility.

Robertson, Kennedy, McIntosh and McKechnie (2025) found that young people's sense of safety and ownership can be strengthened when they have opportunities to shape the environments and expectations within which they participate. This supports the use of collaborative group agreements rather than imposing rules without discussion.

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## Why Group Agreements Matter

Group agreements support psychological safety by making expectations visible and shared.

They can help young people feel more confident because they know:

- How the group will work
- What respectful participation looks like
- What happens if someone needs support
- What confidentiality means
- What boundaries exist
- How people are expected to treat one another

Clear agreements reduce uncertainty.

They also help facilitators respond consistently if difficulties arise.

Group agreements should be revisited where needed, particularly if the group dynamic changes or if reminders are required.

---

## Co-Producing Agreements

Where possible, facilitators should invite young people to contribute to the group agreement.

This may involve asking:

- “What helps people feel safe in a group?”
- “What helps you feel respected?”
- “What makes it easier to take part?”
- “What do we need from each other today?”
- “What should we agree so everyone has a fair chance to participate?”

Co-producing agreements helps young people feel that the space is something they are part of, rather than something being done to them.

This supports empowerment, participation and belonging.

Facilitators should guide the process to ensure agreements remain appropriate, inclusive and safeguarding-aware.

---

## Respect

Respect forms the foundation of all programme delivery.

Participants are encouraged to:

- Listen to others
- Respect differences
- Avoid judgement
- Communicate appropriately
- Value different perspectives
- Allow others to participate in their own way

Respect applies to everyone in the space, including participants, facilitators, staff and partner organisations.

Respect does not mean everyone must agree.

It means disagreement is handled safely, fairly and without harm.

---

## Confidentiality and Its Limits

Young people should understand that facilitators will respect privacy wherever possible.

However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where there are concerns about safety, harm, abuse, exploitation or safeguarding.

This should be explained clearly, calmly and in age-appropriate language.

Participants should understand:

- What confidentiality means
- What its limits are
- When information may need to be shared
- Why safeguarding responsibilities exist
- Who concerns may be shared with

Transparency supports trust.

Gibbons (2019) emphasises the importance of communicating professional boundaries clearly and consistently when working with children and young people. Clear communication about confidentiality does not undermine trust; when delivered with warmth and respect, it can help young people understand that adults have a responsibility to keep them safe.

Facilitators should never promise secrecy.

Instead, they may say:

“I will respect your privacy where I can, but if I am worried that you or someone else may not be safe, I will need to share that with the right person so support can be put in place.”

---

## **Participation Expectations**

Participants are encouraged to take part in ways that feel safe and manageable for them.

Participation may include:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- Drawing
- Reflecting
- Working in pairs
- Observing
- Taking a break when needed

Young people should never be required to disclose personal experiences.

The programme focuses on learning, reflection and skill development rather than personal disclosure.

Participation expectations should reinforce the message that everyone has the right to engage in a way that feels appropriate.

---

## **Boundaries Within the Group**

Boundaries help keep the group safe.

They support respectful communication, emotional safety and appropriate participation.

Boundaries may include:

- Not pressuring others to share

- Not making fun of another person's response
- Keeping examples appropriate
- Respecting different views
- Avoiding personal comments
- Asking for support if something feels difficult

Boundaries should be explained as supportive rather than punitive.

They are there to help everyone feel safer.

---

## Example Group Agreement

A group agreement may include:

We will:

- Respect each other
- Listen without judgement
- Respect different views
- Keep discussions appropriate
- Allow everyone the opportunity to participate
- Remember that sharing is a choice
- Avoid pressuring others to speak
- Ask for support if needed
- Respect boundaries
- Help create a safe learning environment

Facilitators may adapt this agreement depending on the age, needs and setting of the group.

---

## Facilitator Notes

Group agreements should be introduced early in delivery and revisited where needed.

Facilitators should avoid presenting agreements as a list of rules to control behaviour.

Instead, they should frame them as shared commitments that help keep the space safe, respectful and inclusive.

If an agreement is broken, facilitators should respond calmly and consistently.

The aim is to restore safety, not shame the young person.

Where behaviour raises safeguarding concerns, facilitators should follow organisational safeguarding procedures.

---

## Key Learning Messages

Participants should understand that:

- Group agreements help create safety.
  - Everyone has a role in maintaining respect.
  - Participation is a choice.
  - Personal disclosure is not required.
  - Confidentiality has limits where safety is involved.
  - Boundaries support trust.
  - Different people participate in different ways.
  - Asking for support is always okay.
- 

## Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, group agreements are part of creating psychological safety.

They are not about making young people behave perfectly.

They are about helping everyone understand how to share a space with respect, kindness and responsibility.

A good group agreement protects participation.

It helps quieter voices feel safer.

It helps confident voices understand boundaries.

It helps facilitators respond consistently.

Most importantly, it reminds everyone that the space belongs to the group.

Supporting Young Minds works best when young people feel that they are not just attending a programme.

They are helping shape a space where learning, reflection and growth can happen safely.

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# Chapter 16

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## Inclusion & Accessibility

### Introduction

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been designed to be accessible, inclusive and adaptable for a wide range of young people, learning environments and support needs.

At Fynix Project, we recognise that no two young people experience the world in exactly the same way.

Young people bring different strengths, identities, communication styles, learning preferences, lived experiences and support needs into every learning environment.

Inclusion is therefore not viewed as an additional feature of programme delivery.

It is a core principle.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create learning environments where all young people feel respected, valued and able to participate in ways that feel safe, meaningful and accessible to them.

This commitment reflects wider evidence suggesting that belonging, participation and inclusion are important contributors to wellbeing, engagement and educational outcomes. Weare and Nind (2014), reviewing 52 reviews of school-based wellbeing programmes, found that effective programmes were characterised by inclusive approaches that promoted participation and recognised the diverse needs of learners.

These findings support a core Fynix belief:

**Every young person deserves the opportunity to participate, learn and be heard.**

---

## What Inclusion Means

Inclusion involves creating environments where young people can participate meaningfully regardless of background, identity, ability or additional need.

Inclusion recognises and values diversity.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Neurodiversity
- Disability
- SEND
- Cultural background
- Ethnicity
- Language differences
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Care experience
- Mental health challenges
- Social and economic circumstances

Supporting Young Minds does not seek to treat all young people in exactly the same way.

Instead, the programme seeks to create equitable opportunities for participation by recognising that different young people may require different approaches, adjustments or supports.

---

## Accessibility in Practice

Accessibility involves reducing unnecessary barriers to participation.

Young people should be able to access learning in ways that feel manageable and meaningful for them.

Facilitators should consider:

- Language used during delivery
- Activity design
- Environmental factors
- Sensory needs
- Communication preferences
- Processing time
- Literacy requirements

- Physical accessibility

Accessibility is not about lowering expectations.

It is about ensuring that participation is possible.

At Fynix Project, accessibility means asking:

**"What might help this young person engage?"**

rather than:

**"Why are they not engaging?"**

This shift reflects a strengths-based and trauma-informed perspective that seeks to remove barriers rather than place responsibility solely on the young person.

---

## **Inclusive Communication**

Communication should be clear, respectful and accessible.

Facilitators should aim to:

- Use plain language
- Avoid unnecessary jargon
- Explain unfamiliar terms
- Provide examples
- Check understanding
- Use visual supports where appropriate
- Offer information in multiple formats

Young people process information differently.

Some may benefit from verbal explanation.

Others may benefit from written instructions, visual aids, demonstrations or opportunities to ask questions.

Providing multiple routes into learning supports both accessibility and inclusion.

---

## **Representation and Belonging**

Young people are more likely to engage when they feel represented and included.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments where diversity is recognised and respected.

Facilitators should:

- Use inclusive examples
- Avoid assumptions
- Respect identity
- Challenge discriminatory language appropriately
- Promote respect for difference
- Create opportunities for all voices to be valued

Belonging is an important aspect of wellbeing.

Young people who feel accepted, respected and included are often more able to participate, learn and develop positive relationships.

---

## Participation and Choice

Inclusive practice recognises that participation can look different for different young people.

Participation may include:

- Speaking
- Writing
- Drawing
- Reflecting
- Pair work
- Observation
- Small-group discussion
- Creative activities

Young people should not be expected to participate in one particular way.

Providing choice supports autonomy, confidence and psychological safety.

Watson and Astor (2025) identified empowerment, participation and choice as important elements of trauma-informed educational environments.

Supporting Young Minds therefore encourages participation without pressure.

Participation should be invited, not demanded.

---

## Reducing Barriers

Barriers to participation can arise for many reasons.

These may include:

- Anxiety
- Communication differences
- Sensory sensitivities
- Literacy challenges
- Fatigue
- Confidence difficulties
- Environmental factors
- Previous experiences of education

Facilitators are encouraged to identify and reduce barriers wherever possible.

Small adjustments can often have a significant impact on participation and wellbeing.

This may include:

- Offering breaks
- Adjusting activity formats
- Providing visual supports
- Allowing additional processing time
- Providing alternative participation methods

The goal is not perfection.

The goal is meaningful access.

---

## Facilitator Notes

Facilitators should approach inclusion with curiosity and flexibility.

No single strategy will work for every young person.

The most effective approach often involves:

- Listening
- Observing
- Adapting
- Collaborating
- Remaining responsive

Young people should never be made to feel different, singled out or less capable because they require support or adjustments.

Inclusion should feel natural, respectful and embedded within delivery.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Inclusion is a core delivery principle.
  - Accessibility supports participation.
  - Different young people learn in different ways.
  - Choice supports engagement.
  - Belonging supports wellbeing.
  - Barriers should be reduced wherever possible.
  - Inclusion benefits everyone, not only those with identified needs.
- 

## Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, inclusion is about more than access.

It is about belonging.

We believe every young person deserves to feel that they have a place within the learning environment.

Young people should not have to change who they are in order to participate.

Instead, programmes should be flexible enough to meet young people where they are.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments where difference is recognised, respected and valued.

Because inclusion is not about fitting young people into a programme.

It is about creating a programme that makes space for young people.

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## Chapter 17

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# SEND Adaptations

## Introduction

Supporting Young Minds has been designed to be delivered across a wide range of educational, youth, community and care settings, including those supporting young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The programme recognises that SEND is not a single experience.

Young people with SEND have diverse strengths, needs, communication styles, sensory profiles and learning preferences.

At Fynix Project, we believe that effective adaptation begins with understanding the individual rather than making assumptions based on labels or diagnoses.

Supporting Young Minds therefore adopts a flexible and responsive approach to SEND inclusion.

The aim is not to create separate versions of the programme.

The aim is to create delivery that can be adapted whilst maintaining the core learning outcomes and wellbeing principles.

This approach aligns with the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015), which emphasises participation, inclusion, reasonable adjustment and person-centred support.

---

## Person-Centred Practice

Person-centred practice places the young person at the centre of delivery.

Rather than asking:

**"How should we deliver this to someone with SEND?"**

Facilitators are encouraged to ask:

**"What helps this young person learn, engage and participate?"**

This approach recognises that needs vary considerably between individuals.

Two young people with the same diagnosis may require very different supports.

Supporting Young Minds therefore encourages flexible, strengths-based and individualised adaptation.

---

## **Communication Adaptations**

Some young people may benefit from additional communication supports.

Facilitators should consider:

- Simplified language
- Visual supports
- Written instructions
- Demonstrations
- Chunked information
- Repetition where appropriate
- Additional processing time

Communication should remain clear, respectful and age-appropriate.

Young people should never be spoken to in ways that feel patronising or infantilising.

The goal is accessibility, not simplification of the young person.

---

## **Sensory Considerations**

Sensory differences can significantly influence participation.

Some young people may be sensitive to:

- Noise
- Lighting
- Crowding
- Movement
- Temperature
- Visual stimuli

Facilitators should remain aware of environmental factors that may affect comfort and engagement.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Offering movement breaks
- Providing quieter spaces
- Allowing sensory tools
- Adjusting seating arrangements
- Reducing unnecessary sensory demands

These adaptations support participation without altering the core aims of the programme.

---

## **Flexible Participation**

Young people with SEND may engage in different ways.

Participation may include:

- Speaking
- Writing
- Drawing
- Visual responses
- Practical activities
- Pair work
- Observation
- Non-verbal participation

Facilitators should recognise that engagement is not always visible through verbal contribution.

Listening, observing and reflecting are all valid forms of participation.

The programme therefore encourages multiple ways of engaging with learning activities.

---

## **Emotional Safety and Predictability**

Predictability can be particularly important for some young people.

Facilitators should therefore aim to provide:

- Clear explanations
- Session structure

- Visual schedules where appropriate
- Consistent routines
- Advance notice of changes
- Clear transitions between activities

Predictability can reduce uncertainty and support psychological safety.

This aligns with wider trauma-informed and neurodiversity-informed approaches to learning environments.

---

## **Strengths-Based Adaptation**

Supporting Young Minds adopts a strengths-based approach to SEND inclusion.

The focus is not solely on support needs.

It is also on recognising strengths, interests, talents and abilities.

Young people may demonstrate strengths in areas such as:

- Creativity
- Problem-solving
- Memory
- Focus
- Empathy
- Innovation
- Visual thinking
- Determination

Recognising strengths helps create more balanced and empowering learning experiences.

---

## **Facilitator Notes**

Facilitators should:

- Remain flexible
- Avoid assumptions
- Seek information from appropriate staff where relevant
- Collaborate with support professionals when appropriate
- Use reasonable adjustments
- Focus on participation and inclusion

Adaptations should support access without reducing dignity, autonomy or expectations.

The aim is to create environments where young people can engage in ways that work for them.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- SEND is diverse.
  - Adaptations should be person-centred.
  - Communication should be accessible.
  - Sensory needs matter.
  - Predictability supports safety.
  - Participation can take many forms.
  - Strengths should be recognised alongside support needs.
  - Inclusion and adaptation benefit the whole group.
- 

## Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, we believe difference is not something that needs fixing.

Young people experience the world in different ways.

Those differences bring challenges at times, but they can also bring strengths, perspectives and abilities that enrich learning environments.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create spaces where young people do not feel they need to mask, perform or become someone else in order to participate.

Instead, we aim to create learning environments that recognise individual needs, value different ways of thinking and support meaningful participation for everyone.

Because inclusion is not about asking young people to fit the environment.

It is about creating environments where young people can belong.

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# Chapter 18

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## Professional Boundaries

### Introduction

Professional boundaries play an essential role in creating safe, ethical and effective learning environments.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is designed as an educational and psychoeducational programme. Whilst facilitators may build positive relationships with participants and create emotionally supportive environments, they must remain within clearly defined professional boundaries at all times.

At Fynix Project, we believe that boundaries are not barriers to connection.

They are part of creating safety.

Clear professional boundaries help young people understand what facilitators can do, what they cannot do and how support can be accessed when additional needs arise.

Boundaries also protect facilitators, partner organisations and the integrity of the programme itself.

Research examining trauma-informed educational practice highlights the importance of role clarity, consistency and predictable relationships within safe learning environments (Shevrin Venet, 2019). Young people often feel safer when adults provide warmth, consistency and support whilst remaining clear about their professional role and responsibilities.

Supporting Young Minds therefore promotes supportive relationships within clear educational and safeguarding boundaries.

---

### The Role of the Facilitator

Facilitators are responsible for:

- Delivering programme content

- Supporting participation
- Promoting psychological safety
- Managing group dynamics
- Encouraging reflection
- Modelling respectful communication
- Maintaining professional standards
- Following safeguarding procedures

Facilitators are not responsible for:

- Providing therapy
- Delivering counselling
- Processing trauma
- Conducting risk assessments
- Diagnosing conditions
- Providing clinical intervention
- Replacing specialist services

Supporting Young Minds is designed to complement existing support systems rather than replace them.

Maintaining role clarity helps ensure young people receive support from the most appropriate services when required.

---

## **Building Supportive Relationships**

Positive facilitator-participant relationships can significantly influence engagement and participation.

Young people are more likely to learn, reflect and participate when they feel respected, heard and valued.

However, supportive relationships must remain professional.

Facilitators should:

- Be approachable
- Listen respectfully
- Show empathy
- Maintain consistency
- Respect confidentiality limits
- Promote appropriate support pathways

Facilitators should avoid:

- Becoming a young person's sole source of support
- Sharing excessive personal information
- Creating dependency
- Promising secrecy
- Blurring professional boundaries

Supporting Young Minds encourages connection without dependency and support without over-involvement.

---

## **Maintaining Professional Distance**

Professional distance does not mean being cold, detached or impersonal.

It means maintaining appropriate boundaries whilst remaining warm, respectful and supportive.

Facilitators should seek to:

- Maintain appropriate communication
- Follow organisational policies
- Keep interactions professional
- Avoid dual relationships where possible
- Remain consistent with all participants

Maintaining professional distance supports fairness, safety and ethical practice.

---

## **Confidentiality and Professional Responsibility**

Facilitators should respect participant privacy wherever possible.

However, confidentiality is not absolute.

Young people should understand that information may need to be shared where concerns exist regarding:

- Harm
- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Self-harm
- Suicide risk
- Significant safeguarding concerns

This should be communicated clearly and consistently from the beginning of programme delivery.

Young people should never be misled into believing facilitators can keep safeguarding concerns secret.

Transparency helps build trust.

---

## **Responding Within Role**

Facilitators may sometimes encounter situations where young people share experiences, concerns or emotions that fall outside the programme's educational remit.

When this occurs, facilitators should:

- Remain calm
- Listen appropriately
- Avoid investigation
- Avoid counselling responses
- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Seek support from appropriate professionals where required

The facilitator's role is not to solve every problem.

The facilitator's role is to respond safely, appropriately and within professional boundaries.

---

## **Self-Awareness and Reflective Practice**

Professional boundaries also require facilitators to remain aware of their own responses, experiences and limitations.

Facilitators should engage in reflective practice by considering:

- How they respond to participants
- Personal triggers
- Professional limitations
- Areas requiring support or supervision
- Ethical considerations

Reflective practice helps maintain safe, consistent and professional delivery.

It also supports facilitator wellbeing and sustainable practice.

---

## **Key Messages**

Facilitators should remember:

- Professional boundaries support safety.
  - Boundaries are part of trauma-informed practice.
  - Facilitators are educators, not therapists.
  - Confidentiality has safeguarding limits.
  - Positive relationships can remain professional.
  - Young people deserve clarity about roles and responsibilities.
  - Support should always remain within professional competence.
- 

## **Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe that trust grows when boundaries are clear.

Young people should never have to guess what support is available, what facilitators can offer or how concerns will be managed.

Professional boundaries create predictability, consistency and safety.

They allow facilitators to build meaningful connections whilst ensuring that support remains ethical, appropriate and safeguarding-aware.

Because effective support is not about doing everything.

It is about doing the right thing, in the right role, at the right time.

---

# **Chapter 19**

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## **Managing Disclosures**

## Introduction

Supporting Young Minds is designed as an educational and psychoeducational programme.

Participants are never expected to disclose personal experiences, trauma histories or safeguarding concerns as part of programme activities.

However, facilitators should recognise that disclosures may occasionally occur.

Young people may choose to share concerns, experiences or information during discussions, activities, breaks or informal conversations.

Facilitators therefore need a clear understanding of how disclosures should be managed safely, consistently and in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities.

Managing disclosures effectively is not about becoming an investigator, therapist or counsellor.

It is about responding appropriately, maintaining safety and ensuring concerns are passed to the correct safeguarding pathways.

---

## Understanding Disclosures

A disclosure occurs when a young person shares information that suggests:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Self-harm
- Suicidal thoughts
- Significant emotional distress
- Risk of harm
- Criminal exploitation
- Other safeguarding concerns

Disclosures may be:

### **Direct**

The young person clearly describes a concern.

### **Indirect**

The young person hints at a concern without stating it directly.

## **Observed**

Behaviour, presentation or interactions raise concerns even without verbal disclosure.

Facilitators should remain alert to all three forms.

---

## **Responding to a Disclosure**

If a young person makes a disclosure, facilitators should:

### **Listen**

Allow the young person to speak without interruption where appropriate.

### **Remain Calm**

The facilitator's response can influence how safe the young person feels.

### **Reassure**

Appropriate reassurance may include:

"Thank you for telling me."

"You have done the right thing by speaking to someone."

### **Avoid Leading Questions**

Facilitators should not investigate, interview or seek detailed information.

Questions should remain limited to immediate clarification where necessary.

### **Explain Next Steps**

Young people should understand that information may need to be shared to help keep them safe.

### **Follow Safeguarding Procedures**

All concerns should be reported according to organisational safeguarding policies and procedures.

---

## What Facilitators Should Avoid

Facilitators should not:

- Promise confidentiality
- Investigate concerns
- Ask leading questions
- Seek unnecessary detail
- Express shock or disbelief
- Make judgements
- Offer counselling
- Attempt to manage serious concerns alone

The facilitator's role is to listen, respond appropriately and report concerns through the correct channels.

---

## Recording Concerns

Where disclosures occur, records should be:

- Accurate
- Objective
- Timely
- Factual
- Stored securely

Facilitators should distinguish clearly between:

- What was observed
- What was said
- Professional actions taken

Records should avoid assumptions, interpretations or personal opinions.

---

## Supporting the Group

Occasionally, disclosures may occur within group settings.

Where appropriate, facilitators should:

- Maintain calm
- Protect privacy
- Redirect discussion if necessary
- Avoid exploring disclosures publicly
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are followed

The emotional safety of both the individual and wider group should be considered.

The programme should not become focused on processing individual disclosures.

---

## Looking After Yourself as a Facilitator

Managing disclosures can sometimes be emotionally challenging.

Facilitators should seek:

- Supervision
- Safeguarding support
- Debriefing where appropriate
- Guidance from designated safeguarding leads

Professional support helps maintain safe and effective practice.

Facilitators should not carry safeguarding concerns alone.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Disclosures may occur even when not invited.
  - Young people should never be pressured to disclose.
  - Listening is more important than investigating.
  - Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
  - Safeguarding responsibilities must be followed.
  - Accurate recording matters.
  - Support should remain within professional competence.
- 

## Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, we believe that every disclosure deserves to be treated with respect, sensitivity and professionalism.

Young people who choose to share concerns are often demonstrating significant courage and trust.

Our responsibility is not to investigate or fix every situation.

Our responsibility is to listen appropriately, respond safely and ensure concerns reach the people best placed to provide support.

Because safeguarding is not simply about procedures.

It is about protecting people.

---

## Part 5 Summary

### The Fynix Delivery Approach

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is built upon more than content.

It is built upon the environments, relationships and delivery principles that shape how young people experience learning.

Throughout Part 5, the programme has outlined the foundations of safe, inclusive and trauma-informed delivery:

- Psychological safety
- Facilitation principles
- Group agreements
- Inclusion and accessibility
- SEND adaptation
- Professional boundaries
- Safeguarding-aware responses

Together, these elements help create environments where young people can participate without pressure, reflect without judgement and learn within clear safeguarding boundaries.

Research consistently highlights the importance of safety, trust, inclusion, choice and supportive relationships within effective youth wellbeing and educational environments (Weare & Nind, 2014; Watson & Astor, 2025; Maynard et al., 2019).

Supporting Young Minds seeks to translate these principles into practical delivery.

The programme remains:

- Educational
- Prevention-focused
- Trauma-informed
- Strengths-based
- Safeguarding-aware
- Non-clinical

At Fynix Project, we believe that how young people are supported matters as much as what they are taught.

Because meaningful learning happens when young people feel:

- Safe enough to participate
- Respected enough to contribute
- Included enough to belong
- Supported enough to grow

### **The Fynix Perspective**

Every young person deserves an environment where they can learn without fear of judgement, participate without pressure and access support when needed.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create those environments through consistent, compassionate and evidence-informed practice.

Because before young people can build confidence, resilience or wellbeing skills, they first need something more fundamental:

A space where they feel safe enough to begin.

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## **PART 6**

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# **SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK**

## **Introduction**

The safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people sit at the heart of everything we do.

At Fynix Project, safeguarding is not viewed as a separate procedure that exists alongside programme delivery. It is woven throughout every interaction, decision, conversation and environment we create.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been designed to provide emotionally safe, psychologically informed and safeguarding-aware learning experiences for young people. Whilst the programme focuses on emotional wellbeing, resilience, confidence and personal development, safeguarding remains the primary responsibility that underpins all delivery.

Every facilitator, volunteer, partner organisation and member of staff shares responsibility for helping create environments where young people feel safe, respected, listened to and protected from harm.

We recognise that meaningful learning can only take place when young people experience safety.

For this reason, safeguarding is not simply a legal or organisational obligation.

It is a reflection of the values that underpin Fynix Project: respect, dignity, compassion, responsibility and care.

The programme operates within current safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance and recognised safeguarding best practice. It is informed by evidence from child protection, education, youth work, trauma-informed practice and multi-agency safeguarding research.

Baginsky, Driscoll, Purcell, Manthorpe and Hickman (2022), in their examination of safeguarding within schools, highlight the importance of clear responsibilities, organisational culture and shared safeguarding ownership. Their findings reinforce a principle that sits at the centre of Supporting Young Minds:

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

No single person creates safety alone.

Effective safeguarding depends upon collective awareness, clear processes, professional accountability and a culture where concerns are recognised and acted upon appropriately.

This framework outlines the safeguarding principles, responsibilities and procedures that support programme delivery across all settings.

It has been developed to help facilitators recognise concerns, respond appropriately, maintain professional boundaries and ensure that young people can access support whenever it is needed.

---

## **Evidence-Informed Safeguarding Framework**

The safeguarding framework within Supporting Young Minds has been developed using current safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance, trauma-informed practice principles and evidence from child protection, education, youth work and safeguarding research.

The references cited throughout this framework inform the safeguarding principles, procedures and delivery approach adopted by Fynix Project. They should not be interpreted as evaluations of Supporting Young Minds itself.

Supporting Young Minds remains an educational and psychoeducational programme. It does not provide therapy, counselling, clinical intervention or safeguarding services. Safeguarding responsibilities remain governed by relevant legislation, statutory guidance and host organisation procedures.

Fynix Project remains committed to maintaining safeguarding practice that is aligned with current legislation, statutory guidance and emerging evidence.

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## **Evidence-Informed Safeguarding Practice**

The safeguarding framework within Supporting Young Minds has been developed using current safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance, trauma-informed practice principles and evidence from child protection, education, youth work and safeguarding research.

The references cited throughout this section inform the safeguarding principles, procedures and delivery approach adopted by Fynix Project. They should not be interpreted as evaluations of Supporting Young Minds itself.

Fynix Project remains committed to maintaining safeguarding practice that is aligned with current legislation, statutory guidance and emerging evidence.

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## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe safeguarding is more than responding to concerns.

It is about creating environments where concerns are less likely to go unnoticed.

It is about building relationships that encourage trust, creating spaces where young people feel heard and ensuring that support can be accessed when it is needed.

Safeguarding is not the boundary around the programme.

It is the foundation upon which the programme is built.

Every conversation, every activity and every interaction should reflect one simple principle:

**The welfare of the child is paramount.**

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## CHAPTER 20

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# SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

## Introduction

Fynix Project is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who participate in Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

We believe that every child and young person has the right to feel safe, valued, respected and protected from harm.

Safeguarding is central to every aspect of programme planning, delivery and partnership working.

This commitment applies regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender identity
- Ethnicity

- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic background
- Care experience
- Additional needs or vulnerabilities

Every child and young person deserves access to safe, inclusive and supportive environments.

---

## **Our Commitment**

Fynix Project is committed to:

- Promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- Creating safe and inclusive learning environments
- Maintaining safeguarding-aware delivery practices
- Following safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance
- Working collaboratively with partner organisations
- Responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns
- Supporting a culture of vigilance and accountability
- Ensuring facilitators understand their safeguarding responsibilities
- Maintaining clear reporting procedures
- Prioritising the welfare of children and young people at all times

This commitment extends across all programme settings, including schools, alternative provision, youth services, residential care environments, community organisations and online delivery environments.

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## **Child-Centred Practice**

Supporting Young Minds adopts a child-centred approach to safeguarding.

This means that the needs, welfare and best interests of the child remain the primary consideration when decisions are made.

Sidebotham (2019) highlights the importance of evidence-informed child protection approaches that place children's experiences and welfare at the centre of safeguarding decision-making.

At Fynix Project, safeguarding decisions should always consider:

- The child's welfare
- The child's safety
- The child's voice
- The child's needs
- The child's right to protection

Safeguarding should never become solely process-driven.

Procedures matter, but the child must remain at the centre.

---

## **Prevention and Early Recognition**

Effective safeguarding is not limited to responding when harm has already occurred.

It also involves recognising concerns early and taking action before risks escalate.

O'Connell (2017) highlights the importance of recognising early indicators of abuse, neglect and vulnerability, enabling professionals to respond before concerns become more significant.

Supporting Young Minds promotes awareness of:

- Vulnerability factors
- Early warning signs
- Changes in behaviour
- Indicators of distress
- Emerging safeguarding concerns

The programme itself is not designed to investigate safeguarding concerns, but facilitators should remain alert to signs that a young person may require support.

---

## **Safeguarding Culture**

Safeguarding is strengthened when it becomes part of organisational culture rather than simply a set of procedures.

Baginsky et al. (2022) emphasise the importance of creating environments where safeguarding responsibilities are understood, discussed and embedded across all levels of practice.

At Fynix Project, safeguarding culture includes:

- Shared responsibility
- Open communication
- Professional accountability
- Reflective practice
- Continuous learning
- Clear reporting pathways

Every member of the delivery team contributes to safeguarding culture through their actions, decisions and professional conduct.

---

## **Key Safeguarding Principles**

The safeguarding approach underpinning Supporting Young Minds is guided by the following principles:

### **The Welfare of the Child Is Paramount**

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people must always come first.

### **Safeguarding Is Everyone's Responsibility**

Every adult involved in programme delivery has a safeguarding role.

### **Early Action Matters**

Concerns should be recognised and acted upon promptly.

### **Professional Boundaries Support Safety**

Clear boundaries help create safe and ethical relationships.

### **Children Have a Right to Be Heard**

Young people's voices should be respected and considered appropriately.

### **Partnership Working Strengthens Safeguarding**

Effective safeguarding relies upon collaboration between organisations, professionals and services.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, safeguarding is not something we do after a concern arises.

It begins long before that.

It begins with the environments we create, the relationships we build and the standards we maintain.

Young people should know that they are entering a space where their wellbeing matters.

A space where adults take responsibility.

A space where concerns are recognised.

A space where support can be accessed.

Because safeguarding is not only about responding to harm.

It is about helping create conditions where young people can feel safe enough to learn, participate and grow.

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## **CHAPTER 21**

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# **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **Introduction**

Safeguarding is most effective when responsibilities are clear.

Every person involved in Supporting Young Minds has a role to play in helping create safe environments and responding appropriately to concerns.

Clarity of responsibility reduces uncertainty, supports accountability and helps ensure that safeguarding concerns are managed consistently and effectively.

Baginsky et al. (2022) identify clear safeguarding roles and responsibilities as a key feature of effective safeguarding systems within educational environments.

Supporting Young Minds therefore promotes a shared safeguarding approach whilst recognising that different individuals hold different responsibilities.

---

## Shared Responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Every adult involved in programme delivery should:

- Remain vigilant
- Recognise concerns
- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Promote safe environments
- Report concerns appropriately

Safeguarding should never be viewed as the responsibility of one individual alone.

Collective awareness strengthens protection.

---

## Facilitator Responsibilities

Facilitators are responsible for:

- Delivering sessions safely
- Maintaining professional boundaries
- Creating psychologically safe environments
- Following safeguarding procedures
- Reporting concerns promptly
- Maintaining accurate records where required
- Working within their competence
- Seeking support when needed

Facilitators should not investigate concerns independently or attempt to provide specialist intervention beyond their role.

Their responsibility is to recognise, respond and report.

---

## Designated Safeguarding Leads

Where delivery occurs within schools, local authorities, youth organisations or other partner settings, safeguarding concerns should be reported in accordance with the host organisation's safeguarding procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) retains responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns within their organisation.

Facilitators should understand:

- Who the DSL is
- How concerns should be reported
- What procedures apply within the setting
- What actions are expected following a disclosure or concern

Clear reporting pathways support consistency and accountability.

---

## **Fynix Project Responsibilities**

Fynix Project is responsible for:

- Maintaining safeguarding policies and procedures
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding training
- Supporting facilitators
- Promoting safe delivery environments
- Maintaining appropriate governance arrangements
- Reviewing safeguarding practices regularly
- Supporting partnership working
- Responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond individual sessions and form part of wider organisational accountability.

---

## **Partner Organisation Responsibilities**

Partner organisations remain responsible for safeguarding arrangements within their own settings.

This includes:

- Safeguarding leadership
- Designated safeguarding roles
- Internal reporting procedures

- Information sharing decisions
- Ongoing safeguarding management

Supporting Young Minds should complement, not replace, existing safeguarding systems.

Effective safeguarding depends upon collaboration between Fynix Project and host organisations.

The What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (2021) highlights the importance of multi-agency working and coordinated responses in improving outcomes for children and young people.

---

## **Professional Accountability**

Every individual involved in programme delivery remains professionally accountable for their actions.

This includes:

- Following procedures
- Maintaining professional conduct
- Respecting confidentiality limits
- Acting upon concerns
- Seeking support when needed

Ignoring concerns or failing to act appropriately may place children and young people at risk.

Professional accountability is therefore a key component of safeguarding practice.

---

## **Escalation and Support**

Facilitators should never feel that they need to manage safeguarding concerns alone.

Support should be sought whenever:

- Concerns arise
- Procedures are unclear
- Advice is required
- Safeguarding decisions feel uncertain

Seeking support is an example of good safeguarding practice.

It demonstrates professional responsibility rather than weakness.

---

## **Key Messages**

All staff and facilitators should understand that:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
  - Roles and responsibilities must be clear.
  - Facilitators recognise, respond and report.
  - DSLs manage safeguarding processes.
  - Fynix Project maintains organisational safeguarding responsibilities.
  - Partner organisations retain responsibility for safeguarding within their settings.
  - Professional accountability supports child safety.
  - Support should be sought whenever needed.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, safeguarding works best when responsibilities are understood rather than assumed.

Every person involved in delivery contributes to the safety of young people.

No role is too small.

No concern is too insignificant to raise.

When responsibilities are clear, concerns are more likely to be recognised, communicated and acted upon appropriately.

Because safeguarding is not about individuals working in isolation.

It is about people working together to protect children and young people.

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## **CHAPTER 22**

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# RECOGNISING CONCERNS

## Introduction

Safeguarding begins with awareness.

Before concerns can be responded to appropriately, they must first be recognised.

Children and young people may not always tell adults directly when something is wrong. Concerns may instead emerge through changes in behaviour, emotional presentation, attendance, communication, relationships or general wellbeing.

For this reason, safeguarding requires attentiveness, curiosity and professional awareness.

At Fynix Project, we recognise that safeguarding concerns can present in many different ways.

No single sign or behaviour automatically indicates abuse, neglect or exploitation.

However, patterns, changes or combinations of indicators may suggest that a young person requires additional support, assessment or safeguarding intervention.

Supporting Young Minds is not designed to identify or investigate safeguarding concerns directly. Nevertheless, facilitators should remain alert to signs that a child or young person may be experiencing harm, vulnerability or increased risk.

Research consistently highlights the importance of early recognition within safeguarding practice. Sidebotham (2019) emphasises that effective safeguarding involves recognising concerns across a continuum, from prevention and early intervention through to specialist support. Similarly, O'Connell (2017) highlights the importance of recognising early indicators of abuse and vulnerability before concerns escalate.

These findings reinforce a key safeguarding principle:

**Early recognition creates opportunities for early support.**

---

## Understanding Vulnerability

All children and young people have the right to protection.

However, some young people may experience additional vulnerabilities that increase their risk of harm, exploitation or abuse.

Vulnerability factors may include:

- Care experience
- Family instability
- Domestic abuse
- Social isolation
- Poverty
- Mental health difficulties
- Neurodiversity
- Learning disabilities
- Substance misuse within the family
- Previous trauma
- Online exploitation risks
- Criminal exploitation risks

Experiencing vulnerability does not mean a young person is experiencing harm.

However, it may increase the importance of professional curiosity and safeguarding awareness.

Facilitators should remain mindful that vulnerability is often influenced by a combination of individual, relational, environmental and social factors.

---

## **Recognising Changes**

One of the most important aspects of safeguarding is noticing change.

Changes in behaviour, presentation or engagement may sometimes indicate that a young person requires additional support.

Examples may include:

- Withdrawal from activities
- Increased emotional distress
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Increased aggression
- Reduced concentration
- Persistent tiredness
- Changes in attendance
- Increased anxiety
- Social isolation

- Noticeable mood changes

These signs do not automatically indicate abuse or neglect.

However, significant or persistent changes should be considered within the wider context of the young person's circumstances.

Safeguarding often begins with noticing when something feels different.

---

## **Behaviour as Communication**

At Fynix Project, we encourage facilitators to approach behaviour with curiosity rather than immediate judgement.

Behaviour often communicates information about a young person's experiences, emotions, environment or unmet needs.

This does not mean all behaviour is linked to safeguarding concerns.

However, behaviour can sometimes provide important clues about distress, stress, fear, exploitation or other difficulties.

Trauma-informed practice emphasises the importance of understanding behaviour within context rather than viewing it solely as a problem to be managed (Boag, 2020; Hayes, 2022).

Facilitators should therefore ask:

- What might this behaviour be communicating?
- Has something changed?
- Is additional support needed?
- Does this require safeguarding consideration?

Professional curiosity supports safer practice.

---

## **Indicators of Abuse and Neglect**

Abuse and neglect can take many forms.

Potential indicators may include:

### **Physical Abuse**

Possible indicators may include:

- Unexplained injuries
- Frequent injuries
- Injuries inconsistent with explanations
- Reluctance to discuss injuries
- Fear of certain individuals

## **Emotional Abuse**

Possible indicators may include:

- Persistent low self-esteem
- Excessive self-criticism
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety
- Fearfulness
- Extreme compliance

## **Neglect**

Possible indicators may include:

- Persistent hunger
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
- Unmet medical needs
- Frequent tiredness
- Lack of supervision

## **Sexual Abuse**

Possible indicators may include:

- Age-inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Sudden behavioural changes
- Distress relating to specific individuals
- Fearfulness
- Withdrawal

Facilitators should never attempt to diagnose abuse.

Their role is to recognise concerns and report them appropriately.

# Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines

Safeguarding concerns may also include exploitation.

Child criminal exploitation can involve young people being manipulated, coerced or controlled for criminal purposes.

Research by Robinson, McLean and Densley (2018), Glover Williams and Finlay (2018), and Swancott et al. (2025) highlights the growing concern regarding county lines activity and child criminal exploitation within the UK.

Possible indicators may include:

- Unexplained money or possessions
- Missing episodes
- Increased secrecy
- Association with older individuals
- Changes in friendship groups
- Travel to unfamiliar locations
- Sudden changes in behaviour

Facilitators are not expected to investigate these concerns.

They should report concerns through safeguarding pathways.

---

## Online Risks

Young people increasingly navigate digital environments as part of everyday life.

Whilst online spaces can provide opportunities for learning, communication and connection, they can also expose young people to safeguarding risks.

Davies, Bhullar and Dowty (2011), El-Asam et al. (2021), Hayes et al. (2017) and Hayes (2023) all highlight the evolving nature of online safeguarding risks facing children and young people.

Potential concerns may include:

- Online grooming
- Exploitation
- Cyberbullying
- Harmful content exposure
- Online coercion
- Digital harassment

- Unsafe online relationships

Facilitators should maintain awareness of digital safeguarding as part of wider safeguarding responsibilities.

---

## Professional Curiosity

Professional curiosity refers to the willingness to explore, question and reflect when concerns arise.

It involves remaining open-minded rather than making assumptions.

Professional curiosity may include:

- Noticing changes
- Asking appropriate questions
- Seeking clarification where necessary
- Consulting safeguarding leads
- Considering wider context

Safeguarding concerns are not always obvious.

Remaining curious can help ensure concerns are not overlooked.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Safeguarding often begins with noticing change.
  - Behaviour may communicate important information.
  - Vulnerability factors can increase safeguarding risk.
  - Abuse and neglect can present in different ways.
  - Exploitation can affect young people across many settings.
  - Online safeguarding is part of safeguarding.
  - Professional curiosity supports safer practice.
  - Concerns should be reported rather than investigated.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, recognising concerns is not about looking for problems in every young person.

It is about paying attention.

It is about noticing when something changes.

It is about remaining curious, compassionate and professionally aware.

Sometimes safeguarding begins with a disclosure.

Sometimes it begins with a conversation.

And sometimes it begins with a feeling that something does not seem quite right.

Recognising concerns means taking those observations seriously and ensuring they are responded to appropriately.

Because early recognition can create opportunities for early support.

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## **CHAPTER 23**

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# **MANAGING CONCERNS**

## **Introduction**

Recognising a concern is only the first step.

Effective safeguarding also requires concerns to be managed appropriately, consistently and without delay.

At Fynix Project, safeguarding concerns should never be ignored, minimised or managed in isolation.

Where concerns arise, facilitators are expected to follow safeguarding procedures, seek support where needed and ensure concerns are passed to the appropriate safeguarding lead or organisation.

Research examining safeguarding systems consistently identifies timely reporting, clear procedures and multi-agency collaboration as important features of effective safeguarding practice (Baginsky et al., 2022; What Works Centre for Children's Social Care, 2021).

Supporting Young Minds therefore promotes a safeguarding response that is clear, proportionate and child-centred.

---

## **Responding to Concerns**

When a safeguarding concern arises, facilitators should:

- Remain calm
- Prioritise safety
- Listen appropriately
- Avoid assumptions
- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Report concerns promptly

Facilitators should not attempt to determine whether abuse has occurred.

Their responsibility is to recognise, respond and report.

Safeguarding decisions should be managed through appropriate safeguarding processes.

---

## **Immediate Risk**

Where a child or young person appears to be at immediate risk of harm, facilitators should act without delay.

Immediate risks may include:

- Serious threats to safety
- Significant injury
- Immediate exploitation concerns
- Serious self-harm concerns
- Immediate suicide risk
- Situations requiring emergency intervention

In these circumstances, organisational safeguarding procedures and emergency response pathways should be followed immediately.

The welfare of the child remains the primary consideration.

---

## **Recording Concerns**

Accurate recording is an important safeguarding responsibility.

Records should be:

- Factual
- Objective
- Accurate
- Timely
- Secure

Facilitators should clearly record:

- What was observed
- What was said
- Dates and times
- Actions taken
- Individuals informed

Records should avoid speculation, interpretation or personal opinion.

Clear records support accountability and continuity of safeguarding responses.

---

## **Information Sharing**

Safeguarding may require information to be shared appropriately with relevant professionals.

Young people should be informed, where appropriate, that concerns may need to be shared in order to keep them safe.

Information sharing should:

- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Be proportionate
- Be necessary
- Be relevant
- Protect privacy wherever possible

Safeguarding responsibilities may override expectations of confidentiality where safety concerns exist.

---

## **Multi-Agency Working**

Safeguarding is rarely the responsibility of one person or organisation.

The What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (2021) highlights the importance of effective multi-agency working in supporting positive outcomes for children and young people.

Depending on the nature of the concern, safeguarding responses may involve:

- Schools
- Local authorities
- Children's social care
- Health professionals
- Police
- Youth services
- Specialist support services

Supporting Young Minds should complement these systems rather than replace them.

---

## **Escalating Concerns**

If a facilitator feels that a safeguarding concern has not been addressed appropriately, concerns should be escalated through organisational safeguarding procedures.

Professional accountability includes raising concerns when further action may be required.

Safeguarding practice should remain child-centred rather than process-centred.

The focus should remain on what is needed to promote the safety and wellbeing of the young person.

---

## **Seeking Support**

Managing safeguarding concerns can sometimes feel challenging.

Facilitators should seek:

- Advice from safeguarding leads
- Organisational support
- Supervision where available
- Guidance regarding procedures

Mackey (2025) highlights the importance of support and supervision for professionals working within safeguarding environments.

Seeking support is an example of responsible safeguarding practice.

Facilitators should never feel expected to manage concerns alone.

---

## Learning from Concerns

Safeguarding practice benefits from reflection and continuous improvement.

Where appropriate, organisations should review:

- Responses
- Procedures
- Communication
- Recording practices
- Partnership working

Reflective practice supports learning and strengthens safeguarding systems over time.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Concerns should never be ignored.
- Safeguarding responses should be timely.
- Facilitators recognise, respond and report.
- Accurate recording matters.
- Information sharing may be necessary.
- Multi-agency working supports safeguarding.
- Support should be sought when needed.

- The child's welfare remains paramount.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, managing concerns is not about having all the answers.

It is about taking responsibility.

It is about ensuring that concerns reach the people best placed to help.

Safeguarding works best when people act, communicate and work together.

When concerns are recognised and managed appropriately, young people are more likely to receive the support, protection and intervention they may need.

Because safeguarding is not defined by policies alone.

It is defined by what happens when concerns arise.

---

# **CHAPTER 26**

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## **EMOTIONAL CONTAINMENT**

### **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is designed as an educational and psychoeducational programme.

Participants are not expected to disclose personal experiences, discuss traumatic events or engage in therapeutic processing as part of programme delivery.

However, emotional topics, wellbeing discussions and reflective activities can sometimes evoke emotional responses.

Facilitators therefore require an understanding of emotional containment and its role within safe programme delivery.

At Fynix Project, emotional containment refers to the ability to create an emotionally safe, structured and supportive learning environment where feelings can be acknowledged without becoming overwhelming.

Emotional containment is not therapy.

It is not counselling.

It is not trauma processing.

It is the process of maintaining emotional safety whilst remaining within professional and educational boundaries.

Trauma-informed practice literature highlights the importance of predictable, emotionally safe environments that support regulation, trust and stability (Boag, 2020; Hayes, 2022). Similarly, Shevrin Venet (2019) emphasises the importance of role clarity and relational safety within trauma-informed educational settings.

These principles underpin the emotional containment approach used throughout Supporting Young Minds.

---

## **Why Emotional Containment Matters**

Young people may occasionally experience:

- Emotional reactions
- Frustration
- Anxiety
- Distress
- Worry
- Sadness
- Strong feelings linked to discussion topics

This does not mean something has gone wrong.

It reflects the reality that wellbeing conversations can sometimes connect with personal experiences.

Emotional containment helps facilitators create a space where emotions can be acknowledged safely without becoming the focus of therapeutic intervention.

The aim is not to remove emotions.

The aim is to create enough safety and structure for learning to continue appropriately.

---

## Emotional Safety and Learning

Research suggests that learning is more likely to occur when individuals experience psychological and emotional safety.

Young people are often more willing to engage, reflect and participate when they feel respected, supported and free from judgement.

Within Supporting Young Minds, emotional safety is promoted through:

- Predictable delivery
- Clear boundaries
- Choice and autonomy
- Respectful communication
- Consistent facilitation
- Group agreements
- Psychological safety

These elements work together to create environments where young people can participate without feeling pressured to disclose personal experiences.

---

## The Facilitator's Role

Facilitators play an important role in supporting emotional containment.

This includes:

- Remaining calm
- Maintaining structure
- Acknowledging emotions appropriately
- Avoiding panic or overreaction
- Following safeguarding procedures where required
- Keeping discussions within programme boundaries

Facilitators are not expected to solve every problem.

Nor are they expected to provide therapeutic responses.

Their role is to provide stability, reassurance and appropriate support whilst maintaining professional boundaries.

---

## Responding to Emotional Distress

Where a young person becomes upset during delivery, facilitators should seek to:

### Remain Calm

The facilitator's response can influence how safe the young person feels.

### Acknowledge the Emotion

Simple statements such as:

"Thank you for letting us know."

"It is okay to take a moment."

can help validate feelings without encouraging therapeutic exploration.

### Offer Choice

The young person may wish to:

- Take a break
- Speak to a trusted adult
- Continue participating
- Step outside with appropriate support
- Use grounding techniques

### Maintain Safety

Facilitators should consider both individual and group wellbeing.

### Follow Safeguarding Procedures

Where concerns indicate risk or vulnerability, safeguarding pathways should be followed.

---

## Avoiding Therapeutic Drift

Therapeutic drift occurs when educational programmes unintentionally move beyond their intended remit and begin functioning like counselling or therapy.

Supporting Young Minds should remain:

- Educational
- Preventative
- Psychoeducational
- Skills-focused

Facilitators should avoid:

- Trauma processing
- Exploring traumatic experiences in depth
- Therapeutic questioning
- Providing counselling interventions
- Encouraging disclosure

Professional boundaries help maintain emotional safety.

Young people should never feel responsible for sharing personal experiences in order to benefit from the programme.

---

## Grounding and Stabilisation

Where appropriate, grounding techniques introduced within the programme may help support emotional steadiness.

Examples may include:

- Box breathing
- Sensory awareness
- Present-moment grounding
- Anchor objects
- Movement breaks

These strategies should be presented as wellbeing tools rather than therapeutic interventions.

The goal is to support participation and emotional steadiness rather than process emotional experiences.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Emotional containment supports emotional safety.

- Supporting Young Minds is not therapy.
  - Emotional responses are not necessarily safeguarding concerns.
  - Facilitators should remain calm and consistent.
  - Boundaries support safety.
  - Grounding techniques may support regulation.
  - Therapeutic drift should be avoided.
  - Safeguarding procedures remain in place where concerns arise.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, emotional containment is about holding space, not taking over.

It is about creating environments where emotions can exist without becoming overwhelming and where young people feel supported without feeling exposed.

Young people do not need to share their story in order to learn.

They do not need to disclose personal experiences in order to participate.

They simply need a space that feels safe enough to engage.

Because safety supports learning.

And learning supports growth.

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# **CHAPTER 27**

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## **SAFEGUARDING FLOWCHARTS**

### **Introduction**

Safeguarding procedures should be clear, consistent and easy to follow.

When concerns arise, uncertainty can delay action.

For this reason, Supporting Young Minds uses simple safeguarding flowcharts to support decision-making and reporting.

The purpose of these flowcharts is not to replace professional judgement.

Their purpose is to provide a clear framework that supports timely and appropriate action.

Flowcharts should always be read alongside:

- Organisational safeguarding policies
  - Local safeguarding procedures
  - DSL guidance
  - Statutory safeguarding responsibilities
- 

## **Safeguarding Response Flowchart**

### **Step 1**

#### **Observe, Notice or Receive Information**

A concern may arise through:

- Observation
- Disclosure
- Behaviour
- Communication
- Information shared by others

↓

### **Step 2**

#### **Consider Immediate Safety**

Ask:

#### **Is the young person at immediate risk of harm?**

If yes:

- Follow emergency safeguarding procedures immediately.
- Contact appropriate safeguarding leads.
- Contact emergency services where required.

If no:

Proceed to Step 3.

↓

### **Step 3**

#### **Record the Concern**

Record:

- What was observed
- What was said
- Date and time
- Actions taken

Use factual and objective language.

↓

### **Step 4**

#### **Report the Concern**

Report concerns to:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Appropriate safeguarding contact
- Host organisation safeguarding lead

Follow local procedures.

↓

### **Step 5**

#### **Safeguarding Lead Review**

The DSL or safeguarding lead determines next actions and referrals.

↓

### **Step 6**

#### **Continue Appropriate Support**

Maintain professional boundaries.

Continue programme delivery where appropriate.

Do not investigate independently.

---

## **Disclosure Response Flowchart**

### **A Young Person Makes a Disclosure**

↓

#### **Listen**

Allow the young person to speak.

↓

#### **Remain Calm**

Provide a safe and supportive response.

↓

#### **Reassure**

Thank the young person for speaking.

↓

#### **Do Not Investigate**

Avoid leading questions.

↓

#### **Explain Next Steps**

Be honest about safeguarding responsibilities.

↓

#### **Record**

Make a factual record.

↓

## Report

Follow safeguarding procedures immediately.

---

## Key Messages

Flowcharts support:

- Consistency
- Clarity
- Accountability
- Timely action
- Safe decision-making

They are designed to guide practice rather than replace professional judgement.

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# CHAPTER 28

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## REFERRAL PATHWAYS

### Introduction

Supporting Young Minds is not a specialist safeguarding service, therapeutic service or crisis intervention programme.

Where concerns arise that require additional support, young people should be referred through appropriate safeguarding and support pathways.

Referral pathways help ensure that young people receive support from professionals and services best placed to meet their needs.

Research consistently highlights the importance of coordinated responses and multi-agency working when supporting vulnerable children and young people (What Works Centre for Children's Social Care, 2021; Golden, 2011).

Supporting Young Minds therefore operates within existing safeguarding systems rather than outside them.

---

## **Internal Reporting Pathways**

Concerns arising during programme delivery should be reported through:

- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Host organisation safeguarding procedures
- Fynix Project safeguarding processes
- Local organisational reporting systems

Facilitators should understand reporting arrangements before delivery begins.

---

## **Potential Referral Destinations**

Depending on the nature of the concern, referrals may involve:

### **Children's Social Care**

Where concerns relate to abuse, neglect or significant safeguarding risks.

### **Education Services**

Where concerns affect attendance, wellbeing or educational engagement.

### **Health Services**

Where physical or mental health support may be required.

### **CAMHS**

Where specialist mental health assessment or intervention is required.

### **Early Help Services**

Where coordinated family support may be beneficial.

### **Youth Services**

Where community-based support can strengthen wellbeing and engagement.

## **Police**

Where criminal activity, exploitation or immediate safety concerns exist.

## **Specialist Services**

Including:

- Domestic abuse services
- Exploitation services
- Bereavement support
- Substance misuse services
- Advocacy services

Referral decisions should be made through appropriate safeguarding procedures.

---

## **Partnership Working**

Effective safeguarding depends upon collaboration.

The What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (2021) identifies multi-agency working as an important component of effective safeguarding responses.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to work collaboratively with:

- Schools
- Local authorities
- Social care
- Health services
- Community organisations
- Youth services
- Families where appropriate

The programme should complement existing support systems rather than duplicate them.

---

## **Facilitator Responsibilities**

Facilitators should:

- Understand referral pathways
- Follow safeguarding procedures

- Report concerns appropriately
- Avoid making referrals outside authorised procedures unless required by policy
- Seek support where needed

Facilitators should not assume responsibility for managing complex safeguarding concerns independently.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Supporting Young Minds is not a safeguarding service.
  - Referral pathways help young people access appropriate support.
  - Safeguarding concerns should be reported through established procedures.
  - Multi-agency working strengthens safeguarding.
  - Facilitators should remain within professional competence.
  - The welfare of the child remains paramount.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, safeguarding does not end when a concern is recognised.

It continues through action, communication and partnership.

Young people deserve support that is timely, appropriate and coordinated.

No programme can meet every need.

But every programme can play a role in helping young people access the support they require.

Because safeguarding is not about carrying responsibility alone.

It is about ensuring that the right people are connected to the right support at the right time.

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# PART 7

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# EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

## Introduction

Accessibility is a fundamental principle of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

At Fynix Project, we believe that wellbeing education should be designed in ways that maximise participation, reduce unnecessary barriers and create opportunities for all young people to engage meaningfully.

Accessibility is not limited to physical access.

It also includes communication, learning, emotional and participation accessibility.

Supporting Young Minds therefore adopts a broad approach to accessibility that seeks to recognise and respond to the diverse needs, experiences and circumstances of young people.

The aim is not simply to make participation possible.

It is to make participation meaningful.

Accessibility should be considered throughout programme planning, delivery and review.

It is not a one-time adjustment.

It is an ongoing process of reflection and improvement.

*Research increasingly highlights the importance of embedding accessibility and equitable participation into programme design from the outset. Harniess, McGlinchey, McDonald and colleagues (2024) found that barriers to engagement often emerged when programmes did not adequately reflect the needs, circumstances and participation preferences of diverse groups. Similarly, Welsh et al. (2015) highlight the importance of considering equity during programme design rather than attempting to address barriers retrospectively.*

These findings support a principle that underpins Supporting Young Minds:

**Accessibility works best when it is built into the design rather than added afterwards.**

---

## **Evidence-Informed Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility**

The equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility framework within Supporting Young Minds has been developed using current research relating to belonging, inclusive education, accessibility, cultural humility, neurodiversity, identity development and equitable participation.

The references cited throughout this section inform programme design, facilitation principles and accessibility considerations. They should not be interpreted as evaluations of Supporting Young Minds itself.

Fynix Project remains committed to reviewing delivery practices and programme environments to ensure that learning remains inclusive, accessible and responsive to the diverse experiences of young people.

---

## **Why Inclusion Matters**

Inclusion is often discussed in terms of access.

Whilst access is important, meaningful inclusion goes beyond attendance or participation alone.

Young people are more likely to engage when they experience:

- Respect
- Safety
- Belonging
- Representation
- Fairness
- Opportunity
- Connection

Inclusion therefore involves creating environments where young people feel that they matter.

It involves recognising that every young person has value and that every young person deserves the opportunity to participate without fear of exclusion, judgement or discrimination.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create these conditions through trauma-informed, strengths-based and psychologically safe delivery.

---

## **Equality, Diversity and Accessibility**

Equality, diversity and accessibility are closely connected but distinct concepts.

### **Equality**

Equality involves ensuring that young people are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged because of protected characteristics, identity or background.

### **Diversity**

Diversity recognises the richness of different experiences, cultures, identities, perspectives and ways of understanding the world.

### **Accessibility**

Accessibility focuses on reducing barriers that may prevent participation, engagement or learning.

Together, these principles help create environments where young people can access opportunities in ways that are meaningful and appropriate to their individual circumstances.

---

## **Belonging and Participation**

One of the strongest themes emerging from contemporary inclusion research is the importance of belonging.

Belonging refers to the experience of feeling accepted, valued and connected within a group or community.

Research consistently identifies belonging as an important contributor to wellbeing, participation and positive educational experiences.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks not only to include young people physically within learning environments, but to create conditions where they feel that they belong.

This involves:

- Respectful relationships
- Psychological safety
- Participation opportunities
- Representation
- Inclusive communication
- Recognition of individual strengths

Belonging is not created through policy alone.

It develops through everyday interactions, experiences and relationships.

---

## **The Role of Facilitators**

Facilitators play an important role in creating inclusive learning environments.

Facilitators should seek to:

- Use inclusive language
- Promote respect
- Recognise diversity
- Reduce barriers to participation
- Encourage belonging
- Challenge discrimination appropriately
- Remain open to different perspectives
- Adapt delivery where appropriate

Inclusive practice is not about having perfect knowledge of every experience or identity.

It is about approaching young people with respect, curiosity and a willingness to learn.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe wellbeing education should be accessible to every young person.

Young people should not need to change who they are in order to participate.

They should not need to hide aspects of their identity in order to feel accepted.

They should not need to fit a particular mould in order to belong.

Instead, programmes should be designed to recognise diversity, reduce barriers and create environments where young people can participate as themselves.

Because meaningful wellbeing education begins with something simple:

The feeling that you are welcome here.

---

## **CHAPTER 29**

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# **INCLUSIVE PRACTICE**

## **Introduction**

Inclusive practice involves creating learning environments where all young people have meaningful opportunities to participate, contribute and benefit from the programme.

At Fynix Project, inclusion is not viewed as a destination.

It is an ongoing process.

It requires reflection, flexibility, responsiveness and a commitment to recognising the dignity and value of every participant.

Supporting Young Minds adopts a strengths-based, person-centred and trauma-informed approach to inclusion.

The aim is not simply to provide access.

The aim is to support belonging.

Research highlights the importance of this distinction. Prince and Hadwin (2013), examining school belonging and inclusion for children with special educational needs, found that a sense of belonging was more strongly associated with

positive educational, emotional and social outcomes than physical inclusion alone.

These findings reinforce an important principle:

**Attendance does not automatically create belonging.**

Inclusive practice seeks to create both.

---

## What Inclusion Means

Within Supporting Young Minds, inclusion means:

- Recognising diversity
- Valuing individuality
- Removing barriers to participation
- Promoting belonging
- Encouraging participation
- Respecting differences
- Supporting equitable access

Inclusion is not a single strategy or activity.

It is a way of thinking about how environments, relationships and learning experiences are created.

Inclusive practice recognises that young people may have different needs, strengths and preferences, and that meaningful participation may look different from one person to another.

---

## Creating Inclusive Environments

Inclusive environments help young people feel welcomed, respected and able to participate.

Facilitators should seek to create environments that:

- Feel welcoming
- Promote safety
- Encourage participation
- Respect individuality
- Recognise diversity

- Reduce barriers
- Value different perspectives

Young people should never feel excluded, judged or disadvantaged because of who they are.

Brown, Douthwaite, Donnelly and Shay (2025), drawing on findings from the Belonging in School Study, found that young people's experiences of belonging were shaped by multiple aspects of identity, including social, cultural, peer and individual identities. The authors highlight the importance of environments that recognise the whole person rather than focusing solely on educational participation.

This supports the importance of creating learning environments that are responsive to the complexity of young people's lives and experiences.

---

## **Strengths-Based Practice**

Supporting Young Minds adopts a strengths-based approach throughout programme delivery.

Rather than focusing solely on difficulties, challenges or deficits, facilitators are encouraged to recognise and build upon existing strengths.

These strengths may include:

- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Determination
- Empathy
- Problem-solving
- Leadership
- Communication
- Resilience
- Kindness
- Insight

Every young person brings strengths into the learning environment.

Brown and Shay (2021), exploring identity, wellbeing and educational practice, found that young people reported stronger wellbeing and engagement when educational environments recognised authenticity, connection and individual strengths rather than focusing solely on risk or resilience deficits.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to help young people recognise what is already strong within them whilst continuing to develop new skills and understanding.

---

## **Participation and Voice**

Inclusive practice recognises that participation can take many forms.

Not every young person will contribute in the same way.

Participation may involve:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- Drawing
- Reflecting
- Observing
- Pair work
- Small-group discussion

Young people should not feel pressured to engage in a particular way.

Providing different opportunities for participation can help create more accessible and inclusive learning experiences.

The focus should remain on meaningful engagement rather than visible participation alone.

---

## **Equity and Fairness**

Equality does not always mean treating everyone identically.

Some young people may require additional support, adaptations or adjustments in order to participate fully.

Equity involves recognising these differences and responding appropriately.

Welsh et al. (2015) describe this approach as proportionate universalism: providing universal opportunities whilst recognising that some individuals may require additional support to achieve equitable access and participation.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to apply this principle through flexible, responsive and accessible delivery.

The aim is not to give everyone the same experience.

The aim is to ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to engage.

---

## **Reflective and Responsive Practice**

Inclusive practice requires ongoing reflection.

Facilitators should continually consider:

- Who is participating?
- Who may be experiencing barriers?
- What adjustments may help?
- How inclusive does the environment feel?
- What can be improved?

No programme will be perfect.

However, a commitment to reflection and continuous improvement helps ensure that inclusion remains an active part of delivery rather than a statement within a policy document.

---

## **Key Messages**

Facilitators should remember:

- Inclusion is a process, not a destination.
  - Belonging matters as much as access.
  - Diversity should be recognised and valued.
  - Participation can take many forms.
  - Strengths should be recognised alongside needs.
  - Equity may require flexibility and adaptation.
  - Inclusive environments benefit all young people.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, inclusion is about more than making space for young people.

It is about helping young people feel that the space belongs to them too.

We believe young people learn best when they feel respected, represented and valued.

When they feel safe enough to participate.

When they feel confident enough to contribute.

And when they know that they do not need to become someone else in order to belong.

Because inclusion is not simply about who is present.

It is about who feels welcome enough to stay.

---

## **CHAPTER 30**

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# **PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

## **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is committed to creating learning environments where all young people are treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

Every young person has the right to participate in wellbeing education without fear of discrimination, exclusion or prejudice.

At Fynix Project, equality is not viewed solely as a legal responsibility.

It is a commitment to recognising the value of every individual and creating environments where young people can participate as themselves.

Supporting Young Minds aligns with the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and seeks to promote inclusive, respectful and psychologically safe learning environments throughout all aspects of delivery.

The programme recognises that young people may experience the world differently depending upon their identity, background, experiences and circumstances.

These experiences can influence wellbeing, belonging, participation and access to support.

For this reason, equality and inclusion are embedded throughout programme design and delivery rather than addressed as separate topics.

---

## Respect for Individual Identity

Identity is complex.

Young people may identify with multiple aspects of themselves simultaneously, including culture, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality, gender, family background, community and personal experiences.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments where young people feel accepted, respected and valued without needing to hide important aspects of who they are.

Richards (2025), exploring identity, belonging and inclusion within educational settings, highlights the importance of recognising that visible characteristics rarely tell the whole story of a young person's experiences or support needs. The study found that many young people chose not to disclose important aspects of their identity because they were uncertain how that information would be received.

These findings reinforce an important principle:

**Young people should not need to hide parts of themselves in order to feel safe.**

Creating inclusive environments means creating spaces where identity can be respected without assumption or judgement.

---

## Understanding Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 identifies a number of protected characteristics.

These include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Whilst not every protected characteristic will be directly relevant within every youth setting, the principles of equality, dignity and respect apply consistently across programme delivery.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to ensure that no young person is disadvantaged, excluded or treated unfairly because of who they are.

---

## **Inclusion Beyond Compliance**

Legal protections provide an important framework for equality.

However, meaningful inclusion goes beyond compliance.

Creating genuinely inclusive environments involves:

- Respecting individual identity
- Recognising diversity
- Promoting belonging
- Challenging discrimination
- Encouraging participation
- Supporting representation

Young people are more likely to engage when they feel that their experiences and identities are recognised rather than ignored.

This does not require facilitators to become experts in every identity or experience.

It requires openness, respect and a willingness to learn.

---

## **Challenging Discrimination**

Discrimination, prejudice and exclusion can have significant impacts on wellbeing, confidence and participation.

Supporting Young Minds promotes environments where discriminatory language, behaviour or attitudes are addressed appropriately and respectfully.

Facilitators should:

- Model inclusive behaviour
- Promote respectful communication
- Challenge discriminatory language appropriately
- Encourage empathy and understanding
- Maintain psychologically safe learning environments

The aim is not to shame participants.

The aim is to promote learning, respect and accountability.

---

## **Intersectionality and Belonging**

Young people do not experience identity through a single characteristic.

Many young people navigate multiple aspects of identity simultaneously.

Woodhead, Morgan, Sabra and colleagues (2025), exploring LGBTQ+ young people's experiences within educational settings, found that young people with intersecting identities often experienced additional barriers when those identities were not recognised or understood.

The study highlights the importance of moving beyond simplistic approaches to inclusion and recognising the complexity of young people's experiences.

Supporting Young Minds therefore encourages facilitators to view participants as whole people rather than categories or labels.

No single characteristic defines a young person.

---

## **Dignity and Respect**

Every young person has the right to:

- Feel respected
- Feel safe

- Feel valued
- Participate without discrimination
- Have their identity treated with dignity

These principles should be reflected in:

- Communication
- Activities
- Group discussions
- Facilitator behaviour
- Programme environments

Respect is not something that must be earned.

It is something that should be provided consistently.

---

## Facilitator Notes

Facilitators should:

- Avoid assumptions
- Use inclusive language
- Respect identity
- Promote belonging
- Challenge discrimination appropriately
- Remain curious and open-minded
- Recognise the diversity within every group

Facilitators do not need to have all the answers.

They do need to create environments where respect remains the expectation.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Every young person deserves dignity and respect.
- Identity is often more complex than visible characteristics alone.
- Equality involves fairness, inclusion and participation.
- Belonging supports wellbeing.
- Discrimination can negatively affect wellbeing and engagement.
- Inclusion requires ongoing reflection and learning.

- Young people should feel safe to be themselves.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe young people should never feel that they need to leave part of themselves at the door in order to participate.

We believe every young person deserves to feel welcomed, respected and valued.

Our role is not to define who young people are.

Our role is to create environments where they can participate safely, confidently and authentically.

Because wellbeing grows more easily in spaces where people feel accepted for who they are.

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# **CHAPTER 31**

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## **NEURODIVERSITY INCLUSION**

### **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds recognises neurodiversity as a natural and valuable part of human diversity.

Young people experience the world in different ways.

They process information differently, communicate differently, learn differently and engage with environments differently.

At Fynix Project, neurodiversity is not viewed as something that needs fixing.

Instead, we recognise neurodivergent differences as part of the broad range of human experiences that enrich communities, learning environments and society.

Supporting Young Minds therefore adopts a strengths-based and accessibility-focused approach to neurodiversity inclusion.

The programme seeks to reduce barriers whilst recognising and valuing the strengths, perspectives and abilities that neurodivergent young people bring.

This approach reflects contemporary neurodiversity-informed practice, which emphasises participation, accessibility and recognition of strengths rather than deficit-based models.

---

## **Understanding Neurodiversity**

Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in how human brains develop and function.

Neurodivergent experiences may include:

- Autism
- ADHD
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- Tourette Syndrome
- Other neurodevelopmental differences

Every individual experiences neurodiversity differently.

Two young people with the same diagnosis may have very different strengths, preferences and support needs.

For this reason, assumptions should never be made based solely on labels or diagnoses.

Supporting Young Minds encourages person-centred rather than diagnosis-centred approaches.

---

## **A Strengths-Based Perspective**

Neurodivergent young people often possess strengths that may be overlooked when attention focuses only on challenges.

These strengths may include:

- Creativity
- Curiosity

- Innovation
- Problem-solving
- Attention to detail
- Deep interests
- Original thinking
- Determination
- Pattern recognition

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create opportunities for these strengths to be recognised and valued.

Young people should be able to experience themselves as capable, resourceful and valued members of the group.

The programme therefore seeks to balance support needs with strengths recognition.

---

## **Inclusive Delivery**

Supporting Young Minds has been designed to support flexible and accessible participation.

Facilitators should seek to:

- Use clear language
- Provide predictable structure
- Reduce unnecessary ambiguity
- Offer participation choices
- Allow processing time
- Use visual supports where appropriate
- Adapt activities where needed

These approaches often benefit all participants rather than neurodivergent young people alone.

Accessibility frequently improves learning experiences for the whole group.

---

## **Participation Without Pressure**

Young people engage differently.

Some may enjoy discussion.

Others may prefer writing, drawing, observation or practical activities.

Participation should never be limited to one method.

Harniess, McGlinchey, McDonald and colleagues (2024), exploring equitable access within health promotion programmes, found that participation barriers often emerged when programmes required engagement in ways that did not align with participants' needs or circumstances.

These findings reinforce a key Fynix principle:

**Participation should be invited, not demanded.**

Providing choice can support accessibility, autonomy and psychological safety.

---

## Multiple Ways of Learning

Young people learn in different ways.

Lyons, Van Dyke and de Courten (2025), reviewing mental health education approaches, found that programmes using varied delivery methods, active participation and multiple modes of engagement tended to support more inclusive learning experiences than one-size-fits-all approaches.

Supporting Young Minds therefore encourages facilitators to use a variety of methods, including:

- Discussion
- Reflection
- Visual resources
- Practical activities
- Creative exercises
- Workbook activities
- Small-group work

Providing multiple routes into learning supports accessibility and inclusion.

---

## Reducing Barriers

Inclusive practice involves identifying and reducing barriers wherever possible.

Potential barriers may include:

- Sensory demands
- Communication difficulties
- Unclear instructions
- Excessive waiting times
- Rapid transitions
- Social pressure
- Overly complex activities

Facilitators are encouraged to consider how delivery can be adapted whilst maintaining the integrity of the programme.

Small adjustments can often have a significant impact on participation.

---

## **Neurodiversity and Belonging**

Belonging remains an important aspect of neurodiversity inclusion.

Young people are more likely to engage when they feel accepted, respected and understood.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments where neurodivergent young people do not feel that they must mask, hide or suppress aspects of themselves in order to participate.

The aim is not simply access.

The aim is meaningful inclusion.

---

## **Facilitator Notes**

Facilitators should:

- Avoid assumptions
- Focus on the individual
- Provide flexibility where appropriate
- Recognise strengths
- Reduce barriers
- Offer participation choices
- Maintain predictable structures
- Promote belonging

No single strategy will meet the needs of every young person.

Inclusive practice requires curiosity, responsiveness and ongoing reflection.

---

## **Key Messages**

Facilitators should remember:

- Neurodiversity is a natural part of human diversity.
  - Every neurodivergent young person is unique.
  - Strengths and support needs can coexist.
  - Participation should be flexible.
  - Accessibility benefits everyone.
  - Belonging supports wellbeing and engagement.
  - Inclusion is an ongoing process.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we do not believe young people should have to change who they are in order to access wellbeing education.

We believe programmes should be flexible enough to meet young people where they are.

Neurodivergent young people bring valuable perspectives, strengths and experiences into every learning environment.

Our role is not to make young people fit the programme.

Our role is to create a programme that makes space for young people.

Because inclusion is not about helping young people fit in.

It is about helping young people feel that they belong.

---

## **CHAPTER 32**

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# ACCESSIBILITY FRAMEWORK

## Introduction

Accessibility is a fundamental principle of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

At Fynix Project, we believe that wellbeing education should be designed in ways that maximise participation, reduce unnecessary barriers and create opportunities for all young people to engage meaningfully.

Accessibility is not limited to physical access.

It also includes communication, learning, emotional and participation accessibility.

Supporting Young Minds therefore adopts a broad approach to accessibility that seeks to recognise and respond to the diverse needs, experiences and circumstances of young people.

The aim is not simply to make participation possible.

The aim is to make participation meaningful.

Accessibility should be considered throughout programme planning, delivery and review.

It is not a one-time adjustment.

It is an ongoing process of reflection and improvement.

Research increasingly highlights the importance of embedding accessibility into programme design from the outset. Yi (2025) argues that equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility-informed practice requires more than the removal of physical barriers alone. Sustainable accessibility involves recognising the wider social, environmental and structural factors that influence participation and engagement.

This reflects a principle that underpins Supporting Young Minds:

**Accessibility works best when it is built into the design rather than added afterwards.**

## Physical Accessibility

Physical accessibility involves ensuring that programme environments are safe, appropriate and accessible for participants.

Where possible, facilitators and partner organisations should consider:

- Venue accessibility
- Mobility requirements
- Seating arrangements
- Room layout
- Access routes
- Environmental safety

Accessibility considerations should be planned proactively wherever possible.

Young people should not be placed in situations where participation is unnecessarily restricted by environmental barriers.

---

## Communication Accessibility

Communication accessibility involves ensuring that information can be understood and engaged with by a wide range of participants.

Facilitators should seek to:

- Use clear language
- Avoid unnecessary jargon
- Explain unfamiliar terms
- Check understanding
- Provide instructions clearly
- Allow additional processing time where needed

Effective communication supports both accessibility and participation.

Young people should not feel excluded from learning because information is delivered in inaccessible ways.

---

## Learning Accessibility

Young people engage with learning differently.

Some may learn most effectively through discussion.

Others may benefit from visual resources, reflection, practical activities or creative approaches.

Supporting Young Minds therefore encourages a variety of learning methods, including:

- Visual resources
- Group discussion
- Reflection exercises
- Practical activities
- Workbook tasks
- Creative learning approaches

Lyons, Van Dyke and de Courten (2025), reviewing approaches to mental health education, found that programmes using multiple modes of engagement, active learning approaches and varied delivery methods were associated with stronger participation and more inclusive learning experiences than traditional one-size-fits-all models.

These findings support the use of flexible delivery methods that allow young people to engage in ways that feel meaningful and accessible.

---

## **Emotional Accessibility**

Emotional accessibility refers to creating environments where young people feel emotionally safe enough to participate.

This may involve:

- Predictable structures
- Participation choice
- Clear expectations
- Psychological safety
- Flexible engagement opportunities
- Respectful facilitation

Young people should never feel pressured to disclose personal experiences in order to participate.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments where young people can engage with learning whilst maintaining appropriate emotional boundaries.

Research consistently highlights the importance of belonging within educational and youth development contexts. Thomas and Welters (2018) suggest that experiences of belonging during adolescence may influence wellbeing, participation and wider developmental outcomes. Similarly, Allen and Kern (2017) identify belonging as an important factor associated with wellbeing, life satisfaction, educational engagement and reduced psychological distress among young people.

These findings reinforce the importance of creating emotionally accessible environments where young people feel accepted, valued and included.

---

## **Participation Accessibility**

Accessibility also involves recognising that participation may look different for different young people.

Participation may include:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- Drawing
- Reflecting
- Observing
- Pair work
- Small-group discussion

Harniess, McGlinchey, McDonald and colleagues (2024), exploring equitable access to health promotion programmes, identified participation barriers as most likely to emerge when programmes required engagement in ways that did not align with participants' needs, capacities or circumstances.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to provide multiple opportunities for participation rather than relying on a single mode of engagement.

Participation should remain flexible, respectful and responsive.

---

## **Reviewing Accessibility**

Accessibility should never be viewed as complete.

Facilitators and organisations should continually reflect upon:

- Participation patterns
- Potential barriers
- Feedback from young people
- Environmental considerations
- Communication approaches
- Learning methods

Continuous reflection supports continuous improvement.

Accessibility is strengthened when organisations remain willing to listen, learn and adapt.

---

## **Key Messages**

Facilitators should remember:

- Accessibility extends beyond physical access.
  - Communication should be clear and inclusive.
  - Young people learn in different ways.
  - Emotional accessibility supports participation.
  - Participation should remain flexible.
  - Barriers should be reduced wherever possible.
  - Accessibility is an ongoing process.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, accessibility is about creating opportunities rather than removing obstacles alone.

It is about recognising that young people engage differently, learn differently and experience the world differently.

Our responsibility is not to expect young people to fit a programme.

Our responsibility is to design programmes that make participation possible for as many young people as possible.

Because accessibility is not simply about being able to attend.

It is about being able to take part.

---

# CHAPTER 33

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## CULTURAL AWARENESS

### Introduction

Young people come from diverse cultural, religious, ethnic and community backgrounds.

These experiences can influence identity, communication styles, values, beliefs, relationships and understandings of wellbeing.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create culturally aware learning environments that recognise and respect this diversity whilst promoting inclusion, belonging and mutual respect.

At Fynix Project, cultural awareness is not about becoming an expert in every culture or identity.

It is about recognising that young people's experiences may differ from our own and remaining open, respectful and willing to learn.

Culture influences how people make sense of the world.

It can influence how emotions are expressed, how support is sought, how wellbeing is understood and how learning is experienced.

For this reason, cultural awareness forms an important part of inclusive and responsive programme delivery.

Holt (2020), exploring intercultural understandings of mental health within educational settings, found that many school-based approaches were shaped predominantly by Western understandings of mental health and wellbeing, often overlooking alternative cultural perspectives.

These findings highlight the importance of recognising that young people may bring different frameworks, values and understandings into learning environments.

---

# Cultural Awareness and Wellbeing

Culture can influence:

- Emotional expression
- Communication styles
- Relationships
- Help-seeking behaviours
- Views of wellbeing
- Learning experiences
- Family expectations
- Community connections

Facilitators should avoid assuming that their own understanding of wellbeing reflects the experiences of every young person.

Supporting Young Minds encourages openness, curiosity and respect when exploring wellbeing-related topics.

Different perspectives should be viewed as opportunities for learning rather than barriers to understanding.

---

## Avoiding Assumptions

One of the most important aspects of culturally aware practice is avoiding assumptions.

Assumptions may be based upon:

- Appearance
- Language
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Family background
- Community identity
- Visible characteristics

However, no single characteristic can fully explain a young person's experiences.

Richards (2025) highlights the risks associated with making assumptions about young people's needs or identities based solely on visible characteristics. The study found that effective practitioners approached young people with curiosity and openness rather than relying on assumptions or stereotypes.

Supporting Young Minds therefore encourages facilitators to remain curious rather than certain.

---

## Cultural Humility

Cultural humility provides an important framework for working respectfully across difference.

Unlike models that focus solely on cultural competence, cultural humility recognises that learning is ongoing.

It encourages:

- Reflection
- Openness
- Curiosity
- Respect
- Self-awareness
- Willingness to learn

Curtiss and Perry (2023), exploring cultural humility within youth work practice, found that cultural humility helped practitioners better understand power dynamics, engage more authentically with young people and create more equitable relationships.

Similarly, Anderson, Riordan, Smith, Hillard and Sánchez (2022) found that cultural humility training supported youth programme staff in developing more reflective and responsive approaches when working across cultural differences.

These findings reinforce an important principle:

**Cultural awareness is not about knowing everything. It is about remaining willing to learn.**

---

## Cultural Responsiveness

Culturally responsive practice involves adapting delivery in ways that recognise and respect the experiences of participants.

This may include:

- Using inclusive examples

- Recognising diverse perspectives
- Encouraging respectful discussion
- Avoiding culturally narrow assumptions
- Remaining sensitive to different experiences

Bollers and Eizadirad (2025), exploring culturally responsive wellbeing programmes for Black young people, found that participants valued environments where practitioners demonstrated genuine understanding, respect and responsiveness to their lived experiences.

The findings highlight the importance of creating environments where young people feel seen rather than expected to fit a single model of wellbeing.

---

## Creating Culturally Inclusive Spaces

Facilitators can support culturally inclusive environments by:

- Using inclusive language
- Promoting respect
- Valuing different perspectives
- Encouraging participation
- Challenging prejudice appropriately
- Remaining curious and reflective

The aim is not to focus on difference alone.

The aim is to create environments where diversity is recognised, respected and welcomed.

Li, Lang, Cho, Nguyen and Nandakumar (2022) argue that genuinely inclusive environments require attention not only to interpersonal interactions but also to the wider structures and assumptions that shape participation and belonging.

Supporting Young Minds therefore encourages facilitators to remain aware of both individual experiences and wider contextual influences.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Culture influences how people experience the world.
- Different perspectives should be respected.

- Assumptions can create barriers.
  - Cultural humility supports inclusion.
  - Learning about others is an ongoing process.
  - Respect and curiosity strengthen relationships.
  - Diversity enriches learning environments.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, cultural awareness begins with recognising that no two young people will experience the world in exactly the same way.

Every young person brings their own story, experiences, perspectives and identity into the learning environment.

Our role is not to assume.

Our role is to listen.

Our role is not to define wellbeing for others.

Our role is to create spaces where different understandings, experiences and perspectives can be explored respectfully.

Because belonging grows when people feel seen, heard and respected.

---

## **PART 7 SUMMARY**

### **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility**

Equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are not separate elements of Supporting Young Minds.

They are principles that run throughout every aspect of programme design and delivery.

The programme seeks to create learning environments where young people:

- Feel welcomed
- Feel respected
- Feel represented

- Feel included
- Feel valued
- Feel safe enough to participate

Through inclusive practice, accessibility, neurodiversity awareness, cultural humility and strengths-based delivery, Supporting Young Minds aims to create learning experiences that are meaningful, relevant and accessible to a diverse range of young people.

Research consistently identifies belonging as an important contributor to young people's wellbeing, engagement and educational experiences. Allen and Kern (2017), whose work has become a leading reference within belonging research internationally, highlight associations between school belonging, wellbeing, life satisfaction, educational engagement and reduced psychological distress among adolescents.

Whilst belonging represents only one aspect of wellbeing, the evidence suggests that feeling accepted, valued and connected within a community can play an important role in how young people experience learning environments, relationships and personal development.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to create conditions that support belonging through:

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Representation
- Psychological safety
- Meaningful participation

The programme recognises that young people are not defined by a single characteristic, experience or identity.

Every young person brings strengths, perspectives and potential.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe that wellbeing education works best when young people feel that they belong.

Not because they have changed who they are.

Not because they have learned to fit in.

But because they have entered an environment where they are welcomed, respected and valued.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create those environments.

Environments where young people can participate safely, develop confidence, build understanding and recognise their own strengths.

Because inclusion is not simply about access.

It is about belonging.

And belonging helps create the conditions in which young people can learn, grow and thrive.

---

## **PART 8**

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# **HEALTH, SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

## **Introduction**

The safety and wellbeing of participants, facilitators, partner organisations and visitors is a fundamental priority within Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

Fynix Project recognises that effective wellbeing education requires attention to both physical safety and psychological safety. Young people are most able to engage, participate and learn when they feel secure within their environment and confident that appropriate safeguards and support systems are in place.

Health, safety and risk management are therefore embedded throughout programme planning, preparation, delivery and review.

This section outlines the principles, procedures and responsibilities that support safe programme delivery across a range of educational, community, youth and wellbeing settings.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments that are not only physically safe but also emotionally supportive, accessible and conducive to learning.

Research consistently highlights the importance of safety within educational and wellbeing settings. Jerrim (2025), in a longitudinal study examining pupils across England, found that young people who reported feeling safer within their learning environments also reported higher levels of wellbeing. Similarly, Engel, Chalasani, Rakotomalala and colleagues (2021), within the UNICEF adolescent wellbeing framework, identify safety and supportive environments as one of the foundational domains of adolescent wellbeing.

Whilst safety alone cannot guarantee positive outcomes, the evidence suggests that safe and supportive environments provide an important foundation for participation, engagement and wellbeing.

These principles have informed the design of Supporting Young Minds and the wider delivery framework used by Fynix Project.

---

## **Evidence-Informed Health, Safety and Risk Management**

The health, safety and risk management framework within Supporting Young Minds has been informed by current research relating to physical safety, psychological safety, risk management, trauma-informed environments, participation and organisational learning.

The references cited throughout this section inform programme design, facilitator responsibilities and risk management approaches. They should not be interpreted as evaluations of Supporting Young Minds itself.

Fynix Project remains committed to reviewing health and safety practices to ensure that programme delivery remains aligned with current legislation, guidance, emerging evidence and good practice.

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## **Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

Health and safety are sometimes viewed solely through the lens of compliance.

Whilst legal and organisational responsibilities remain important, Supporting Young Minds adopts a broader perspective.

Safety is not simply the absence of harm.

It is also the presence of conditions that support participation, engagement and learning.

Young people are more likely to engage meaningfully when they:

- Feel physically safe
- Feel emotionally secure
- Understand expectations
- Trust the adults around them
- Know that support is available if needed

For this reason, safety considerations are integrated throughout programme delivery rather than viewed as separate operational requirements.

---

## **Balancing Safety and Participation**

Supporting Young Minds seeks to balance safety with meaningful participation.

Risk management should support engagement rather than create unnecessary barriers to learning.

Young people benefit from opportunities to participate, contribute, explore ideas and develop confidence within appropriately managed environments.

The aim of health and safety processes is therefore not to eliminate all risk.

The aim is to identify foreseeable risks, implement proportionate safeguards and support safe participation.

This reflects contemporary approaches to risk management that emphasise proportionality, participation and informed decision-making rather than risk avoidance alone.

---

## **Shared Responsibility**

Creating safe environments is a shared responsibility.

Health and safety responsibilities may be shared between:

- Fynix Project
- Facilitators

- Partner organisations
- Venue providers
- Participants
- Supporting professionals

Clear communication and collaborative working help ensure that responsibilities are understood and managed appropriately.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to work alongside existing organisational systems rather than replace them.

---

## **A Trauma-Informed Approach to Safety**

Supporting Young Minds adopts a trauma-informed approach throughout programme delivery.

This includes recognising that experiences of adversity, stress, uncertainty or previous harm may influence how young people experience environments, relationships and learning opportunities.

Trauma-informed approaches emphasise:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment

These principles inform not only interactions between facilitators and participants but also the wider learning environment.

The programme therefore seeks to create environments that feel predictable, respectful, inclusive and psychologically safe.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, health and safety is not viewed as a separate process that sits alongside wellbeing education.

It is part of wellbeing education.

We believe young people learn best when they feel safe enough to participate, confident enough to contribute and supported enough to engage.

Creating those conditions requires planning, preparation, reflection and shared responsibility.

Because safety is not simply about preventing harm.

It is about creating the foundations that allow learning, confidence and growth to take place.

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## **CHAPTER 34**

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# **HEALTH AND SAFETY FRAMEWORK**

## **Introduction**

Fynix Project is committed to providing safe, healthy and supportive environments for all participants involved in Supporting Young Minds.

Health and safety considerations are embedded throughout programme planning, preparation, delivery and evaluation.

The purpose of the Health and Safety Framework is to support the identification of foreseeable risks, the implementation of proportionate control measures and the creation of environments that promote safe participation.

The framework applies across all delivery settings and should be read alongside relevant legislation, organisational procedures, safeguarding arrangements and venue-specific requirements.

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## **Health and Safety Principles**

Supporting Young Minds is guided by the following principles:

### **Safety First**

The welfare and safety of participants remains the primary consideration throughout programme delivery.

### **Prevention Where Possible**

Foreseeable risks should be identified and addressed proactively wherever possible.

### **Proportionate Risk Management**

Risk management should support participation whilst maintaining appropriate safeguards.

### **Shared Responsibility**

Safe delivery depends upon collaboration between facilitators, organisations and participants.

### **Continuous Review**

Health and safety processes should be reviewed and adapted as circumstances change.

### **Safeguarding Awareness**

Health and safety considerations should remain aligned with safeguarding responsibilities.

### **Accessibility and Inclusion**

Safety planning should consider the diverse needs of participants and seek to reduce barriers to engagement.

---

## **Health and Safety as an Enabling Framework**

Health and safety should be viewed as an ongoing process rather than a single task.

Research increasingly recognises the relationship between safety, wellbeing and participation. Moika and Verma (2025) describe school safety as a shared responsibility involving educational settings, families and communities, and argue that physical, emotional and psychological safety work together to support positive developmental outcomes.

These findings reinforce the importance of viewing safety as an enabling framework that supports confidence, participation and belonging rather than simply a compliance requirement.

---

## **Shared Responsibility**

Health and safety is most effective when responsibilities are clearly understood.

Responsibilities may be shared between:

### **Fynix Project**

Providing policies, procedures, training and programme guidance.

### **Facilitators**

Following procedures, identifying concerns and supporting safe delivery.

### **Partner Organisations**

Providing local guidance, safeguarding arrangements and venue-specific information.

### **Venue Providers**

Maintaining safe environments and communicating relevant procedures.

### **Participants**

Engaging respectfully and following agreed expectations.

Effective communication helps ensure that responsibilities are understood and fulfilled appropriately.

---

## **Safe Delivery Environments**

Supporting Young Minds should be delivered in environments that are:

- Suitable for the planned activities
- Accessible where possible
- Consistent with safeguarding requirements

- Appropriately supervised
- Free from avoidable hazards
- Supportive of participation and wellbeing

The physical environment can influence both safety and engagement.

Themane and Osher (2014) argue that young people are more likely to thrive when learning environments provide both physical safety and supportive relationships. Their work highlights the importance of environments that reduce barriers, promote inclusion and provide opportunities for connection and participation.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to create environments that support both safety and wellbeing.

---

## Monitoring and Review

Health and safety should remain an ongoing consideration throughout programme delivery.

Facilitators should remain aware of:

- Environmental changes
- Emerging risks
- Participant needs
- Accessibility considerations
- Safeguarding concerns

Where necessary, adjustments should be made to maintain safe and effective delivery.

Continuous review helps ensure that health and safety arrangements remain relevant, proportionate and responsive to changing circumstances.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Safety supports participation.
- Health and safety is a shared responsibility.
- Risk management should be proportionate.
- Accessibility and inclusion should be considered throughout planning.

- Safe environments support learning and wellbeing.
  - Continuous review strengthens safety practices.
  - Health and safety and safeguarding are closely connected.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, safety is not about creating restrictions.

It is about creating opportunities.

When young people feel safe, they are more likely to participate.

When they feel supported, they are more likely to engage.

And when environments are designed with care, preparation and inclusion in mind, they become places where confidence, learning and growth can flourish.

Because safety is not the end goal.

It is the foundation that makes everything else possible.

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# **CHAPTER 35**

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## **RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

### **Introduction**

Risk assessment is an important part of creating safe, supportive and effective learning environments.

At Fynix Project, risk assessment is not viewed as a paperwork exercise or a process designed to eliminate all uncertainty.

Instead, risk assessment is a practical tool that helps facilitators and organisations identify foreseeable risks, implement proportionate control measures and support safe participation.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to balance safety with meaningful engagement.

Young people benefit from opportunities to participate, contribute and develop confidence within appropriately managed environments.

The purpose of risk assessment is therefore not to prevent participation.

The purpose is to enable participation as safely as reasonably possible.

Research examining contemporary risk management approaches highlights the importance of proportionate responses that balance protection with opportunity. Kemshall (2007) argues that effective risk management involves informed decision-making, proportionality and ongoing review rather than attempting to eliminate all forms of risk.

These principles inform the risk assessment process used throughout Supporting Young Minds.

---

## **What Is a Risk Assessment?**

A risk assessment is a structured process used to:

- Identify potential hazards
- Consider who may be affected
- Evaluate potential risks
- Implement control measures
- Review effectiveness

Risk assessments help facilitators and organisations think proactively about safety before activities take place.

They support planning, preparation and decision-making.

Risk assessments should be viewed as living documents that may require adjustment when circumstances change.

---

## **Risk and Participation**

Supporting Young Minds recognises that participation always involves some level of uncertainty.

Risk management should therefore focus on managing foreseeable risks rather than preventing participation altogether.

Young people often learn through:

- Exploration
- Discussion
- Reflection
- Social interaction
- Practical activities

The aim is not to remove these opportunities.

The aim is to create conditions where participation can occur safely.

Risk assessments should support learning and engagement rather than becoming barriers to them.

---

## **Identifying Hazards**

Hazards may arise from a variety of sources.

Examples may include:

### **Environmental Hazards**

- Slips, trips and falls
- Poor lighting
- Unsafe access routes
- Inappropriate room layouts

### **Activity-Related Hazards**

- Equipment use
- Movement-based activities
- Group exercises

### **Participant Considerations**

- Accessibility needs
- Medical needs
- Additional support requirements

### **Organisational Factors**

- Staffing levels
- Supervision arrangements
- Communication procedures

Identifying hazards early helps support effective planning.

---

## **Assessing Risk**

Once hazards have been identified, facilitators should consider:

- The likelihood of harm occurring
- The potential impact if harm occurs
- Existing control measures
- Additional actions that may be required

Risk assessments should remain proportionate.

Not all risks require extensive controls.

The focus should remain on foreseeable and meaningful risks that could affect safety or participation.

---

## **Control Measures**

Control measures are actions taken to reduce risk.

Examples may include:

- Clear instructions
- Appropriate supervision
- Environmental checks
- Accessibility adjustments
- Emergency procedures
- Safeguarding arrangements

Control measures should be practical, realistic and proportionate to the identified risk.

The aim is to support safe participation whilst maintaining programme integrity.

---

## Dynamic Risk Assessment

Risk assessment does not end once a form has been completed.

Facilitators should remain aware of changing circumstances throughout delivery.

Dynamic risk assessment involves ongoing observation and decision-making.

This may include responding to:

- Changes in the environment
- Changes in participant needs
- Unexpected events
- Emerging safety concerns

Effective risk management requires flexibility and professional judgement.

---

## Recording and Review

Risk assessments should be:

- Documented appropriately
- Reviewed regularly
- Updated where necessary
- Shared with relevant individuals

Review is particularly important when:

- Delivery locations change
- Activities change
- New risks emerge
- Incidents occur
- Participant needs change

Continuous review supports safer and more responsive delivery.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Risk assessment supports participation.
- Risk management should be proportionate.

- Hazards should be identified proactively.
  - Control measures should be practical.
  - Dynamic risk assessment remains important.
  - Review and reflection strengthen safety.
  - Risk management is an ongoing process.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, risk assessment is not about removing every challenge or uncertainty.

It is about thinking ahead.

It is about preparing responsibly.

And it is about creating environments where young people can participate with confidence.

Because effective risk management does not restrict opportunity.

It helps make opportunity possible.

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# **CHAPTER 36**

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## **VENUE SAFETY**

### **Introduction**

The environments in which Supporting Young Minds is delivered play an important role in both safety and participation.

Venue safety extends beyond the physical condition of a building.

It also includes accessibility, safeguarding considerations, emergency arrangements, supervision and the overall suitability of the environment for programme delivery.

At Fynix Project, venue safety forms an important part of delivery planning and preparation.

Suitable environments help create the conditions necessary for safe, inclusive and effective learning experiences.

Research examining learning environments highlights the relationship between environmental conditions, perceived safety and participation. Jerrim (2025) found that young people's perceptions of safety within educational settings were associated with higher levels of reported wellbeing, whilst trauma-informed environmental research highlights the importance of predictable, supportive and appropriately designed spaces (Kopec & Harte, 2020).

These findings reinforce the importance of selecting and preparing environments that support both safety and participation.

---

## **Venue Suitability**

Before delivery begins, facilitators should consider whether a venue is suitable for the planned activities.

This may include consideration of:

- Space requirements
- Group size
- Accessibility
- Supervision arrangements
- Emergency procedures
- Safeguarding requirements

The environment should be appropriate for both the activities being delivered and the needs of participants.

---

## **Accessibility Considerations**

Venue safety should be considered alongside accessibility.

Potential considerations may include:

- Physical access
- Mobility requirements
- Seating arrangements

- Sensory considerations
- Toilets and facilities
- Access routes

Supporting Young Minds seeks to reduce barriers to participation wherever reasonably possible.

Accessibility should therefore form part of venue planning rather than being considered retrospectively.

---

## **Creating Safe Learning Spaces**

Safe learning spaces are often characterised by:

- Clear expectations
- Appropriate supervision
- Respectful behaviour
- Predictable structures
- Accessible environments

The physical environment can influence how comfortable, confident and engaged participants feel.

Trauma-informed environmental approaches emphasise the importance of spaces that feel welcoming, predictable and supportive (Kopec & Harte, 2020).

These principles align with the wider Fynix approach to safety and participation.

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## **Environmental Checks**

Facilitators should complete appropriate venue checks before delivery begins.

Checks may include:

- Access routes
- Fire exits
- First aid arrangements
- Seating and room layout
- Equipment safety
- Potential hazards
- Safeguarding considerations

Potential concerns should be addressed or reported before activities commence wherever possible.

---

## **Emergency Information**

Facilitators should be familiar with relevant emergency arrangements.

This may include:

- Fire procedures
- Evacuation routes
- Assembly points
- First aid provision
- Emergency contacts

Emergency procedures should be communicated clearly where appropriate.

Preparation supports confidence and effective response should an incident occur.

---

## **Venue Safety and Psychological Safety**

Safety involves more than physical considerations.

Supporting Young Minds also recognises the importance of environments that support psychological safety.

Edmondson (2004) describes psychological safety as an environment where individuals feel able to participate, contribute and engage without fear of humiliation or unnecessary judgement.

Whilst originally developed within organisational learning research, the principles have been widely applied within educational and wellbeing contexts.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to create environments that are:

- Respectful
- Inclusive
- Predictable
- Supportive
- Participation-focused

Physical and psychological safety work together to support learning and engagement.

---

## Shared Responsibilities

Venue safety may involve collaboration between:

- Fynix Project
- Facilitators
- Partner organisations
- Venue providers
- Supporting staff

Clear communication helps ensure that responsibilities are understood and managed appropriately.

Safe delivery is most effective when organisations work together.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Venue safety supports participation.
  - Accessibility should be considered from the outset.
  - Environmental checks are important.
  - Emergency arrangements should be understood.
  - Physical and psychological safety both matter.
  - Safe environments support learning and wellbeing.
  - Safety is a shared responsibility.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, venue safety is about more than buildings, procedures and checklists.

It is about creating environments where young people feel comfortable enough to participate, confident enough to engage and supported enough to learn.

The spaces we use send messages.

They can communicate safety, inclusion and respect.

Or they can create barriers.

Our aim is to create environments that help young people feel welcomed, valued and able to take part.

Because the environment is not separate from the learning experience.

It is part of it.

---

## **CHAPTER 37**

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# **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

## **Introduction**

Whilst every reasonable effort should be made to create safe and supportive environments, no organisation can entirely eliminate the possibility of incidents occurring.

For this reason, Supporting Young Minds adopts a proactive approach to incident management that focuses on safety, appropriate response, clear communication, learning and continuous improvement.

Incident management is not solely about responding when something goes wrong.

It is also about ensuring that concerns, accidents, near misses and unexpected events are managed consistently, proportionately and professionally.

At Fynix Project, effective incident management supports participant safety, facilitator confidence and organisational accountability.

The aim is to ensure that incidents are responded to appropriately whilst creating opportunities for reflection and learning.

Research examining safety culture increasingly highlights the importance of learning-oriented approaches to incident management. Sujjan, Huang and Braithwaite (2017), writing from a Safety-II perspective, argue that organisations

strengthen safety not only by analysing failures but also by understanding how systems adapt and respond effectively to challenges.

These principles inform the incident management approach used within Supporting Young Minds.

---

## What Is an Incident?

An incident refers to any event that has the potential to affect safety, wellbeing, programme delivery or organisational responsibilities.

Incidents may include:

- Accidents
- Injuries
- Medical events
- Safeguarding concerns
- Behavioural incidents
- Environmental hazards
- Security concerns
- Near misses
- Unexpected disruptions

Not every incident will require the same level of response.

However, all incidents should be considered appropriately and managed according to their nature, severity and potential impact.

---

## Principles of Incident Management

Supporting Young Minds adopts the following principles:

### **Safety First**

The immediate safety and wellbeing of participants, facilitators and others should remain the primary consideration.

### **Calm and Proportionate Response**

Incidents should be managed in a way that is measured, organised and appropriate to the circumstances.

## **Clear Communication**

Relevant individuals should be informed through appropriate reporting procedures.

## **Accurate Recording**

Incidents should be documented factually and accurately.

## **Learning and Improvement**

Where appropriate, incidents should contribute to ongoing reflection and organisational learning.

---

## **Immediate Response**

When an incident occurs, facilitators should:

- Remain calm
- Prioritise safety
- Assess immediate risks
- Follow relevant procedures
- Seek assistance where required
- Communicate appropriately

The specific response will depend upon the nature of the incident.

Facilitators should avoid making assumptions and should work within their role, competence and organisational procedures.

---

## **Recording Incidents**

Accurate recording supports accountability, communication and organisational learning.

Incident records should include:

- Date and time
- Location
- Individuals involved
- Description of the incident
- Actions taken

- Individuals informed
- Follow-up actions where applicable

Records should remain:

- Factual
- Objective
- Accurate
- Timely
- Secure

Documentation should avoid speculation or personal interpretation.

---

## Reporting Procedures

Incidents should be reported through appropriate organisational channels.

Depending upon the nature of the incident, this may involve:

- Programme leads
- Designated safeguarding leads
- Partner organisations
- Venue staff
- Emergency services
- Relevant external agencies

Reporting pathways should be understood before programme delivery begins.

Clear reporting procedures help ensure that concerns are managed consistently and appropriately.

---

## Near Misses

A near miss refers to an event that could have resulted in harm but did not.

Examples may include:

- Hazards identified before an accident occurred
- Equipment issues identified early
- Environmental concerns addressed promptly

Near misses can provide valuable learning opportunities.

Reviewing near misses can help organisations identify improvements before harm occurs.

---

## Learning from Incidents

Incident management should support continuous improvement.

Where appropriate, organisations should review:

- Contributing factors
- Existing procedures
- Communication processes
- Environmental considerations
- Training needs

Sujan et al. (2017) highlight the importance of learning cultures that seek to understand how systems respond to challenges rather than focusing solely on identifying individual mistakes.

Supporting Young Minds adopts this principle by encouraging reflective and learning-oriented approaches wherever appropriate.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Safety remains the primary priority.
  - Incidents should be managed calmly and proportionately.
  - Reporting procedures should be followed.
  - Accurate recording is important.
  - Near misses provide valuable learning opportunities.
  - Reflection and review strengthen safety systems.
  - Incident management supports continuous improvement.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, incident management is not about assigning blame.

It is about taking responsibility.

It is about responding appropriately, learning where possible and maintaining safe environments for everyone involved.

Most importantly, it is about ensuring that safety remains at the centre of decision-making when unexpected situations arise.

Because strong organisations are not defined by the absence of challenges.

They are defined by how they respond when challenges occur.

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## **CHAPTER 38**

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# **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

## **Introduction**

Emergency situations are rare, but preparation remains essential.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to ensure that facilitators, partner organisations and delivery teams understand how to respond appropriately should an emergency arise.

Emergency procedures help create clarity during situations that may otherwise feel uncertain or stressful.

The purpose of emergency planning is not to anticipate every possible scenario.

The purpose is to establish clear processes that support timely, coordinated and proportionate responses.

At Fynix Project, emergency procedures form part of wider health, safety, safeguarding and risk management responsibilities.

Preparation helps support confidence, communication and effective decision-making when urgent situations occur.

---

## **Principles of Emergency Response**

Supporting Young Minds adopts the following principles:

### **Safety First**

The immediate safety of participants and staff remains the primary consideration.

### **Calm and Clear Communication**

Information should be communicated clearly, accurately and appropriately.

### **Proportionate Action**

Responses should be appropriate to the nature and severity of the situation.

### **Following Established Procedures**

Organisational, venue and emergency service procedures should be followed.

### **Collaboration**

Effective emergency responses often depend upon coordinated working between multiple individuals and organisations.

---

## **Potential Emergency Situations**

Emergency situations may include:

- Fire
- Medical emergencies
- Serious injuries
- Missing participants
- Security concerns
- Environmental hazards
- Severe weather
- Safeguarding emergencies

The specific procedures followed will depend upon the nature of the situation and the delivery environment.

---

## **Preparation Before Delivery**

Facilitators should familiarise themselves with relevant emergency arrangements before delivery begins.

This may include:

- Fire procedures
- Evacuation routes
- Assembly points
- First aid arrangements
- Emergency contact information
- Venue-specific procedures

Preparation helps reduce uncertainty and supports more effective responses should an emergency occur.

---

## Responding to Emergencies

Where an emergency occurs, facilitators should:

- Remain calm
- Prioritise immediate safety
- Follow established procedures
- Seek assistance where required
- Contact emergency services if necessary
- Communicate appropriately with relevant individuals

The specific actions required will vary depending upon the circumstances.

Facilitators should operate within their role and competence whilst following organisational procedures.

---

## Medical Emergencies

Where a medical emergency occurs:

- Immediate safety should be prioritised.
- Emergency services should be contacted where required.
- First aid support should be sought from appropriately trained individuals.
- Relevant organisational procedures should be followed.

Facilitators should not provide interventions beyond their training or competence.

---

## Safeguarding Emergencies

Some safeguarding concerns may require immediate action.

Examples may include:

- Immediate risk of harm
- Serious welfare concerns
- Significant safety risks
- Situations requiring urgent intervention

In these circumstances, safeguarding procedures should be followed without delay.

The welfare of the child remains paramount.

---

## Communication During Emergencies

Clear communication helps reduce confusion and supports coordinated responses.

Communication should be:

- Calm
- Accurate
- Timely
- Appropriate

Information should be shared with relevant individuals whilst maintaining confidentiality and safeguarding considerations where appropriate.

---

## Reviewing Emergency Responses

Where appropriate, emergency situations should be reviewed following resolution.

Review may consider:

- What occurred
- Actions taken

- Communication processes
- Lessons learned
- Potential improvements

Review supports organisational learning and preparedness.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Emergency situations require calm responses.
  - Preparation supports effective action.
  - Safety remains the primary priority.
  - Established procedures should be followed.
  - Communication should be clear and timely.
  - Safeguarding responsibilities remain in place.
  - Reflection supports continuous improvement.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, emergency planning is not about expecting problems.

It is about being prepared.

Preparation helps create confidence, clarity and coordination when unexpected situations arise.

Young people, facilitators and partner organisations deserve environments where safety is taken seriously and where clear procedures exist should support be needed.

Because effective emergency planning is ultimately about creating reassurance.

The reassurance that, should something unexpected happen, there is a clear path forward.

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## CHAPTER 39

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# PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT

## Introduction

Supporting Young Minds recognises that safety extends beyond physical environments.

Whilst physical safety remains essential, young people are also influenced by how safe they feel emotionally, socially and psychologically within a learning environment.

Psychological safety refers to the experience of feeling able to participate, contribute, ask questions, make mistakes and engage without fear of humiliation, ridicule or unnecessary judgement.

At Fynix Project, psychological safety is viewed as an important component of effective programme delivery.

Young people are more likely to engage meaningfully when they feel respected, listened to and supported.

For this reason, psychological safety considerations are embedded throughout programme planning, facilitation and delivery.

Research consistently highlights the importance of psychologically safe environments for participation and engagement. Edmondson (2004), whose work has significantly shaped understanding of psychological safety, describes psychologically safe environments as those in which individuals feel able to participate without fear of negative interpersonal consequences.

Although psychological safety does not guarantee participation, wellbeing or positive outcomes, the evidence suggests that it can support engagement, communication and learning.

These principles have informed the delivery approach used within Supporting Young Minds.

---

## Psychological Safety and Wellbeing

Psychological safety is closely linked to wider wellbeing considerations.

Young people may find it difficult to engage with learning if they feel:

- Judged
- Embarrassed
- Excluded
- Dismissed
- Unsupported
- Unsafe

Creating psychologically safe environments helps reduce these barriers and supports participation.

The UNICEF adolescent wellbeing framework developed by Engel, Chalasani, Rakotomalala and colleagues (2021) identifies supportive relationships and safe environments as important contributors to adolescent wellbeing.

These findings reinforce the importance of creating learning spaces where young people feel respected and able to engage at their own pace.

---

## Psychological Safety Risks

Psychological safety can be affected by a range of factors.

Potential risks may include:

- Bullying
- Exclusion
- Discrimination
- Shaming
- Mocking or ridicule
- Excessive pressure to participate
- Dismissive responses
- Unclear expectations
- Inconsistent facilitation

These factors may reduce participation, confidence and engagement.

For this reason, psychological safety should be considered as part of wider programme planning and risk management.

---

## Preventing Psychological Harm

Supporting Young Minds seeks to reduce avoidable psychological risks through:

- Clear group agreements
- Respectful communication
- Inclusive facilitation
- Participation choice
- Predictable structures
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Professional boundaries
- Accessibility considerations

The aim is not to remove all discomfort.

Learning, reflection and personal development can sometimes involve challenge.

However, challenge should occur within environments that remain supportive, respectful and psychologically safe.

---

## Participation Without Pressure

Participation is encouraged throughout Supporting Young Minds.

However, participation should never be forced.

Young people may choose to participate in different ways.

This may include:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- Drawing
- Reflecting
- Observing
- Small-group discussion

Providing flexibility helps support autonomy, accessibility and psychological safety.

Young people should not feel pressured to disclose personal experiences or contribute in ways that feel uncomfortable.

Meaningful participation often develops through trust rather than expectation.

---

## Group Culture and Safety

Psychological safety is influenced by group culture.

Facilitators play an important role in establishing expectations that promote:

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Kindness
- Listening
- Empathy
- Accountability

**McClintock, Fainstad and Jauregui (2022)**, examining psychological safety within learning environments, highlight the importance of respectful group cultures and supportive facilitation in promoting participation and engagement.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to create group environments where young people feel able to contribute without fear of ridicule or exclusion.

---

## Psychological Safety and Trauma-Informed Practice

Trauma-informed approaches emphasise the importance of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment.

These principles align closely with psychological safety.

Young people may arrive with different experiences, backgrounds and support needs.

Facilitators may not always know what experiences participants have encountered.

For this reason, Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments that feel:

- Predictable
- Respectful
- Inclusive
- Consistent
- Supportive

Trauma-informed practice does not eliminate challenge.

Instead, it seeks to ensure that challenge occurs within environments that remain safe and manageable.

---

## Managing Psychological Safety Concerns

Where concerns arise relating to psychological safety, facilitators should:

- Respond calmly
- Address concerns respectfully
- Reinforce group agreements
- Consider adjustments where appropriate
- Seek support where needed
- Follow safeguarding procedures where relevant

Psychological safety concerns should be taken seriously.

Small concerns can sometimes affect participation and wellbeing if left unaddressed.

---

## Continuous Reflection

Psychological safety benefits from ongoing reflection.

Facilitators should consider:

- How safe does the environment feel?
- Who is participating?
- Who may be withdrawing?
- Are there barriers to engagement?
- What adjustments may help?

Reflection supports continuous improvement and helps ensure that programme environments remain inclusive and responsive.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Psychological safety supports participation.
  - Respectful environments encourage engagement.
  - Participation should never be forced.
  - Group culture influences safety.
  - Trauma-informed approaches support psychological safety.
  - Concerns should be addressed appropriately.
  - Reflection strengthens practice.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, psychological safety is not about making every experience comfortable.

It is about creating environments where young people feel safe enough to participate, contribute and learn.

Young people should be able to ask questions without embarrassment.

Share ideas without fear of ridicule.

And participate without feeling pressured to reveal personal experiences.

Because when young people feel psychologically safe, they are often more willing to engage, reflect and grow.

And growth is most likely to occur in environments built on respect, trust and belonging.

---

## **PART 8 SUMMARY**

### **Health, Safety and Risk Management**

Health, safety and risk management are essential components of effective programme delivery.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments that support participation whilst maintaining appropriate safeguards for young people, facilitators and partner organisations.

Throughout this framework, health and safety have been considered from multiple perspectives, including:

- Physical safety
- Psychological safety
- Risk assessment
- Venue safety
- Incident management
- Emergency preparedness
- Accessibility
- Safeguarding

The programme recognises that safety is not achieved through policies alone.

Safety is created through planning, communication, awareness, collaboration and continuous review.

Research consistently highlights the importance of safe and supportive environments within educational and wellbeing settings. Jerrim (2025) found that young people who perceived their educational environments as safer also reported higher levels of wellbeing, whilst Engel et al. (2021) identify safety and supportive environments as important contributors to adolescent wellbeing within the UNICEF framework.

Similarly, Edmondson (2004) and McClintock et al. (2022) highlight the role of psychological safety in supporting participation, communication and engagement within learning environments.

Together, these findings suggest that safety can provide an important foundation for learning, participation and wellbeing.

Supporting Young Minds has therefore been designed to embed safety considerations throughout programme planning and delivery.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, health and safety is not viewed as a collection of policies, forms or procedures.

It is a commitment.

A commitment to creating environments where young people can participate with confidence.

A commitment to reducing avoidable risks whilst preserving meaningful opportunities for learning and growth.

And a commitment to recognising that safety includes both physical and psychological experiences.

Because when young people feel safe, respected and supported, they are more able to engage with the opportunities that learning provides.

Safety is not the destination.

It is the foundation upon which everything else is built.

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## **PART 9**

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## **CHAPTER 35**

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# **RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

## **Introduction**

Risk assessment is an important part of creating safe, supportive and effective learning environments.

At Fynix Project, risk assessment is not viewed as a paperwork exercise or a process designed to eliminate all uncertainty.

Instead, risk assessment is a practical tool that helps facilitators and organisations identify foreseeable risks, implement proportionate control measures and support safe participation.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to balance safety with meaningful engagement.

Young people benefit from opportunities to participate, contribute and develop confidence within appropriately managed environments.

The purpose of risk assessment is therefore not to prevent participation.

The purpose is to enable participation as safely as reasonably possible.

Research examining contemporary risk management approaches highlights the importance of proportionate responses that balance protection with opportunity. Kemshall (2007) argues that effective risk management involves informed decision-making, proportionality and ongoing review rather than attempting to eliminate all forms of risk.

These principles inform the risk assessment process used throughout Supporting Young Minds.

---

## **What Is a Risk Assessment?**

A risk assessment is a structured process used to:

- Identify potential hazards
- Consider who may be affected
- Evaluate potential risks
- Implement control measures
- Review effectiveness

Risk assessments help facilitators and organisations think proactively about safety before activities take place.

They support planning, preparation and decision-making.

Risk assessments should be viewed as living documents that may require adjustment when circumstances change.

---

## **Risk and Participation**

Supporting Young Minds recognises that participation always involves some level of uncertainty.

Risk management should therefore focus on managing foreseeable risks rather than preventing participation altogether.

Young people often learn through:

- Exploration

- Discussion
- Reflection
- Social interaction
- Practical activities

The aim is not to remove these opportunities.

The aim is to create conditions where participation can occur safely.

Risk assessments should support learning and engagement rather than becoming barriers to them.

---

## Identifying Hazards

Hazards may arise from a variety of sources.

Examples may include:

### Environmental Hazards

- Slips, trips and falls
- Poor lighting
- Unsafe access routes
- Inappropriate room layouts

### Activity-Related Hazards

- Equipment use
- Movement-based activities
- Group exercises

### Participant Considerations

- Accessibility needs
- Medical needs
- Additional support requirements

### Organisational Factors

- Staffing levels
- Supervision arrangements
- Communication procedures

Identifying hazards early helps support effective planning.

---

## Assessing Risk

Once hazards have been identified, facilitators should consider:

- The likelihood of harm occurring
- The potential impact if harm occurs
- Existing control measures
- Additional actions that may be required

Risk assessments should remain proportionate.

Not all risks require extensive controls.

The focus should remain on foreseeable and meaningful risks that could affect safety or participation.

---

## Control Measures

Control measures are actions taken to reduce risk.

Examples may include:

- Clear instructions
- Appropriate supervision
- Environmental checks
- Accessibility adjustments
- Emergency procedures
- Safeguarding arrangements

Control measures should be practical, realistic and proportionate to the identified risk.

The aim is to support safe participation whilst maintaining programme integrity.

---

## Dynamic Risk Assessment

Risk assessment does not end once a form has been completed.

Facilitators should remain aware of changing circumstances throughout delivery.

Dynamic risk assessment involves ongoing observation and decision-making.

This may include responding to:

- Changes in the environment
- Changes in participant needs
- Unexpected events
- Emerging safety concerns

Effective risk management requires flexibility and professional judgement.

---

## Recording and Review

Risk assessments should be:

- Documented appropriately
- Reviewed regularly
- Updated where necessary
- Shared with relevant individuals

Review is particularly important when:

- Delivery locations change
- Activities change
- New risks emerge
- Incidents occur
- Participant needs change

Continuous review supports safer and more responsive delivery.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Risk assessment supports participation.
- Risk management should be proportionate.
- Hazards should be identified proactively.
- Control measures should be practical.
- Dynamic risk assessment remains important.
- Review and reflection strengthen safety.
- Risk management is an ongoing process.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, risk assessment is not about removing every challenge or uncertainty.

It is about thinking ahead.

It is about preparing responsibly.

And it is about creating environments where young people can participate with confidence.

Because effective risk management does not restrict opportunity.

It helps make opportunity possible.

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## **CHAPTER 36**

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### **VENUE SAFETY**

#### **Introduction**

The environments in which Supporting Young Minds is delivered play an important role in both safety and participation.

Venue safety extends beyond the physical condition of a building.

It also includes accessibility, safeguarding considerations, emergency arrangements, supervision and the overall suitability of the environment for programme delivery.

At Fynix Project, venue safety forms an important part of delivery planning and preparation.

Suitable environments help create the conditions necessary for safe, inclusive and effective learning experiences.

Research examining learning environments highlights the relationship between environmental conditions, perceived safety and participation. Jerrim (2025) found that young people's perceptions of safety within educational settings were associated with higher levels of reported wellbeing, whilst trauma-informed environmental research highlights the importance of predictable, supportive and appropriately designed spaces (Kopec & Harte, 2020).

These findings reinforce the importance of selecting and preparing environments that support both safety and participation.

---

## Venue Suitability

Before delivery begins, facilitators should consider whether a venue is suitable for the planned activities.

This may include consideration of:

- Space requirements
- Group size
- Accessibility
- Supervision arrangements
- Emergency procedures
- Safeguarding requirements

The environment should be appropriate for both the activities being delivered and the needs of participants.

---

## Accessibility Considerations

Venue safety should be considered alongside accessibility.

Potential considerations may include:

- Physical access
- Mobility requirements
- Seating arrangements
- Sensory considerations
- Toilets and facilities
- Access routes

Supporting Young Minds seeks to reduce barriers to participation wherever reasonably possible.

Accessibility should therefore form part of venue planning rather than being considered retrospectively.

---

## **Creating Safe Learning Spaces**

Safe learning spaces are often characterised by:

- Clear expectations
- Appropriate supervision
- Respectful behaviour
- Predictable structures
- Accessible environments

The physical environment can influence how comfortable, confident and engaged participants feel.

Trauma-informed environmental approaches emphasise the importance of spaces that feel welcoming, predictable and supportive (Kopec & Harte, 2020).

These principles align with the wider Fynix approach to safety and participation.

---

## **Environmental Checks**

Facilitators should complete appropriate venue checks before delivery begins.

Checks may include:

- Access routes
- Fire exits
- First aid arrangements
- Seating and room layout
- Equipment safety
- Potential hazards
- Safeguarding considerations

Potential concerns should be addressed or reported before activities commence wherever possible.

---

## **Emergency Information**

Facilitators should be familiar with relevant emergency arrangements.

This may include:

- Fire procedures
- Evacuation routes
- Assembly points
- First aid provision
- Emergency contacts

Emergency procedures should be communicated clearly where appropriate.

Preparation supports confidence and effective response should an incident occur.

---

## **Venue Safety and Psychological Safety**

Safety involves more than physical considerations.

Supporting Young Minds also recognises the importance of environments that support psychological safety.

Edmondson (2004) describes psychological safety as an environment where individuals feel able to participate, contribute and engage without fear of humiliation or unnecessary judgement.

Whilst originally developed within organisational learning research, the principles have been widely applied within educational and wellbeing contexts.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to create environments that are:

- Respectful
- Inclusive
- Predictable
- Supportive
- Participation-focused

Physical and psychological safety work together to support learning and engagement.

---

## **Shared Responsibilities**

Venue safety may involve collaboration between:

- Fynix Project
- Facilitators
- Partner organisations
- Venue providers
- Supporting staff

Clear communication helps ensure that responsibilities are understood and managed appropriately.

Safe delivery is most effective when organisations work together.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Venue safety supports participation.
  - Accessibility should be considered from the outset.
  - Environmental checks are important.
  - Emergency arrangements should be understood.
  - Physical and psychological safety both matter.
  - Safe environments support learning and wellbeing.
  - Safety is a shared responsibility.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, venue safety is about more than buildings, procedures and checklists.

It is about creating environments where young people feel comfortable enough to participate, confident enough to engage and supported enough to learn.

The spaces we use send messages.

They can communicate safety, inclusion and respect.

Or they can create barriers.

Our aim is to create environments that help young people feel welcomed, valued and able to take part.

Because the environment is not separate from the learning experience.

It is part of it.

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## CHAPTER 41

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# OBSERVATION STANDARDS

## Introduction

Observation is an important component of quality assurance within Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

Observations provide opportunities to recognise effective practice, identify strengths, support professional development and maintain programme quality.

At Fynix Project, observation is not viewed as a mechanism for criticism or surveillance.

Instead, it is viewed as a collaborative process that supports learning, reflection and continuous improvement.

The purpose of observation is developmental rather than punitive.

Observation should help facilitators build confidence, strengthen practice and enhance the quality of programme delivery.

Research increasingly highlights the importance of reflective and developmental approaches to professional support. Lindenbach, Dimitropoulos, Wood and colleagues (2024), examining reflective practice consultations within a community youth mental health organisation, found that trust and psychological safety were important factors influencing practitioner engagement with reflective processes. Practitioners were more likely to engage meaningfully when feedback processes felt supportive, collaborative and focused on learning rather than judgement.

These findings support an important principle within Supporting Young Minds:

**Observation should create opportunities for growth rather than fear of evaluation.**

---

## Purpose of Observation

Observation serves multiple functions within the quality assurance framework.

These include:

- Supporting programme quality
- Encouraging reflective practice
- Recognising effective delivery
- Maintaining consistency
- Identifying development opportunities
- Strengthening facilitator confidence
- Supporting professional growth

Observations help ensure that programme delivery remains aligned with the principles, values and expectations of Supporting Young Minds.

---

## Observation Principles

All observations should be guided by the following principles:

### **Fairness**

Observation processes should be applied consistently and fairly.

### **Transparency**

Facilitators should understand the purpose and process of observation.

### **Respect**

Observation should be conducted in a professional and respectful manner.

### **Development**

The primary focus should remain learning and improvement.

### **Collaboration**

Observation should encourage dialogue, reflection and shared learning.

### **Strengths-Based Practice**

Effective practice should be recognised and celebrated alongside development opportunities.

Together, these principles help create a positive and constructive observation culture.

---

## **What Observations May Consider**

Observations may consider a range of factors relevant to safe and effective programme delivery.

These may include:

### **Safeguarding Practice**

- Professional boundaries
- Safeguarding awareness
- Appropriate responses to concerns
- Participant welfare considerations

### **Facilitation Skills**

- Communication
- Group management
- Clarity of delivery
- Engagement strategies
- Session structure

### **Inclusion and Accessibility**

- Participation opportunities
- Inclusive language
- Accessibility considerations
- Adaptation of activities where appropriate

### **Programme Fidelity**

- Alignment with programme principles
- Appropriate use of resources
- Consistency of key messages
- Delivery within agreed framework boundaries

The purpose is not to create rigid uniformity.

Rather, it is to ensure that core principles remain consistent whilst allowing facilitators to bring their own strengths and style to delivery.

---

## **Observation as Reflective Practice**

Observation can provide valuable opportunities for reflection.

Facilitators may be encouraged to consider:

- What worked well?
- What supported engagement?
- What challenges emerged?
- What adaptations were effective?
- What could be strengthened in future sessions?

Reflection supports learning and continuous improvement.

Observations should therefore be viewed as part of a wider reflective practice process rather than isolated quality checks.

---

## **Observation Feedback**

Constructive feedback is a central component of effective observation.

Feedback should:

- Recognise strengths
- Highlight effective practice
- Encourage reflection
- Identify development opportunities
- Support professional growth

Feedback should be specific, respectful and balanced.

The aim is to support learning rather than assign blame.

Research into reflective practice environments suggests that supportive feedback processes are more likely to encourage engagement, confidence and professional development than approaches perceived as judgemental or punitive (Lindenbach et al., 2024).

---

## Professional Development

Observation findings may help identify opportunities for:

- Additional training
- Skills development
- Peer learning
- Reflective practice
- Continuing professional development

Learning should be viewed as an ongoing process rather than a one-time achievement.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that facilitators continue to grow through experience, reflection and feedback.

---

## Observation Records

Observation outcomes should be documented appropriately.

Records may include:

- Areas of strength
- Key observations
- Agreed actions
- Development opportunities
- Follow-up arrangements

Documentation supports accountability, consistency and ongoing development.

Records should remain factual, respectful and proportionate.

---

## Creating a Positive Observation Culture

A positive observation culture is built upon:

- Trust
- Respect
- Openness
- Reflection
- Learning

Facilitators should feel able to discuss challenges, seek support and engage honestly with feedback.

Observation processes are most effective when they contribute to professional confidence rather than anxiety.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to create observation processes that are developmental, supportive and learning-focused.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Observation supports learning and improvement.
  - The purpose of observation is developmental.
  - Feedback should be constructive and respectful.
  - Reflection strengthens professional practice.
  - Effective practice should be recognised and celebrated.
  - Observation supports programme quality and consistency.
  - Trust and collaboration strengthen observation processes.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, observation is not about catching people doing things wrong.

It is about helping people do things well.

We believe that facilitators are most likely to grow when they feel supported, respected and encouraged to reflect on their practice.

Observation should create opportunities for learning, confidence and professional development.

Because quality assurance is not about judgement.

It is about creating the conditions in which good practice can continue to develop.

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## CHAPTER 42

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# FACILITATOR SUPERVISION

## Introduction

Facilitator supervision forms an important component of quality assurance, professional development and safe programme delivery within Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that effective facilitation requires more than knowledge of programme content.

Facilitators are often required to navigate complex group dynamics, safeguarding considerations, emotional discussions, accessibility needs and professional boundaries whilst maintaining safe and supportive learning environments.

For this reason, facilitators should have access to appropriate supervision, support and opportunities for reflection.

At Fynix Project, supervision is viewed as a collaborative process that supports learning, wellbeing, accountability and continuous professional development.

The purpose of supervision is not simply oversight.

It is also to provide space for reflection, learning and support.

Research consistently highlights the value of reflective supervision within youth, wellbeing and helping professions. Jenkinson, White, Harries and colleagues (2023) found that reflective supervision contributed to practitioner confidence, professional development and reflective capacity when delivered within supportive and psychologically safe environments.

These findings reinforce an important principle within Supporting Young Minds:

**Good supervision supports good practice.**

---

## Purpose of Supervision

Supervision serves multiple functions within programme delivery.

These include:

- Professional support
- Reflective practice
- Safeguarding oversight
- Professional accountability
- Skills development
- Emotional support
- Continuous improvement

Supervision provides opportunities for facilitators to discuss experiences, reflect on practice and identify areas for growth.

It also helps ensure that programme delivery remains aligned with organisational values, safeguarding expectations and professional standards.

---

## **Supervision Principles**

Supporting Young Minds adopts the following supervision principles:

### **Reflection**

Supervision should encourage thoughtful consideration of practice and experience.

### **Support**

Facilitators should feel supported in managing challenges and responsibilities.

### **Learning**

Supervision should contribute to ongoing professional development.

### **Accountability**

Professional responsibilities and organisational expectations should remain clear.

### **Psychological Safety**

Supervision should provide a respectful and supportive environment for discussion.

### **Continuous Improvement**

Supervision should contribute to programme quality and facilitator development.

Together, these principles help create supervision processes that are supportive, constructive and effective.

---

## **Reflective Practice**

Reflective practice forms a central component of supervision.

Facilitators may be encouraged to consider:

- What worked well?
- What challenges emerged?
- How were challenges managed?
- What learning has been gained?
- What could be approached differently in future?

Reflection helps transform experience into learning.

It supports professional growth whilst helping facilitators maintain awareness of their strengths, limitations and development needs.

Marsh, Osuji, Byrne and colleagues (2024) highlight reflective practice as an important mechanism for supporting learning, self-awareness and professional development within helping professions. Their findings suggest that reflective spaces can support professional growth, confidence and ongoing learning.

Supporting Young Minds adopts a similar approach by embedding reflection within supervision processes.

---

## **Safeguarding and Professional Practice**

Supervision also provides opportunities to review:

- Safeguarding concerns
- Professional boundaries
- Ethical considerations
- Risk management issues
- Participant welfare considerations

Facilitators should never feel isolated when managing complex situations.

Appropriate supervision helps ensure that concerns can be discussed, reviewed and responded to within clear organisational processes.

Supervision therefore supports both facilitator wellbeing and participant safety.

---

## **Emotional Support and Wellbeing**

Facilitating wellbeing programmes can sometimes involve emotionally demanding situations.

Whilst Supporting Young Minds remains educational and non-clinical, facilitators may encounter:

- Distressing disclosures
- Complex participant experiences
- Challenging group dynamics
- Safeguarding concerns

Supervision can provide opportunities to process these experiences within appropriate professional boundaries.

Strumm, Weston and Lawrence (2023), examining supervision within youth-facing services, found that supportive supervision arrangements helped practitioners manage emotional demands whilst maintaining professional effectiveness and wellbeing.

These findings reinforce the importance of ensuring facilitators have access to appropriate support structures.

---

## **Professional Development**

Supervision should support ongoing learning and development.

This may include:

- Skills development
- Knowledge development
- Confidence building
- Training opportunities
- Reflective learning
- Practice improvement

Learning should be viewed as an ongoing process rather than a final destination.

Facilitators continue to develop through experience, reflection and professional support.

---

## **Psychological Safety in Supervision**

Effective supervision depends upon trust.

Facilitators should feel able to:

- Ask questions
- Discuss challenges
- Acknowledge uncertainty
- Seek support
- Reflect honestly on practice

Posselt, Burnett and Lannert (2024) highlight the importance of psychologically safe professional environments in supporting learning, engagement and reflective discussion.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to apply these principles within supervision arrangements wherever possible.

Supervision is most effective when facilitators feel able to engage openly without fear of unnecessary judgement.

---

## **Recording and Follow-Up**

Supervision discussions should be documented appropriately.

Records may include:

- Key discussion points
- Agreed actions
- Development goals
- Training needs
- Follow-up arrangements

Documentation supports continuity, accountability and ongoing development.

Records should remain proportionate, respectful and professionally maintained.

---

## Creating a Learning Culture

Supervision contributes to wider organisational learning.

A strong supervision culture encourages:

- Reflection
- Curiosity
- Learning
- Accountability
- Professional growth

Susman-Stillman, Lim, Meuwissen and Watson (2020) found that supervision processes were most effective when embedded within wider organisational cultures that valued learning, reflection and continuous improvement.

These findings align closely with the wider Fynix approach to quality assurance and professional development.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Supervision supports safe and effective practice.
  - Reflection strengthens professional development.
  - Safeguarding remains an important component of supervision.
  - Emotional support can contribute to facilitator wellbeing.
  - Learning should remain ongoing.
  - Trust and psychological safety strengthen supervision processes.
  - Supervision contributes to programme quality and accountability.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, supervision is not about monitoring people.

It is about supporting people.

We believe facilitators are most effective when they have opportunities to reflect, learn and discuss challenges within supportive professional relationships.

Good supervision creates space for growth.

It creates opportunities for learning.

And it helps ensure that facilitators never feel that they are carrying responsibility alone.

Because strong programmes are built by people who are supported to keep developing their practice.

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## **CHAPTER 43**

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# **COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK**

## **Introduction**

Fynix Project values feedback and recognises that concerns, complaints and suggestions provide important opportunities for learning, reflection and improvement.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is committed to maintaining transparent, accessible and responsive feedback processes for all individuals and organisations involved in programme delivery.

Feedback helps organisations understand how programmes are experienced in practice.

Complaints can highlight areas requiring attention, review or improvement.

Suggestions can provide valuable insights that contribute to future development.

For this reason, complaints and feedback are viewed as important components of quality assurance and continuous improvement rather than administrative processes that exist separately from programme delivery.

At Fynix Project, we believe that listening is an important part of accountability.

Feedback helps us understand what is working well, where improvements may be needed and how programme delivery can continue to develop in ways that remain responsive to the needs of young people, partner organisations and facilitators.

---

## Why Complaints and Feedback Matter

No programme is perfect.

Even within well-designed and well-delivered services, concerns may arise.

Creating clear opportunities for feedback helps organisations identify strengths, recognise challenges and improve practice over time.

Complaints and feedback can contribute to:

- Service improvement
- Participant safety
- Quality assurance
- Accessibility improvements
- Organisational learning
- Accountability
- Relationship building

Feedback should therefore be viewed as a valuable source of information rather than something to be avoided.

A culture that welcomes constructive feedback is often better positioned to learn and improve.

---

## A Culture of Openness

Supporting Young Minds seeks to promote a culture where concerns can be raised safely and respectfully.

Young people, parents, carers, partner organisations and facilitators should feel able to share feedback without fear of criticism, dismissal or negative consequences.

The aim is not to create a culture of complaint.

The aim is to create a culture of openness, learning and accountability.

Feedback processes should encourage honest communication whilst maintaining professionalism and respect.

## Feedback Culture

Feedback may be welcomed from:

- Young people
- Parents and carers
- Schools
- Colleges
- Alternative provision settings
- Youth services
- Partner organisations
- Commissioners
- Facilitators
- Volunteers
- Supporting professionals

Different perspectives can provide valuable insights into programme delivery.

Each contributes to a broader understanding of programme quality and participant experience.

---

## Participant Feedback

The voices of young people remain central to programme development.

Participant feedback may explore:

- Engagement
- Learning experiences
- Accessibility
- Inclusion
- Relevance
- Enjoyment
- Participation
- Perceived value

Feedback from young people can help identify both strengths and opportunities for development.

It provides an important perspective on how programme delivery is experienced by those participating.

---

## Accessible Feedback Processes

Feedback opportunities should be:

- Clear
- Accessible
- Age appropriate
- Inclusive
- Voluntary
- Easy to understand

Young people should know how to provide feedback and feel confident that their views will be taken seriously.

Boswell, Douglas-Osborn, Halkyard and Woods (2021), examining co-production within educational psychology services, found that meaningful participation depended not only on creating opportunities for young people to share their views but also on demonstrating that those views were genuinely listened to and considered. Where services failed to respond visibly to feedback, participation was more likely to feel tokenistic.

These findings highlight an important principle for Supporting Young Minds:

**Feedback should lead to listening, and listening should lead to learning.**

---

## Complaints Management

Where complaints arise, they should be managed:

- Fairly
- Respectfully
- Promptly
- Transparently
- Proportionately

All complaints should be considered seriously and reviewed appropriately.

The purpose of complaints management is not to assign blame.

It is to understand concerns, review relevant information and identify appropriate actions where necessary.

Complaints should be handled in accordance with organisational policies and procedures.

---

## Responding to Concerns

When concerns are raised, responses should seek to:

- Acknowledge the concern
- Gather relevant information
- Review circumstances objectively
- Communicate clearly
- Identify appropriate actions
- Learn where appropriate

Individuals raising concerns should be treated respectfully throughout the process.

Good communication can help support trust, transparency and confidence in the process.

---

## Learning from Complaints

Complaints can provide valuable opportunities for organisational learning.

Reviewing concerns may help identify:

- Procedural improvements
- Training needs
- Communication issues
- Accessibility barriers
- Safeguarding considerations
- Areas for service development

Learning from concerns supports continuous improvement and helps strengthen programme delivery over time.

Complaints should therefore be viewed not only as issues requiring response but also as opportunities to improve practice.

---

## Feedback Loops and Continuous Improvement

Feedback is most effective when it becomes part of an ongoing cycle of learning and improvement.

Quality improvement literature suggests that feedback contributes most effectively to programme development when it is systematically reviewed and incorporated into ongoing learning and improvement processes (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010).

For this reason, Supporting Young Minds seeks to embed feedback within wider quality assurance and continuous improvement processes.

Feedback should not simply be collected.

It should be considered, reviewed and used to support learning where appropriate.

Listening alone is not enough.

Improvement comes from what organisations do with what they hear.

---

## **Recording and Review**

Feedback and complaints should be documented appropriately.

Records may include:

- Nature of the concern
- Date received
- Actions taken
- Outcomes reached
- Learning identified

Documentation supports accountability, consistency and organisational learning.

Records should be maintained securely and in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

---

## **Key Messages**

Facilitators should remember:

- Feedback supports learning and improvement.
- Concerns should be taken seriously.

- Complaints should be managed fairly and respectfully.
  - Young people's voices matter.
  - Accessible feedback processes strengthen participation.
  - Feedback should contribute to organisational learning.
  - Listening is an important part of accountability.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, feedback is not viewed as criticism.

It is viewed as an opportunity.

An opportunity to learn.

An opportunity to improve.

And an opportunity to ensure that Supporting Young Minds continues to meet the needs of the young people, organisations and communities it is designed to support.

Because quality is not maintained by assuming everything is working perfectly.

It is strengthened by remaining willing to listen, reflect and grow.

---

# **CHAPTER 44**

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## **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

### **Introduction**

Continuous improvement is a core principle within Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

Fynix Project recognises that high-quality programmes are not static.

Effective programmes evolve through learning, reflection, feedback, experience and ongoing review.

For this reason, Supporting Young Minds has been designed as a framework that supports continual development rather than fixed delivery.

Continuous improvement helps ensure that programme delivery remains:

- Safe
- Relevant
- Inclusive
- Responsive
- Evidence-informed
- Participant-focused

At Fynix Project, continuous improvement is viewed as an ongoing responsibility shared across programme development, facilitation, quality assurance and governance.

The aim is not to continually change the programme.

The aim is to continually learn how to strengthen it.

Research examining programme development and organisational quality highlights the importance of ongoing review, reflection and adaptation. Yohalem and Wilson-Ahlstrom (2010) argue that quality improvement is most effective when embedded throughout programme delivery rather than treated as an occasional review activity. Similarly, Silliman and Shutt (2010) found that programmes that routinely incorporated reflection and evaluation processes were better positioned to support learning and ongoing development.

These findings support an important principle that underpins Supporting Young Minds:

**Improvement is most effective when it becomes part of everyday practice.**

---

## What Is Continuous Improvement?

Continuous improvement is the process of regularly reviewing programme delivery, identifying opportunities for development and implementing changes where appropriate.

It involves:

- Reflection
- Learning
- Feedback
- Evaluation

- Review
- Adaptation

Continuous improvement is not about assuming something is wrong.

It is about recognising that learning never stops.

Even effective programmes can benefit from reflection and development.

---

## **Why Continuous Improvement Matters**

Young people, communities, educational environments and wellbeing needs continue to evolve.

Programmes must therefore remain responsive to changing circumstances.

Continuous improvement helps organisations:

- Maintain quality
- Strengthen delivery
- Improve accessibility
- Enhance participant experiences
- Respond to emerging needs
- Reflect current evidence
- Support organisational learning

Review and improvement processes help ensure that programmes remain relevant and effective within changing contexts.

---

## **Sources of Learning**

Supporting Young Minds draws upon multiple sources of information when considering programme development.

These may include:

### **Participant Feedback**

Understanding how young people experience programme delivery.

### **Facilitator Feedback**

Learning from delivery experiences, challenges and successes.

### **Supervision**

Identifying learning opportunities through reflective discussion.

### **Observations**

Recognising strengths and areas for development.

### **Partner Organisation Feedback**

Understanding implementation experiences across different settings.

### **Safeguarding Reviews**

Identifying learning arising from safeguarding practice.

### **Emerging Evidence**

Reviewing new research, guidance and good practice developments.

Taken together, these sources provide valuable information that can inform future programme development.

---

## **Reflective Practice and Improvement**

Reflection plays an important role within continuous improvement.

Facilitators and organisations are encouraged to ask:

- What worked well?
- What challenges emerged?
- What have we learned?
- What could be strengthened?
- What changes may be helpful?

Reflection supports learning by encouraging thoughtful consideration of experience.

Marsh, Osuji, Byrne and colleagues (2024) highlight reflective practice as an important mechanism for professional learning, development and continuous improvement. Their work suggests that reflective environments can help

practitioners transform experience into meaningful learning that informs future practice.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to embed reflection throughout programme delivery and review processes.

---

## **Learning from Feedback**

Feedback provides important opportunities for improvement.

Participant feedback, facilitator feedback and partner feedback can all contribute to programme development.

However, feedback is most valuable when it informs action.

Kazanskaia (2025) argues that feedback systems contribute most effectively to improvement when information is reviewed systematically and used to inform decision-making.

For this reason, Supporting Young Minds seeks to ensure that feedback contributes to wider quality assurance and review processes wherever appropriate.

Listening is only the first step.

Improvement comes from learning what to do with what has been heard.

---

## **Learning from Challenges**

Continuous improvement involves learning from both successes and challenges.

Challenges may highlight:

- Training needs
- Resource improvements
- Communication issues
- Accessibility barriers
- Operational adjustments
- Quality assurance opportunities

A learning-focused culture encourages organisations to review challenges constructively rather than defensively.

The purpose is not to assign blame.

The purpose is to understand, learn and improve.

---

## **Evidence-Informed Development**

Supporting Young Minds remains committed to evidence-informed development.

Programme review may include consideration of:

- New research findings
- Emerging guidance
- Professional standards
- Policy developments
- Good practice recommendations

The programme does not claim that every change is evidence-based.

However, Fynix Project seeks to ensure that programme development remains informed by relevant evidence wherever possible.

This reflects our wider commitment to balancing lived experience, practical delivery knowledge and research-informed practice.

---

## **Organisational Learning**

Continuous improvement is strengthened when learning occurs at both individual and organisational levels.

Organisational learning may involve:

- Reviewing patterns and trends
- Sharing learning across teams
- Updating resources
- Strengthening procedures
- Enhancing training

Birleson (1999), writing about quality improvement within child and adolescent services, highlights the importance of creating systems that support ongoing review, learning and service development rather than relying solely on periodic evaluation.

These principles remain relevant within contemporary programme development and quality assurance processes.

---

## **Continuous Improvement Cycle**

Supporting Young Minds adopts a cyclical approach to improvement:

### **Deliver**

Provide programme delivery in line with framework standards.

### **Reflect**

Review experiences, feedback and observations.

### **Learn**

Identify strengths, challenges and opportunities.

### **Improve**

Implement proportionate changes where appropriate.

### **Review**

Monitor the impact of changes and continue learning.

This cycle supports ongoing development whilst maintaining consistency and programme integrity.

---

## **Key Messages**

Facilitators should remember:

- Continuous improvement supports programme quality.
- Reflection is an important source of learning.
- Feedback contributes to development.
- Challenges can provide valuable learning opportunities.
- Improvement should remain proportionate and purposeful.
- Evidence can inform programme development.
- Learning is an ongoing process.

---

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, continuous improvement is not about chasing perfection.

It is about remaining open to learning.

It is about recognising that every session, every conversation and every piece of feedback has the potential to teach us something.

We believe strong programmes are built through reflection, curiosity and a willingness to keep developing.

Because improvement is not something that happens once a year.

It happens every time we ask:

**"What have we learned, and how can we use it to do things better?"**

---

## PART 9 SUMMARY

### Quality Assurance and Governance

Quality assurance and governance help ensure that Supporting Young Minds remains safe, consistent, accountable and responsive.

Throughout this section, quality has been considered through multiple perspectives, including:

- Quality assurance
- Observation
- Supervision
- Feedback
- Complaints management
- Reflective practice
- Continuous improvement

Together, these processes help create a framework that supports learning, accountability and ongoing development.

Research examining programme quality consistently highlights the importance of reflection, supervision, evaluation and feedback in supporting high-quality practice (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010; Silliman & Shutt, 2010).

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to embed these principles throughout programme delivery and governance.

The programme recognises that quality is not maintained through compliance alone.

It is strengthened through learning.

It is strengthened through reflection.

And it is strengthened through a commitment to continual improvement.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, governance is not simply about oversight.

It is about responsibility.

Responsibility to young people.

Responsibility to partner organisations.

Responsibility to facilitators.

And responsibility to continually review whether what we are doing remains safe, relevant and meaningful.

Because quality is not something we achieve and then stop thinking about.

It is something we commit to protecting, strengthening and improving over time.

---

## **PART 9 SUMMARY**

### **Quality Assurance and Governance**

Quality assurance and governance provide the structures that help ensure Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is delivered safely, consistently and responsibly.

Throughout this section, quality has been considered as an ongoing process rather than a single activity.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that programme quality is strengthened through reflection, supervision, feedback, accountability and continuous improvement.

For this reason, quality assurance has been embedded throughout programme planning, delivery and review.

This section has explored:

- Quality assurance principles
- Observation standards
- Facilitator supervision
- Complaints and feedback processes
- Continuous improvement
- Organisational learning
- Accountability and oversight

Together, these processes help create a framework that supports safe, inclusive and consistent programme delivery across a range of educational, youth, community and wellbeing settings.

Research examining youth programme quality highlights the importance of embedding review and improvement processes within programme delivery rather than relying solely on periodic evaluation (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010). Similarly, Silliman and Shutt (2010) found that ongoing reflection and evaluation processes can contribute to learning, programme development and quality improvement over time.

These findings reinforce the importance of maintaining systems that support learning, accountability and continuous review.

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to create opportunities for reflection at multiple levels, including individual facilitators, programme delivery, organisational systems and partnership working.

---

## **Learning Through Reflection**

Reflection remains a central component of quality assurance.

Observations, supervision, feedback and programme review all provide opportunities to identify strengths, recognise challenges and support professional development.

Research examining reflective practice consistently highlights its role in supporting learning, self-awareness and ongoing professional growth (Marsh et al., 2024; Lindenbach et al., 2024).

Supporting Young Minds therefore seeks to create a culture where reflection is viewed as a normal and valuable part of professional practice.

The aim is not to identify fault.

The aim is to strengthen learning.

---

## **Listening and Responding**

Quality assurance also requires organisations to listen.

Participant feedback, partner feedback, complaints and facilitator experiences all contribute to understanding how programmes are experienced in practice.

Kazanskaia (2025) argues that feedback contributes most effectively to organisational improvement when it is reviewed consistently and used to inform decision-making.

For this reason, Supporting Young Minds seeks to ensure that feedback contributes to ongoing review and development wherever appropriate.

Listening alone is not enough.

Learning comes from what organisations do with what they hear.

---

## **Supporting Facilitators**

Facilitators play an important role in creating safe, engaging and effective learning environments.

Observation, supervision and professional support processes help ensure that facilitators are not expected to carry this responsibility alone.

Research examining supervision within youth and helping professions highlights the importance of supportive and reflective professional environments in strengthening practitioner confidence, wellbeing and development (Jenkinson et al., 2023; Strumm et al., 2023).

Supporting Young Minds therefore views supervision as an important part of both quality assurance and facilitator support.

---

## **Continuous Improvement**

Continuous improvement reflects a commitment to learning rather than a belief that programmes are ever complete.

Young people, communities, educational settings and professional knowledge continue to evolve.

For this reason, Supporting Young Minds seeks to remain responsive to:

- Feedback
- Emerging evidence
- Professional learning
- Safeguarding developments
- Accessibility considerations
- Organisational learning

Continuous improvement helps ensure that programme delivery remains aligned with participant needs, organisational values and current good practice.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, quality assurance is not about paperwork.

It is about responsibility.

Responsibility to the young people who place their trust in us.

Responsibility to the organisations that invite us into their settings.

And responsibility to continually reflect upon how we can strengthen what we do.

We believe quality is built through listening.

It is strengthened through reflection.

And it grows through a willingness to keep learning.

Because governance is not simply about oversight.

It is about ensuring that Supporting Young Minds continues to be delivered with integrity, professionalism and care.

And that commitment to learning is what helps transform good programmes into stronger ones over time.

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## **PART 10**

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# **OUTCOMES, IMPACT AND EVALUATION**

## **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed to support meaningful, participant-centred and evidence-informed outcomes for young people.

Fynix Project recognises that wellbeing, confidence, resilience and emotional development are influenced by many different factors. Young people's experiences are shaped by their relationships, families, schools, communities, identities and wider life circumstances.

For this reason, Supporting Young Minds does not claim to prevent specific outcomes, cure difficulties or guarantee individual change.

Instead, the programme seeks to create opportunities for young people to develop emotional awareness, confidence, communication skills, resilience and wellbeing understanding through structured, trauma-informed and prevention-focused learning experiences.

The programme has been designed to contribute to positive development by providing safe learning environments, practical wellbeing tools and opportunities for reflection and participation.

This section outlines the programme's:

- Theory of Change
- Logic Model

- Intended Outcomes
- Evaluation Framework
- Impact Measurement Approach
- Commissioner Reporting Framework

Together, these elements provide a structured framework for understanding how programme activities are expected to contribute to positive outcomes for young people.

Doherty, Quinn, Colson, Tucker and Cameron (2022), writing about Theory of Change approaches within child and adolescent mental health programmes, argue that clearly describing how programme activities are expected to contribute to outcomes improves transparency, strengthens evaluation and supports organisational learning. Making assumptions visible allows programmes to better understand what they are trying to achieve and how those aims can be reviewed over time.

Supporting Young Minds adopts this principle by making its intended outcomes and evaluation approach explicit.

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## **Evidence-Informed Evaluation**

The evaluation framework within Supporting Young Minds has been informed by research relating to social and emotional learning, emotional literacy, youth development, programme evaluation and wellbeing education.

The evidence cited throughout this section informs programme design and evaluation planning.

It should not be interpreted as direct evidence of the effectiveness of Supporting Young Minds itself.

Fynix Project remains committed to ongoing review, evaluation and learning to help ensure that programme delivery continues to reflect emerging evidence, participant feedback and good practice.

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## **CHAPTER 45**

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# THEORY OF CHANGE

## Introduction

A Theory of Change describes how programme activities are expected to contribute to intended outcomes and longer-term impact.

It provides a structured explanation of how change is expected to occur and identifies the assumptions that underpin programme design.

A Theory of Change does not prove that change will occur.

Rather, it explains why programme activities are expected to contribute to particular outcomes and provides a framework for evaluation and learning.

Supporting Young Minds is built upon the belief that emotional awareness, confidence, communication and resilience are skills that can be developed through safe, structured and accessible learning opportunities.

De Silva, Breuer, Lee and colleagues (2014), writing about Theory of Change within complex interventions, argue that making assumptions explicit helps strengthen both programme design and evaluation. They suggest that theory-driven approaches support organisations in understanding how activities contribute to outcomes and provide clearer foundations for monitoring and review.

Supporting Young Minds has been developed using these principles.

---

## Theory of Change Statement

Supporting Young Minds is based upon the following theory of change:

### **If young people are provided with:**

- Emotionally safe learning environments
- Accessible wellbeing education
- Opportunities for reflection
- Practical wellbeing tools
- Positive participation experiences
- Inclusive and supportive facilitation

### **Then they may develop:**

- Greater emotional awareness
- Increased confidence
- Improved communication skills
- Better understanding of stress and wellbeing
- Greater self-awareness
- Increased resilience awareness

### **Which may contribute to:**

- Improved emotional literacy
- Greater confidence in seeking support
- Increased wellbeing awareness
- Positive relationship skills
- Greater participation and engagement
- Healthier coping awareness

### **Ultimately contributing towards:**

- Stronger emotional wellbeing
- Improved resilience
- Increased confidence
- Positive youth development
- Greater wellbeing understanding

This pathway reflects the programme's intended contribution to young people's development.

It does not assume that all participants will experience the same outcomes or that programme participation alone determines long-term wellbeing.

## **Why This Approach Matters**

The evidence base for emotional literacy, social and emotional learning and resilience-focused education suggests that structured learning opportunities can contribute positively to a range of developmental outcomes.

Dowling, Simpkin and Barry (2019) , evaluating the MindOut social and emotional learning programme with older adolescents, found improvements in several social and emotional outcomes, including positive coping strategies and reductions in stress, when delivery was age appropriate, relevant and well implemented.

Similarly, Mohorić, Takšić and Ćosić Pilepić (2021), evaluating an emotional literacy programme in Croatian schools, found evidence that aspects of emotional competence can be strengthened through structured educational approaches.

These findings support the broader principle that emotional literacy and wellbeing-related skills can be developed through learning experiences.

Supporting Young Minds has been designed with this understanding in mind.

---

## **Assumptions**

The programme is built upon several key assumptions.

These assumptions help explain why the programme is expected to contribute to positive outcomes.

Supporting Young Minds assumes that:

- Young people can benefit from emotional literacy education.
- Emotional awareness can be strengthened through learning and reflection.
- Participation supports confidence and engagement.
- Safe environments encourage learning and discussion.
- Prevention-focused approaches can contribute positively to wellbeing.
- Practical wellbeing skills can support resilience awareness and coping understanding.
- Young people learn best when they feel included, respected and supported.

These assumptions are informed by existing research and professional practice.

Wigelsworth (2010), examining the Secondary SEAL programme across English secondary schools, identified important relationships between emotional literacy, mental health and prosocial behaviour.

Whilst programme effects varied, the findings supported the underlying theoretical relationship between emotional literacy and positive developmental outcomes.

This provides support for the broader assumptions underpinning Supporting Young Minds.

---

## **Influencing Factors**

Fynix Project recognises that programme outcomes are influenced by many factors beyond programme delivery.

These may include:

- Family circumstances
- Educational experiences
- Peer relationships
- Community influences
- Health needs
- Social and economic factors
- Safeguarding considerations
- Access to wider support services

For this reason, outcomes should always be viewed within the wider context of young people's lives.

The programme seeks to contribute to positive outcomes rather than claim sole responsibility for them.

Mkandawire and Chapman (2023), examining youth development outcomes within a South African programme, found that longer-term outcomes were influenced by wider contextual factors beyond programme participation itself.

These findings reinforce the importance of remaining realistic about what programmes can and cannot achieve independently.

Supporting Young Minds therefore adopts a transparent and proportionate approach to outcome expectations.

---

## Using the Theory of Change

The Theory of Change provides a foundation for:

- Programme planning
- Delivery design
- Outcome measurement
- Evaluation activity
- Quality assurance
- Continuous improvement

It helps ensure that programme activities, intended outcomes and evaluation processes remain connected through a coherent framework.

De Silva, Breuer, Lee and colleagues (2014) argue that clearly articulated theories of change strengthen programme planning, implementation and evaluation by making assumptions explicit and providing a transparent framework for understanding how activities are expected to contribute to intended outcomes.

These findings support the value of clearly articulating how programme activities are expected to contribute to intended outcomes.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Supporting Young Minds seeks to contribute to positive outcomes rather than guarantee them.
  - Emotional literacy, confidence and resilience can be supported through learning experiences.
  - Safe and inclusive environments support participation.
  - Outcomes are influenced by wider contextual factors.
  - The Theory of Change helps explain how programme activities are expected to contribute to development.
  - Evaluation and learning remain important components of programme delivery.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, we believe young people already possess strengths, abilities and potential.

Our role is not to provide all the answers.

Our role is to create opportunities for young people to explore, develop and strengthen skills that may help them navigate the challenges and opportunities of adolescence.

The Theory of Change within Supporting Young Minds reflects this belief.

It recognises that growth often happens through participation, reflection, learning and connection.

It recognises that meaningful outcomes take time.

And it recognises that wellbeing is influenced by far more than a single programme.

Because lasting change is rarely created by one conversation, one session or one workshop.

It is built through a series of experiences that help young people better understand themselves, strengthen their confidence and recognise the support available around them.

---

## **CHAPTER 46**

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### **LOGIC MODEL**

#### **Introduction**

A logic model provides a visual and conceptual framework for understanding how programme resources, activities and delivery processes are expected to contribute to intended outcomes.

Whilst a Theory of Change explains why change is expected to occur, a logic model focuses on the practical pathway through which programme delivery is intended to contribute to those outcomes.

Logic models are widely used within education, youth development, public health and community programmes because they help clarify the relationship between programme inputs, activities, outputs and intended outcomes.

LeCroy (2018) argues that logic models help strengthen programme planning, evaluation and accountability by clearly illustrating how programme activities are expected to contribute to intended outcomes. They provide a practical framework that can support implementation, review and continuous improvement.

Supporting Young Minds uses a logic model to provide transparency regarding programme delivery and intended outcomes.

---

## Logic Model Overview

The Supporting Young Minds logic model consists of five key components:

### Inputs

The resources required to support programme delivery.

### Activities

The learning experiences, discussions and exercises delivered through the programme.

### Outputs

The immediate products of programme delivery.

### Outcomes

The short-term and medium-term changes the programme seeks to support.

### Impact

The longer-term contribution the programme hopes to make towards positive youth development and wellbeing.

Each component plays an important role within the overall programme framework.

---

## Inputs

Inputs refer to the resources that support programme delivery.

Examples include:

- Trained facilitators
- Programme materials
- Learning resources
- Risk management processes
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Venue provision
- Partner organisation support
- Quality assurance systems

- Evaluation processes

These resources provide the foundation upon which programme delivery is built.

Without appropriate inputs, effective delivery becomes significantly more difficult.

---

## Activities

Activities refer to the learning opportunities provided through Supporting Young Minds.

Examples include:

- Facilitated group discussions
- Emotional literacy activities
- Reflection exercises
- Confidence-building activities
- Communication exercises
- Grounding and regulation techniques
- Wellbeing education
- Interactive learning tasks
- Group participation activities

Activities are designed to support engagement, participation and skill development within safe and inclusive environments.

---

## Outputs

Outputs refer to the direct products of programme delivery.

Examples may include:

- Number of sessions delivered
- Number of participants engaged
- Attendance levels
- Participation rates
- Completed activities
- Feedback responses
- Facilitator observations

Outputs help describe what was delivered but do not, by themselves, demonstrate impact.

For this reason, outputs should be considered alongside outcome information.

---

## **Outcomes**

Outcomes refer to the changes the programme seeks to support.

Potential outcomes may include:

### **Short-Term Outcomes**

- Increased emotional awareness
- Improved understanding of wellbeing
- Increased confidence to participate
- Improved understanding of emotions

### **Medium-Term Outcomes**

- Greater resilience awareness
- Increased communication confidence
- Improved self-awareness
- Greater confidence in help-seeking

Supporting Young Minds seeks to contribute to these outcomes through structured learning experiences.

However, outcomes are influenced by many factors beyond programme participation alone.

---

## **Impact**

Impact refers to the broader and longer-term contribution the programme hopes to make.

Examples may include:

- Stronger emotional literacy
- Improved wellbeing awareness
- Greater resilience
- Increased confidence
- Positive youth development
- Greater understanding of support and help-seeking

Impact should be viewed as a contribution rather than a guaranteed outcome.

Many factors influence long-term development and wellbeing.

Supporting Young Minds therefore adopts a realistic and proportionate approach to impact expectations.

---

## Why Logic Models Matter

Logic models help ensure that programme delivery remains aligned with intended outcomes.

Wells and Arthur-Banning (2008), examining evaluation within youth development programmes, found that logic models supported programme planning, implementation and evaluation by helping organisations maintain clarity regarding programme aims and intended outcomes.

Similarly, Martinek (2017) highlights the value of structured programme frameworks within positive youth development approaches, arguing that clear links between activities and intended outcomes strengthen programme coherence and accountability.

These findings support the use of logic models within Supporting Young Minds.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Logic models explain how activities are expected to contribute to outcomes.
  - Inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact all play different roles.
  - Outputs do not automatically demonstrate impact.
  - Outcomes are influenced by multiple factors.
  - Logic models support transparency and evaluation.
  - Supporting Young Minds seeks to contribute to positive outcomes rather than guarantee them.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, we believe transparency matters.

Young people, partner organisations and commissioners should be able to understand not only what we do, but why we do it.

The logic model helps make that process visible.

It provides a clear pathway between programme delivery and intended outcomes.

And it reminds us that meaningful change is usually built through many small experiences that accumulate over time.

---

## **CHAPTER 47**

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# **INTENDED OUTCOMES**

## **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds has been designed to support a range of developmental, emotional and wellbeing-related outcomes for young people.

The programme recognises that outcomes are influenced by many different factors and that individual experiences will vary.

For this reason, the outcomes described within this chapter should be understood as intended areas of contribution rather than guaranteed results.

The programme seeks to provide opportunities for learning, participation and reflection that may support positive development over time.

Lendrum and Wigelsworth (2013), reviewing social and emotional learning approaches within educational settings, highlight the importance of clearly identifying intended outcomes whilst remaining realistic about the complexity of measuring change in young people's lives.

Supporting Young Minds adopts a similar approach.

---

## Short-Term Outcomes

### Emotional Awareness

Young people may develop:

- Increased awareness of emotions
- Improved emotional vocabulary
- Greater understanding of emotional experiences
- Increased ability to identify emotional responses

Emotional awareness forms an important foundation for emotional literacy and wellbeing education.

---

### Confidence

Young people may experience:

- Increased confidence to participate
- Greater willingness to contribute
- Improved confidence in expressing opinions
- Increased engagement within group activities

Confidence often develops gradually through positive participation experiences.

---

### Participation

Young people may demonstrate:

- Increased engagement in learning activities
- Greater involvement in discussions
- Improved willingness to contribute ideas
- Increased participation within group settings

Participation can support confidence, connection and learning.

---

## Medium-Term Outcomes

### Resilience Awareness

Young people may develop:

- Greater understanding of resilience
- Increased awareness of coping strategies
- Improved recognition of personal strengths
- Increased confidence in managing challenges

The programme focuses on resilience awareness rather than measuring resilience itself.

---

## **Communication Skills**

Young people may develop:

- Greater confidence in communication
- Improved listening skills
- Increased awareness of respectful communication
- Greater confidence expressing thoughts and feelings

Communication is explored throughout multiple programme pillars.

---

## **Self-Awareness**

Young people may develop:

- Greater understanding of personal strengths
- Increased self-reflection
- Improved awareness of values and goals
- Greater understanding of individual experiences

Self-awareness can support emotional development and wellbeing understanding.

---

## **Longer-Term Outcomes**

### **Emotional Literacy**

Supporting Young Minds aims to contribute towards:

- Stronger emotional literacy
- Increased emotional understanding

- Improved emotional awareness

These outcomes reflect broader developmental processes that extend beyond programme participation alone.

---

## **Help-Seeking Confidence**

Young people may develop:

- Greater awareness of available support
- Increased confidence accessing support
- Improved understanding of when support may be helpful

The programme seeks to promote awareness rather than provide therapeutic intervention.

---

## **Wellbeing Understanding**

Young people may develop:

- Increased understanding of wellbeing
- Greater awareness of factors that influence wellbeing
- Improved understanding of self-care and support strategies

These outcomes align with the programme's prevention-focused and educational approach.

---

## **Outcome Expectations**

Supporting Young Minds does not claim that all participants will experience the same outcomes.

Individual experiences are influenced by many factors, including:

- Age
- Developmental stage
- Life experiences
- Educational environment
- Family circumstances
- Existing support systems

For this reason, outcomes should be viewed as intended areas of contribution rather than guaranteed results.

---

## **Key Messages**

Facilitators should remember:

- Outcomes describe what the programme seeks to support.
  - Individual experiences will vary.
  - Participation does not guarantee outcomes.
  - Outcomes are influenced by wider contextual factors.
  - Evaluation should remain realistic and proportionate.
  - Supporting Young Minds seeks to contribute to positive development.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe outcomes are important.

But we also believe honesty is important.

Young people's lives are complex.

No single programme can take responsibility for every outcome.

What we can do is provide opportunities.

Opportunities to learn.

Opportunities to reflect.

Opportunities to build confidence.

And opportunities to develop greater understanding of emotions, wellbeing and resilience.

Because meaningful growth rarely happens all at once.

It often begins with small moments of learning that continue long after a session has ended.

---

# CHAPTER 48

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## EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

### Introduction

Evaluation forms an important part of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

Evaluation helps organisations understand how programmes are experienced, whether intended outcomes appear to be supported and where opportunities for improvement may exist.

At Fynix Project, evaluation is viewed as a learning process rather than a judgement process.

The purpose of evaluation is not simply to demonstrate success.

It is to understand what is working, identify areas for development and support ongoing programme improvement.

Supporting Young Minds adopts a proportionate and educational approach to evaluation that reflects the nature of the programme.

As a prevention-focused wellbeing programme, Supporting Young Minds does not seek to diagnose, assess or clinically measure participants.

Instead, evaluation focuses on participant experiences, engagement, learning and perceived development.

Lendrum and Wigelsworth (2013), examining the evaluation of social and emotional learning programmes within educational settings, highlight the importance of using realistic and proportionate evaluation approaches that reflect programme aims. They argue that evaluation should focus on outcomes that programmes are reasonably positioned to influence rather than attempting to claim responsibility for wider life outcomes.

Supporting Young Minds adopts this principle throughout its evaluation framework.

---

# Evaluation Principles

Evaluation activities are guided by the following principles:

## **Proportionate**

Evaluation methods should be appropriate to programme aims and delivery contexts.

## **Participant-Centred**

The experiences and perspectives of young people should remain central to evaluation activity.

## **Ethical**

Evaluation should respect confidentiality, dignity and participant wellbeing.

## **Accessible**

Evaluation methods should be understandable and inclusive.

## **Evidence-Informed**

Evaluation should reflect current understanding of good practice.

## **Learning-Focused**

Evaluation should support reflection and continuous improvement.

Together, these principles help ensure that evaluation remains meaningful and responsible.

---

# Pre-Programme Evaluation

Where appropriate, pre-programme evaluation activities may be used to understand participants' starting points.

These activities may explore:

- Existing understanding of wellbeing
- Emotional awareness
- Confidence levels
- Communication confidence

- Awareness of support and help-seeking

The purpose of pre-programme evaluation is not to assess young people.

The purpose is to provide context that may support understanding of participant experiences and programme learning.

---

## **Post-Programme Evaluation**

Post-programme evaluation activities may provide opportunities to explore participant experiences following programme delivery.

Areas explored may include:

- Perceived learning
- Confidence
- Emotional awareness
- Participation experiences
- Programme relevance
- Satisfaction with delivery

Post-programme evaluation helps organisations understand how participants experienced the programme and whether intended learning outcomes may have been supported.

---

## **Reflection Activities**

Reflection activities provide valuable opportunities for participants to consider:

- What they have learned
- What they found helpful
- What they may use in the future
- What they enjoyed
- What could be improved

Reflection can support both participant learning and programme evaluation.

It also aligns closely with the wider reflective ethos of Supporting Young Minds.

---

## Facilitator Observations

Facilitator observations may provide additional evaluation information.

Examples may include:

- Participation levels
- Group engagement
- Communication within activities
- Confidence to contribute
- General responsiveness to learning activities

Observations should remain descriptive and proportionate.

They should not be interpreted as clinical assessments.

Observation information may contribute to wider programme review alongside participant feedback and evaluation data.

---

## Partner Organisation Feedback

Partner organisations may provide additional perspectives on programme delivery.

Feedback may explore:

- Programme implementation
- Engagement
- Relevance
- Accessibility
- Organisational fit

These perspectives help contribute to a broader understanding of programme quality and participant experiences.

---

## Using Evaluation Information

Evaluation information may be used to support:

- Programme review
- Resource development
- Facilitator learning

- Quality assurance
- Continuous improvement
- Commissioner reporting

Evaluation should contribute to organisational learning rather than existing solely for reporting purposes.

---

## Evaluation Limitations

Supporting Young Minds recognises that programme evaluation has limitations.

Many factors influence young people's development, wellbeing and life experiences.

Evaluation findings should therefore be interpreted cautiously and within context.

The programme does not claim that evaluation findings demonstrate causation.

Rather, evaluation helps explore whether programme participation may have contributed to intended learning and developmental outcomes.

This approach reflects current good practice within educational and wellbeing programme evaluation.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Evaluation supports learning and improvement.
  - Evaluation should remain proportionate.
  - Participant experiences are important.
  - Observations are not clinical assessments.
  - Evaluation findings should be interpreted within context.
  - Evaluation contributes to quality assurance and development.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, evaluation is not about proving that every young person has changed.

It is about understanding experiences.

It is about learning what has been helpful.

And it is about continually improving the opportunities we provide.

Because meaningful evaluation begins with curiosity, honesty and a willingness to learn.

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## **CHAPTER 49**

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# **MEASURING IMPACT**

## **Introduction**

Impact measurement helps organisations understand whether programme delivery may be contributing towards intended outcomes.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that impact is often complex and influenced by multiple factors.

For this reason, impact measurement should be approached with transparency, realism and humility.

The programme does not claim responsibility for all changes experienced by participants.

Instead, impact measurement seeks to explore whether programme activities may have contributed towards intended areas of learning and development.

This approach reflects the wider evidence-informed philosophy of Supporting Young Minds.

---

## **Understanding Impact**

Impact refers to the broader changes that programmes seek to contribute towards over time.

Examples may include:

- Increased emotional literacy
- Greater confidence
- Improved wellbeing awareness
- Increased communication confidence
- Greater resilience awareness
- Improved help-seeking awareness

Impact should be viewed as a contribution rather than proof of direct causation.

Young people's lives are influenced by many different experiences beyond programme participation.

---

## **Emotional Literacy Indicators**

Potential indicators may include:

- Improved emotional vocabulary
- Increased emotional awareness
- Greater confidence identifying emotions
- Improved understanding of emotional experiences

Mohorić, Takšić and Ćosić Pilepić (2021) found that structured emotional literacy education may contribute to improvements in emotional competence and emotional understanding.

Supporting Young Minds uses these findings to inform its approach to emotional literacy measurement.

---

## **Confidence Indicators**

Potential indicators may include:

- Increased willingness to participate
- Greater confidence expressing views
- Improved confidence contributing to group discussions
- Increased engagement within activities

Confidence is often developed gradually through repeated opportunities for participation and positive experiences.

For this reason, confidence indicators should be interpreted within the wider context of programme delivery.

---

## **Resilience Awareness Indicators**

Potential indicators may include:

- Improved understanding of resilience
- Increased awareness of coping strategies
- Greater recognition of personal strengths
- Increased confidence discussing challenges

Supporting Young Minds focuses on resilience awareness rather than claiming to measure resilience directly.

This distinction helps maintain realistic and proportionate evaluation expectations.

---

## **Communication Indicators**

Potential indicators may include:

- Greater confidence communicating thoughts and feelings
- Improved listening skills
- Increased participation in discussions
- Greater willingness to engage with others respectfully

Communication development is explored throughout multiple programme pillars and may form part of wider outcome review.

---

## **Wellbeing Awareness Indicators**

Potential indicators may include:

- Increased understanding of wellbeing
- Greater awareness of support options
- Improved understanding of self-care strategies
- Increased confidence discussing wellbeing

These indicators reflect the programme's educational and prevention-focused aims.

---

## **Qualitative Impact**

Not all impact can be measured numerically.

Qualitative information may provide valuable insight into participant experiences.

Examples may include:

- Participant comments
- Reflection activities
- Facilitator observations
- Case studies
- Partner feedback

Qualitative information can help provide context and depth to evaluation findings.

Kay (2018) highlights the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative information when evaluating youth-focused programmes, recognising that participant experiences often provide valuable insight that numerical measures alone may not capture.

Supporting Young Minds adopts this principle when considering programme impact.

---

## **Impact Measurement Summary**

Impact measurement should be viewed as one component of a wider learning process.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to understand whether programme participation may have contributed to intended outcomes whilst recognising the complexity of young people's lives and experiences.

Impact information should therefore be interpreted thoughtfully, proportionately and within context.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Impact measurement explores contribution rather than causation.
  - Indicators should remain proportionate.
  - Emotional literacy, confidence and wellbeing awareness may be explored.
  - Qualitative information provides important context.
  - Impact findings should be interpreted cautiously.
  - Learning remains the primary purpose of impact measurement.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, impact is not simply about numbers.

It is also about stories.

It is about the young person who participates for the first time.

The young person who discovers a new way to understand their emotions.

The young person who realises support is available.

These experiences matter.

And whilst not every meaningful outcome can be captured in a graph or questionnaire, they remain an important part of understanding the difference that wellbeing education may contribute towards over time.

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## CHAPTER 50

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# COMMISSIONER REPORTING FRAMEWORK

## Introduction

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is committed to transparent, proportionate and meaningful reporting.

Reporting helps partner organisations, commissioners and stakeholders understand programme delivery, participant engagement and evaluation findings.

At Fynix Project, reporting is viewed as an important component of accountability, quality assurance and continuous improvement.

The purpose of reporting is not simply to provide data.

It is to provide meaningful information that supports understanding, learning and decision-making.

Supporting Young Minds adopts a reporting approach that seeks to balance quantitative information, qualitative feedback and contextual understanding.

This reflects the programme's educational and prevention-focused nature.

---

## **Reporting Principles**

Commissioner reporting within Supporting Young Minds is guided by the following principles:

### **Transparency**

Information should be presented clearly and honestly.

### **Proportionality**

Reporting should reflect the scope and aims of programme delivery.

### **Accountability**

Reporting should support responsible oversight and governance.

### **Context**

Findings should be interpreted within the wider context of programme delivery.

### **Learning**

Reporting should contribute to reflection and continuous improvement.

Together, these principles help ensure that reporting remains meaningful and credible.

---

## **Attendance Information**

Reports may include information relating to:

- Number of sessions delivered
- Number of participants engaged
- Attendance levels
- Completion rates where appropriate

Attendance information helps provide an overview of programme reach and participation.

Attendance data alone should not be interpreted as evidence of programme impact.

However, it can provide useful contextual information regarding engagement and delivery.

---

## **Engagement Information**

Reports may include information relating to participant engagement.

Examples may include:

- Participation levels
- Session involvement
- Activity completion
- Group engagement observations

Engagement information can provide insight into how participants experienced programme activities.

It may also support understanding of implementation and delivery quality.

---

## **Participant Feedback**

Participant feedback forms an important component of commissioner reporting.

Feedback may include:

- Satisfaction information
- Learning reflections
- Participant experiences
- Perceived usefulness
- Suggestions for improvement

Young people's perspectives help provide valuable insight into programme delivery and participant experiences.

Reporting participant voice supports transparency and accountability.

---

## **Outcome Information**

Where appropriate, reports may include information relating to intended programme outcomes.

Examples may include:

- Emotional awareness
- Confidence
- Communication confidence
- Wellbeing understanding
- Resilience awareness
- Help-seeking awareness

Outcome information should be interpreted proportionately.

Supporting Young Minds does not claim that programme participation alone causes observed changes.

Instead, outcome information may provide insight into areas where participants report learning, development or increased understanding.

---

## **Case Studies and Qualitative Information**

Quantitative information provides one perspective on programme delivery.

However, qualitative information can provide important context and depth.

Examples may include:

- Participant reflections
- Facilitator observations
- Anonymous case examples
- Partner organisation feedback

Case studies can help illustrate how programme experiences are understood by participants and organisations.

Any case studies used should respect confidentiality, safeguarding responsibilities and data protection requirements.

---

## **Reporting and Continuous Improvement**

Reporting should contribute to ongoing programme learning.

De Silva, Breuer, Lee and colleagues (2014) highlight the importance of evaluation frameworks that support learning, transparency and ongoing programme development. Their work suggests that evaluation processes are most valuable when they contribute to understanding how programmes operate and how they may be strengthened over time.

These findings reinforce the importance of viewing reporting as part of a wider cycle of evaluation, reflection and continuous improvement.

Supporting Young Minds adopts this principle throughout its reporting framework.

---

## **Key Messages**

Facilitators should remember:

- Reporting supports accountability and transparency.
  - Attendance information does not demonstrate impact on its own.
  - Participant voice remains important.
  - Outcome information should be interpreted proportionately.
  - Qualitative information can provide valuable context.
  - Reporting contributes to organisational learning.
- 

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, reporting is about more than numbers.

It is about helping organisations understand what has been delivered, how it has been experienced and what has been learned.

We believe that honest reporting strengthens trust.

And we believe that meaningful reporting should support learning as much as accountability.

Because good reporting is not simply about demonstrating activity.

It is about helping people understand what that activity may have contributed towards.

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## **CHAPTER 51**

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# **SOCIAL VALUE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

### **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds has been designed as a prevention-focused wellbeing programme that seeks to contribute positively to young people, educational settings and communities.

Whilst the programme's primary focus is supporting emotional literacy, confidence, resilience awareness and wellbeing understanding, its intended contribution extends beyond individual learning experiences.

The programme seeks to contribute towards wider social value through prevention-focused education, accessible wellbeing support and community engagement.

At Fynix Project, social value is understood as the wider positive contribution that programmes may make to individuals, organisations and communities.

---

## Understanding Social Value

Social value refers to the broader benefits that may arise from programme delivery.

These benefits may extend beyond immediate participant outcomes and include contributions to:

- Community wellbeing
- Prevention and early intervention
- Inclusion and accessibility
- Youth participation
- Educational engagement
- Community resilience

Social value should be viewed as a contribution rather than a guaranteed outcome.

Many factors influence wider community change.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to contribute positively within this broader context.

---

## Prevention and Early Intervention

Supporting Young Minds is grounded in prevention-focused wellbeing education.

The programme aims to provide opportunities for young people to develop knowledge, skills and awareness before difficulties escalate.

Membride (2016), examining resilience and early intervention approaches within youth services, highlights the value of preventative work that seeks to strengthen protective factors and support positive development.

Rickwood, Raphael and Pilgrim (2011) highlight the importance of early support, youth wellbeing promotion and accessible pathways to help within youth mental health systems.

These findings support the wider prevention-focused philosophy that underpins Supporting Young Minds.

---

## Supporting Educational Priorities

The programme seeks to align with wider educational and wellbeing priorities.

Potential contributions may include:

- Emotional literacy development
- Wellbeing education
- Positive participation
- Inclusion
- Confidence building
- Supportive learning environments

Supporting Young Minds seeks to complement rather than replace existing educational, pastoral and wellbeing provision.

---

## **Community Wellbeing**

Community wellbeing is influenced by many interconnected factors.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to contribute by:

- Increasing awareness of wellbeing
- Encouraging positive participation
- Supporting confidence and communication
- Promoting awareness of support pathways
- Creating opportunities for learning and connection

These contributions are intended to support wider wellbeing goals within educational and community settings.

---

## **Inclusion and Accessibility**

Social value is strengthened when programmes are accessible and inclusive.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to reduce barriers to participation through:

- Inclusive facilitation
- Accessibility adaptations
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Neurodiversity awareness
- Respect for diversity and difference

Creating opportunities for participation can help support wider social inclusion and community engagement.

---

## **Youth Voice and Participation**

Young people play an important role in shaping healthy communities.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create opportunities for:

- Participation
- Reflection
- Discussion
- Feedback
- Shared learning

Allen, March, Alexandrescu et al. (2025) highlight the importance of youth participation within community wellbeing initiatives, noting that meaningful involvement can support both individual development and wider community engagement.

These findings align closely with the wider Fynix approach to participation and empowerment.

---

## **Wider Community Benefits**

Potential wider benefits may include:

- Increased awareness of wellbeing
- Greater confidence discussing emotions
- Improved understanding of support pathways
- Increased participation opportunities
- Strengthened links between young people and support services

These benefits should be viewed as intended contributions rather than guaranteed outcomes.

The programme recognises the complexity of community-level change and adopts a realistic approach to social value expectations.

---

## Key Messages

Facilitators should remember:

- Social value extends beyond individual outcomes.
  - Prevention and early intervention are important principles.
  - Community wellbeing is influenced by multiple factors.
  - Inclusion strengthens social value.
  - Participation supports community engagement.
  - Supporting Young Minds seeks to contribute positively to wider wellbeing goals.
- 

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, social value is not something that happens after programme delivery.

It is something that is embedded within it.

Every opportunity for a young person to participate.

Every opportunity to develop confidence.

Every opportunity to better understand emotions, wellbeing or support.

These moments matter.

And whilst community change is complex, we believe that creating more opportunities for young people to feel informed, included and supported can contribute positively to the communities they are part of.

Because strong communities are built when young people are given opportunities to thrive.

---

## PART 10 SUMMARY

### Outcomes, Impact and Evaluation

This section has outlined the framework used to understand, evaluate and report the intended contributions of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

The programme has been designed around:

- A clear Theory of Change
- A structured Logic Model
- Defined Intended Outcomes
- An Evaluation Framework
- Impact Measurement Processes
- Commissioner Reporting Arrangements
- Social Value Considerations

Together, these elements provide a transparent framework for understanding how programme activities are intended to contribute to positive outcomes for young people.

Supporting Young Minds recognises that wellbeing, resilience, confidence and emotional development are influenced by many factors.

For this reason, the programme consistently adopts a contribution-focused rather than causation-focused approach to evaluation and impact.

This reflects current good practice within educational, youth development and wellbeing programmes.

---

## **Accountability and Learning**

Evaluation, reporting and impact measurement are intended to support learning as well as accountability.

The programme seeks to use:

- Participant feedback
- Facilitator reflection
- Observations
- Evaluation activities
- Commissioner reporting

to strengthen understanding and support continuous improvement.

Learning remains central to the Fynix approach.

---

## **Prevention and Positive Development**

The programme's intended contribution is rooted in prevention, participation and positive youth development.

Research relating to resilience, emotional literacy, help-seeking and youth wellbeing highlights the potential value of preventative and educational approaches when delivered within safe, supportive and inclusive environments (Membride, 2016; Rickwood et al., 2011).

Supporting Young Minds has been designed with these principles in mind.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, outcomes matter.

Evaluation matters.

Accountability matters.

But people matter most.

We believe that young people deserve opportunities to learn, reflect, participate and grow within environments that feel safe, inclusive and supportive.

The purpose of evaluation is not simply to count activity.

The purpose is to understand experiences.

To learn from them.

And to continually improve the opportunities we provide.

Because meaningful impact is rarely created by one session or one conversation.

It is built over time through learning, participation and connection.

And that belief sits at the heart of Supporting Young Minds.

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## **APPENDIX A**

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# PARENT & CARER INFORMATION

## Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground

### Information for Parents, Carers and Families

## Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

This programme has been developed by Fynix Project to help young people build practical skills that support emotional awareness, confidence, resilience, communication and wellbeing.

We recognise that parents, carers and families play a vital role in supporting the wellbeing of young people. This information guide has been created to explain what the programme involves, what young people can expect and how families can support learning beyond the sessions.

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## What Is Supporting Young Minds?

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is a trauma-informed, evidence-informed and prevention-focused emotional wellbeing learning programme for young people aged 12–17.

The programme helps young people:

- Understand emotions
- Develop emotional vocabulary
- Recognise stress and overwhelm
- Learn grounding techniques
- Build confidence
- Strengthen communication skills
- Develop resilience
- Increase self-awareness
- Explore healthy coping strategies

The programme is educational in nature and is delivered through structured learning activities, discussion, reflection and practical wellbeing exercises.

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## What Is the Aim of the Programme?

The aim of the programme is to help young people develop practical wellbeing skills that may support them throughout adolescence and into adulthood.

The programme seeks to create opportunities for young people to:

- Better understand themselves
- Build confidence
- Develop emotional awareness
- Strengthen resilience
- Learn practical wellbeing tools
- Recognise sources of support

The focus is on education, learning and personal development rather than treatment or therapy.

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## What Topics Will Be Covered?

The programme is organised around six core learning pillars:

### **Understanding Emotions**

Helping young people recognise, understand and communicate emotions.

### **Understanding Stress**

Exploring how stress affects the mind and body.

### **Finding Your Ground**

Learning practical grounding and self-regulation strategies.

### **Confidence & Self-Esteem**

Recognising strengths and building self-belief.

## **Communication & Relationships**

Developing healthy communication and relationship skills.

## **Resilience & Growth**

Understanding resilience and identifying sources of support.

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# **Is This a Therapy Programme?**

No.

Supporting Young Minds is not therapy, counselling or clinical intervention.

The programme does not:

- Diagnose mental health conditions
- Provide counselling
- Offer trauma treatment
- Replace CAMHS
- Replace specialist services
- Replace safeguarding procedures

Instead, the programme provides educational wellbeing learning designed to support emotional awareness, resilience and confidence.

Where additional support is required, facilitators will follow appropriate safeguarding and referral procedures.

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# **Is Participation Mandatory?**

Participation is encouraged but not forced.

We recognise that young people engage in different ways.

Participants may choose to:

- Contribute to discussions
- Complete activities
- Reflect quietly

- Observe and listen
- Participate in writing activities

Young people are never required to share personal experiences.

Choice and autonomy are important elements of the programme.

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## How Is Emotional Safety Maintained?

Creating emotionally safe learning environments is a key priority for Fynix Project.

Facilitators use trauma-informed approaches that prioritise:

- Respect
- Choice
- Inclusion
- Emotional safety
- Psychological safety
- Positive participation

Young people are not encouraged to disclose personal trauma or difficult life experiences during programme activities.

The focus remains on learning, reflection and wellbeing education.

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## Safeguarding

The welfare of children and young people is our highest priority.

Fynix Project follows safeguarding procedures designed to help protect participants from harm.

All facilitators are expected to:

- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Respond appropriately to concerns
- Report safeguarding concerns where necessary

If a young person shares information that raises concerns about their safety or wellbeing, facilitators may need to share this information with appropriate safeguarding professionals.

This is done to help keep young people safe.

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## Confidentiality

Participants are encouraged to respect one another's privacy.

However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where there are concerns relating to:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Self-harm
- Risk of harm
- Safeguarding concerns

In these circumstances, information may need to be shared with relevant safeguarding professionals.

Facilitators will always seek to act in the best interests of the young person.

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## Supporting Your Young Person at Home

Parents and carers can play an important role in reinforcing learning from the programme.

You may wish to:

- Ask about what they learned
- Encourage discussion without pressure
- Explore wellbeing tools together
- Support healthy routines
- Celebrate strengths and achievements
- Encourage help-seeking when needed

Simple conversations can help reinforce learning and wellbeing awareness.

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## Questions You Might Ask

Examples include:

- What did you learn today?
- Was there anything you found interesting?
- Did you learn any new wellbeing tools?
- What helps you feel grounded?
- What strengths do you recognise in yourself?

There is no expectation that young people share everything discussed within sessions.

Respecting their choice is important.

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## Signs a Young Person May Need Additional Support

While emotional ups and downs are a normal part of adolescence, there may be times when additional support is needed.

Examples may include:

- Persistent low mood
- Significant withdrawal
- Ongoing distress
- Changes in behaviour
- Changes in attendance
- Risk-taking behaviour
- Self-harm concerns
- Expressions of hopelessness

If you are concerned about a young person's wellbeing, appropriate support should be sought from relevant professionals or services.

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# Sources of Support

Support may be available through:

- School wellbeing teams
- School safeguarding teams
- GPs
- Early Help services
- CAMHS
- Youth support services
- Local authority services
- Community organisations

Support pathways vary depending on individual circumstances and location.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Does my child have to talk about personal experiences?**

No. Participation is always voluntary and young people are never required to disclose personal experiences.

### **Is the programme suitable for neurodivergent young people?**

Yes. The programme has been designed with inclusion, accessibility and flexible participation in mind.

### **What happens if my child becomes upset during a session?**

Facilitators use trauma-informed and safeguarding-aware approaches to support emotional safety. Appropriate support will be provided within professional boundaries and safeguarding procedures followed where necessary.

### **Can parents access programme materials?**

Depending on the delivery setting, summary information and resources may be made available to parents and carers where appropriate.

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# Our Commitment

At Fynix Project, we believe that every young person deserves opportunities to develop confidence, emotional awareness and practical wellbeing skills in environments that feel safe, respectful and inclusive.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been developed to help young people better understand themselves, build resilience and develop tools that may support them throughout life.

We are committed to delivering this work with professionalism, compassion, safeguarding awareness and respect for every young person's individual journey.

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## Contact Information

For questions about the programme, delivery arrangements or general enquiries, please contact:

### **Fynix Project**

Email: [info@fynix.org.uk](mailto:info@fynix.org.uk)

Website: [www.fynix.org.uk](http://www.fynix.org.uk)

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## Safeguarding Contact

For safeguarding concerns relating to programme delivery, please contact:

### **Darryl Craig**

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Email: [darryl.craig@fynix.org.uk](mailto:darryl.craig@fynix.org.uk)

Where delivery takes place within schools, colleges, residential settings, local authority services or partner organisations, safeguarding concerns should also be reported in accordance with the host organisation's safeguarding procedures and designated safeguarding arrangements.

If a child or young person is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, emergency safeguarding procedures should be followed without delay.

## APPENDIX B

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# PROGRAMME STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

### Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is a trauma-informed, prevention-focused wellbeing programme designed to support young people aged 12–17.

The programme has been developed to provide structured opportunities for young people to explore emotional literacy, confidence, resilience, communication and wellbeing awareness within safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Supporting Young Minds is delivered through a structured programme of **eight interactive modules delivered across two days**, supported by a wider framework built around emotional literacy, self-awareness, resilience, confidence, communication and wellbeing education.

The programme can be delivered within schools, colleges, alternative provision settings, youth services, community organisations and other educational or wellbeing-focused settings.

Whilst delivery may be adapted to meet local needs, the core programme structure remains consistent.

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### Programme Overview

<b>Programme Element</b>	<b>Description</b>
Programme Name	Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground
Age Range	12–17 Years
Delivery Style	Group-based wellbeing education
Approach	Trauma-informed, strengths-based and evidence-informed
Delivery Settings	Schools, colleges, PRUs, alternative provision, youth services and community settings
Delivery Format	In-person delivery
Programme Duration	Two-day programme
Number of Modules	Eight structured modules
Facilitator Ratio	Maximum 1 facilitator to 8 young people
Facilitator Requirements	Trained facilitators operating within safeguarding, quality assurance and professional boundary frameworks

Programme Focus	Emotional literacy, confidence, resilience, communication and wellbeing awareness
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## **Programme Delivery Model**

Supporting Young Minds is delivered through eight interactive modules.

Each module incorporates discussion, reflection, practical activities, wellbeing education and opportunities for participation.

Modules build progressively throughout delivery, allowing young people to develop understanding, confidence and self-awareness through a structured learning journey.

The programme is designed to be interactive and participant-centred rather than lecture-based.

Facilitators encourage discussion, reflection and practical application throughout each module.

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## **Module Structure**

### **Module 1**

Introduction and programme foundations.

Young people are introduced to the programme, group expectations, psychological safety principles and the learning journey ahead.

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### **Module 2**

Understanding emotions and emotional awareness.

Young people begin exploring emotions, emotional literacy and emotional understanding.

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### **Module 3**

Understanding yourself.

Young people explore identity, strengths, values and self-awareness.

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### **Module 4**

Finding your ground.

Young people explore grounding techniques, emotional regulation and practical wellbeing tools.

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### **Module 5**

Confidence and self-esteem.

Young people explore self-belief, participation, confidence and recognising personal strengths.

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### **Module 6**

Communication and relationships.

Young people explore communication skills, listening, healthy relationships and respectful interaction.

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### **Module 7**

Resilience and growth.

Young people explore resilience awareness, coping strategies, adaptability and personal growth.

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### **Module 8**

Reflection, consolidation and moving forward.

Young people review learning, identify personal strengths and explore how learning may be applied beyond programme delivery.

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## Facilitator-to-Participant Ratio

Supporting Young Minds is delivered using a maximum facilitator-to-participant ratio of **1:8**.

The programme's interactive nature requires facilitators to actively support participation, engagement and emotional safety throughout delivery.

Maintaining a smaller group ratio supports:

- Trauma-informed delivery
- Psychological safety
- Meaningful participation
- Relationship building
- Inclusion and accessibility
- Effective group facilitation
- Safeguarding oversight
- Individual engagement and support

Where programmes are delivered to larger groups, additional facilitators should be allocated to maintain this ratio wherever reasonably practicable.

<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Minimum Facilitators Required</b>
Up to 8	1
9–16	2
17–24	3
25–32	4

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## Programme Framework

The programme is underpinned by six interconnected developmental pillars.

These pillars provide the theoretical framework that informs module design and delivery.

### **Pillar 1 – Understanding Emotions**

### **Pillar 2 – Understanding Yourself**

### **Pillar 3 – Finding Your Ground**

### **Pillar 4 – Confidence and Self-Esteem**

### **Pillar 5 – Communication and Relationships**

### **Pillar 6 – Resilience and Growth**

Together, these pillars provide the foundation upon which all eight programme modules are built.

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## Intended Outcomes

Supporting Young Minds seeks to contribute towards:

### **Short-Term Outcomes**

- Increased emotional awareness
- Improved emotional vocabulary
- Greater confidence to participate
- Increased wellbeing understanding

### **Medium-Term Outcomes**

- Increased communication confidence

- Greater self-awareness
- Improved resilience awareness
- Increased confidence accessing support

## **Longer-Term Contribution**

The programme seeks to contribute towards:

- Stronger emotional literacy
- Greater wellbeing awareness
- Increased confidence
- Positive youth development
- Improved understanding of support pathways

Supporting Young Minds recognises that outcomes are influenced by multiple factors and therefore adopts a contribution-focused rather than causation-focused approach to evaluation.

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## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe young people already possess strengths, abilities and potential.

Supporting Young Minds has been designed to create opportunities for those strengths to be recognised, explored and developed through safe, inclusive and engaging learning experiences.

The programme combines eight structured learning modules with a developmental framework centred on emotional literacy, self-awareness, confidence, communication and resilience.

Its purpose is not to provide therapy or clinical intervention.

Its purpose is to provide practical wellbeing education that helps young people better understand themselves, strengthen their confidence and recognise the support available around them.

Because growth often begins when young people are given the opportunity to feel heard, understood and empowered.

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# APPENDIX C

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## Theory of Change Diagram

### Introduction

The Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground Theory of Change provides a visual representation of how programme activities are intended to contribute towards positive outcomes for young people aged 12–17.

The model illustrates the relationship between the resources that support delivery, the activities undertaken during the programme, the immediate outputs generated through participation, and the short, medium and longer-term outcomes the programme seeks to contribute towards.

The Theory of Change has been developed to support programme planning, delivery, evaluation and commissioner understanding. It reflects the programme's trauma-informed, strengths-based and evidence-informed approach and aligns with the evaluation framework outlined within this document.

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### How to Read the Diagram

The Theory of Change follows a logical pathway:

#### Inputs

The resources, systems and structures that support programme delivery.

These include trained facilitators, safeguarding procedures, curriculum resources, community partnerships and quality assurance processes.

#### Activities

The learning experiences and opportunities provided through programme delivery.

These include group discussions, emotional literacy activities, confidence-building exercises, resilience exploration, wellbeing education and support signposting.

## **Outputs**

The immediate indicators of participation and engagement that occur during programme delivery.

Examples include participation in sessions, increased emotional vocabulary and improved understanding of wellbeing concepts.

## **Short-Term Outcomes**

The areas of growth the programme aims to support during and immediately following participation.

These include emotional literacy, confidence, communication, resilience awareness and wellbeing understanding.

## **Medium-Term Outcomes**

The developmental outcomes the programme seeks to contribute towards over time.

These may include increased self-awareness, improved communication confidence, stronger coping strategies and enhanced relationship skills.

## **Long-Term Impact**

The wider outcomes the programme seeks to contribute towards within the broader lives of young people.

These may include improved wellbeing, stronger relationships, increased resilience and greater engagement in education, community participation and future opportunities.

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## **Contribution Rather Than Causation**

Supporting Young Minds recognises that young people's lives are influenced by many interconnected factors including family, education, community, relationships, personal experiences and wider social circumstances.

For this reason, the programme does not claim to directly cause long-term outcomes.

Instead, the Theory of Change illustrates the areas where the programme seeks to make a positive contribution through safe, inclusive and evidence-informed wellbeing education.

The model therefore reflects a contribution-focused approach to evaluation rather than a claim of direct causation.

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## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe that meaningful change begins with understanding, connection and opportunity.

Young people already possess strengths, abilities and potential.

Our role is not to provide therapy or to "fix" young people. Our role is to create environments where they can explore emotions, build confidence, strengthen resilience and develop greater awareness of themselves and the support available around them.

The Theory of Change reflects this belief by focusing on growth, participation and empowerment rather than deficit or pathology.

Because when young people feel heard, valued and supported, they are often better placed to recognise their strengths, navigate challenges and build positive futures.



Trauma-informed • Lived-Experience Led • Psychologically safe

# THEORY OF CHANGE

Supporting Young Minds: Finding your ground



**INPUTS**  
The resources and enablers we bring to the programme.

- Trained, trauma-informed facilitators.
- Evidence-informed curriculum.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Partnerships with schools and community organisations.
- Accessible resources and materials.
- Safe, supportive spaces for learning.
- Evaluation and feedback tools.



**ACTIVITIES**  
What we do and how we engage young people.

- Interactive group sessions (8 modules).
- Reflective discussions and activities.
- Emotional literacy development.
- Confidence and communication building.
- Resilience and coping strategy exploration.
- Wellbeing and self-care education.
- Signposting and awareness of support.
- Opportunities for voice and participation.



**OUTCOMES**  
The immediate results of our activities.

- Young people participate in sessions.
- Increased emotional vocabulary.
- Improved understanding of emotions.
- Greater confidence to express views.
- Increased awareness of coping strategies.
- Improved knowledge of wellbeing and self-care.
- Increased awareness of support and help-seeking options.



**IMPACT**  
Areas of growth we aim to support.

- EMOTIONAL LITERACY**  
Young people better understand and manage their emotions.
- CONFIDENCE**  
Young people feel more confident in themselves and their abilities.
- COMMUNICATION**  
Young people communicate more effectively and respectfully.
- RESILIENCE**  
Young people understand resilience and apply coping strategies.
- WELLBEING AWARENESS**  
Young people make informed choices to support their wellbeing.



**OUTPUTS**  
The long-term difference we aim to contribute.

- Improved mental wellbeing and emotional health.
- Greater engagement in education and opportunities.
- Stronger relationships and positive peer connections.
- Increased resilience and ability to navigate challenges.
- Young people feel empowered to seek support and support others.

### Values & Approach

- We create emotionally safe spaces to learn and grow.
- We value voice, choice and lived experience.
- We build confidence through connection.

### Outcomes

- We promote understanding, resilience, and self-awareness.
- We empower young people to shape their future.
- We rise together. Stronger. Braver. Fynix.



## OUR VISION FOR CHANGE

Young people feel understood, empowered and equipped with the skills and confidence to navigate life's challenges, build positive relationships and thrive in their communities.

**Empowerment • Connection • Growth • Hope**

**TRAUMA-INFORMED LIVED EXPERIENCE LED GROWTH-FOCUSED PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE**

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# APPENDIX D

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## Logic Model

### Introduction

The Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground Logic Model provides a structured overview of how programme resources, activities, outputs and intended outcomes are connected.

The model translates the programme framework into a practical delivery pathway, demonstrating how programme inputs support activities, how activities generate outputs, and how these outputs are intended to contribute towards short, medium and longer-term outcomes for young people.

The Logic Model has been developed to support programme planning, implementation, quality assurance, evaluation and commissioner understanding. It complements the Theory of Change by providing a more operational representation of programme delivery.

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### Purpose of the Logic Model

The Logic Model helps to demonstrate:

- What resources are required to deliver the programme.
- What activities take place during delivery.
- What outputs are expected through participation.
- What areas of growth the programme aims to support.
- What longer-term outcomes the programme seeks to contribute towards.
- How programme evaluation aligns with intended outcomes.

The model provides a practical framework for understanding how programme delivery is intended to support young people's emotional awareness, confidence, resilience and wellbeing.

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## **Understanding the Delivery Pathway**

### **Inputs**

Inputs represent the resources, systems and foundations that make delivery possible.

These include trained facilitators, evidence-informed programme materials, safeguarding procedures, community partnerships, accessible resources and quality assurance systems.

### **Activities**

Activities are the learning experiences and opportunities provided to participants throughout the programme.

These include interactive group sessions, reflective discussions, emotional literacy development, confidence-building activities, resilience exploration, wellbeing education and opportunities for participation and voice.

### **Outputs**

Outputs are the immediate indicators of engagement and participation that arise during programme delivery.

Examples include participation in sessions, increased emotional vocabulary, improved understanding of emotions and greater awareness of wellbeing and support options.

### **Short-Term Outcomes**

Short-term outcomes represent the areas of growth the programme aims to support during and immediately following participation.

These include emotional literacy, confidence, communication skills, resilience awareness and wellbeing understanding.

### **Medium-Term Outcomes**

Medium-term outcomes reflect developmental changes that the programme seeks to contribute towards over time.

These may include greater self-awareness, stronger communication confidence, increased use of coping strategies, improved relationship skills and increased confidence accessing support.

## **Long-Term Impact**

Long-term impact refers to the wider outcomes that the programme seeks to contribute towards within young people's lives and communities.

These may include improved wellbeing, stronger relationships, increased resilience, greater educational engagement and increased confidence seeking support when needed.

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## **Relationship to Evaluation**

The Logic Model directly informs the programme's evaluation framework.

Evaluation activities are designed to explore whether programme delivery is supporting the outputs and outcomes identified within the model.

This may include:

- Participant feedback
- Reflection activities
- Outcome questionnaires
- Facilitator observations
- Partner organisation feedback
- Programme review processes

The Logic Model therefore acts as a bridge between programme delivery and programme evaluation.

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## **Contribution-Focused Approach**

Supporting Young Minds recognises that outcomes are influenced by many factors beyond programme participation alone.

Family circumstances, educational experiences, peer relationships, community environments and wider social influences all contribute to young people's development and wellbeing.

For this reason, the Logic Model should not be interpreted as a claim of direct causation.

Instead, it provides a structured representation of the areas where the programme seeks to make a positive contribution through safe, inclusive and evidence-informed wellbeing education.

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## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, we believe that meaningful outcomes are built through consistent opportunities for participation, reflection, learning and connection.

The Logic Model reflects our commitment to delivering structured, purposeful and accountable wellbeing education that supports young people to better understand themselves, strengthen their confidence and develop practical skills for everyday life.

By connecting programme activities to intended outcomes, the Logic Model helps ensure that delivery remains focused, transparent and aligned with the needs of the young people we serve.

Because meaningful change is rarely the result of a single moment.

It is often the result of many small opportunities to learn, connect, reflect and grow.

# LOGICAL MODEL

Trauma-Informed · Lived-Experience Led · Psychologically Safe



**Values & Approach**  
We create emotionally safe spaces to learn and grow.

We value voice, choice and lived experience.  
We build confidence through connection.

**Outcomes**  
We promote understanding, resilience and self-awareness.

We empower young people to shape their future.

We rise together.  
Stronger. Braver. Fynix.



The resources and enablers we bring to the programme.

- Trained, trauma-informed facilitators.
- Evidence-informed curriculum.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Partnerships with schools and community organisations.
- Accessible resources and materials.
- Safe, supportive spaces for learning.
- Evaluation and feedback tools.



What we do and how we engage young people.

- Interactive group sessions (8 modules).
- Reflective discussions and activities.
- Emotional literacy development.
- Confidence and communication building.
- Resilience and coping strategy exploration.
- Wellbeing and self-care education.
- Signposting and awareness of support.
- Opportunities for voice and participation.



The immediate results of our activities.

- Young people participate in sessions.
- Increased emotional vocabulary.
- Improved understanding of emotions.
- Greater confidence to express views.
- Increased awareness of coping strategies.
- Improved knowledge of wellbeing and self-care.
- Increased awareness of support and help-seeking options.



Areas of growth we aim to support.

- EMOTIONAL LITERACY**  
Young people better understand and manage their emotions.
- CONFIDENCE**  
Young people feel more confident in themselves and their abilities.
- COMMUNICATION**  
Young people communicate more effectively and respectfully.
- RESILIENCE**  
Young people understand resilience and apply coping strategies.
- WELLBEING AWARENESS**  
Young people make informed choices to support their wellbeing.



Developmental outcomes the programme seeks to contribute towards

- Greater self-awareness and understanding.
- Improved communication confidence.
- Increased awareness and use of coping strategies.
- Increased confidence accessing support when needed.
- Stronger sense of identity and self-worth.
- Improved relationship skills and peer connections.



Wider outcomes the programme seeks to contribute towards

- Improved mental wellbeing and emotional health.
- Greater engagement in education and opportunities.
- Stronger relationships and positive peer connections.
- Increased resilience and ability to navigate life's challenges.
- Young people feel empowered to seek support and support others.

## OUR VISION FOR CHANGE

Young people feel understood, empowered, and equipped with the skills and confidence to navigate life's challenges, build positive relationships, and thrive in their communities.

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# APPENDIX E

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## FACILITATOR COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

### Introduction

The quality, safety and effectiveness of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is influenced not only by programme design and resources, but also by the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours of those delivering it.

Supporting Young Minds is delivered by facilitators who operate within Fynix Project's wider safeguarding, health and safety, equality, professional conduct and quality assurance frameworks.

This Facilitator Competency Framework outlines the core competencies expected of all individuals delivering the programme and provides a shared foundation for safe, ethical and effective practice.

The framework is intended to support:

- Safe programme delivery
- Consistent facilitation standards
- Professional accountability
- Quality assurance
- Reflective practice
- Continuous improvement
- Participant wellbeing

Facilitators may come from a range of professional, educational, youth work, community, health or lived-experience backgrounds. This framework provides a common set of expectations that underpin delivery regardless of previous experience.

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# Competency Framework Overview

Supporting Young Minds facilitators are expected to demonstrate competence across seven core areas:

1. Safeguarding & Child Protection
2. Trauma-Informed Practice
3. Professional Boundaries
4. Inclusion & Accessibility
5. Health & Safety
6. Facilitation & Group Management
7. Reflection & Continuous Improvement

Together, these competencies support safe, consistent and high-quality programme delivery.

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## Competency Area 1

### Safeguarding & Child Protection

Facilitators must demonstrate an understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and their role in protecting children, young people and adults at risk.

This includes:

- Understanding safeguarding principles.
- Recognising safeguarding concerns.
- Understanding disclosure procedures.
- Understanding reporting responsibilities.
- Knowing how and when to escalate concerns.
- Understanding confidentiality and its limits.
- Understanding the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Following safeguarding procedures consistently.

Facilitators are not expected to investigate concerns or determine outcomes.

Their responsibility is to recognise, record, report and refer concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

#### Related Policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
  - Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy
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## Competency Area 2

### Trauma-Informed Practice

Supporting Young Minds is underpinned by trauma-informed principles.

Facilitators should be able to create environments that promote emotional safety, trust, participation and respect.

This includes:

- Creating psychologically safe learning environments.
- Promoting choice and autonomy.
- Encouraging participation without pressure.
- Maintaining predictable and structured delivery.
- Recognising signs of distress.
- Responding appropriately to emotional reactions.
- Supporting emotional regulation.
- Avoiding practices that may contribute to re-traumatisation.

Facilitators should understand that adversity and trauma may influence participation, communication and behaviour, whilst avoiding assumptions about individual experiences.

#### Related Policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
  - Code of Conduct Policy
  - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- 

## Competency Area 3

### Professional Boundaries

Facilitators must maintain clear, ethical and appropriate professional boundaries at all times.

This includes:

- Understanding role limitations.
- Maintaining professional relationships.
- Avoiding dependency relationships.
- Respecting confidentiality requirements.
- Working within programme boundaries.
- Seeking support when concerns arise.
- Acting within competence.
- Understanding when referral or signposting is required.

Facilitators delivering Supporting Young Minds are not acting as therapists, counsellors, clinicians or crisis practitioners.

The programme is educational and preventative in nature and does not provide therapeutic intervention.

### **Related Policies**

- Code of Conduct Policy
  - Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy
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## **Competency Area 4**

### **Inclusion & Accessibility**

Facilitators should demonstrate a commitment to equitable participation and inclusive practice.

This includes:

- Respecting diversity and difference.
- Understanding protected characteristics.
- Supporting neurodiverse participants.
- Adapting communication styles.
- Removing participation barriers where possible.
- Using accessible language.
- Promoting belonging and inclusion.

- Creating welcoming environments.

Facilitators should recognise that meaningful participation may look different for different young people.

The goal is not identical participation but equitable opportunity to engage.

### **Related Policies**

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy
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## **Competency Area 5**

### **Health & Safety**

Facilitators are responsible for supporting safe delivery environments.

This includes:

- Understanding risk assessments.
- Completing venue safety checks.
- Understanding emergency procedures.
- Identifying potential hazards.
- Following agreed control measures.
- Maintaining safe room layouts.
- Understanding incident reporting requirements.
- Promoting both physical and psychological safety.

Facilitators should understand that safety extends beyond physical risks and includes emotional wellbeing and psychological safety.

### **Related Policies**

- Health & Safety Policy
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## **Competency Area 6**

# Facilitation & Group Management

Facilitators should be able to deliver engaging, structured and participant-centred learning experiences.

This includes:

- Leading group discussions.
- Encouraging participation.
- Managing group dynamics.
- Facilitating activities effectively.
- Supporting respectful communication.
- Managing time effectively.
- Adapting delivery where appropriate.
- Maintaining group safety and engagement.

Facilitators should encourage participation whilst respecting individual choice and personal boundaries.

Supporting Young Minds is designed to be interactive, reflective and strengths-based.

## Related Policies

- Facilitator Manual
  - Programme Delivery Framework
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## Competency Area 7

### Reflection & Continuous Improvement

Facilitators should engage in ongoing learning and reflective practice.

This includes:

- Reflecting on delivery experiences.
- Engaging with supervision and support.
- Participating in evaluation processes.

- Responding constructively to feedback.
- Identifying development needs.
- Contributing to programme improvement.
- Supporting quality assurance activities.

Reflection is viewed as a key component of safe, ethical and effective practice.

Facilitators are encouraged to approach learning with openness, curiosity and professionalism.

### **Related Policies**

- Complaints & Feedback Policy
  - Quality Assurance Processes
- 

## **Professional Behaviours**

In addition to technical competencies, facilitators are expected to demonstrate professional behaviours that reflect Fynix Project values.

These include:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Reliability
- Compassion
- Accountability
- Professionalism
- Inclusivity
- Collaboration
- Emotional awareness
- Reflective practice

These behaviours support positive learning environments and contribute to psychologically safe programme delivery.

---

## **Minimum Facilitator Requirements**

All facilitators delivering Supporting Young Minds are expected to:

- Read and understand programme policies.
- Complete programme induction.
- Understand safeguarding procedures.
- Understand emergency procedures.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Follow facilitator guidance.
- Participate in quality assurance activities.
- Engage in reflective practice.

Facilitators should work within their level of competence and seek guidance where appropriate.

---

## Facilitator-to-Participant Ratio

Supporting Young Minds is delivered using a maximum facilitator-to-participant ratio of:

### 1 Facilitator : 8 Young People

This ratio supports:

- Effective facilitation.
- Safeguarding oversight.
- Meaningful participation.
- Inclusion and accessibility.
- Trauma-informed delivery.
- Psychological safety.
- Relationship building.
- Individual engagement and support.

Where programmes are delivered to larger groups, additional facilitators should be allocated to maintain this ratio wherever reasonably practicable.

<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Minimum Facilitators</b>
Up to 8	1

9–16 2

17–24 3

25–32 4

33–40 5

---

## Relationship to Fynix Project Policies

This framework should be read alongside:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints & Feedback Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Together, these documents provide the governance framework that supports safe, ethical and accountable programme delivery.

---

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, we believe that young people deserve facilitators who are safe, skilled, reflective and compassionate.

Knowledge matters.

Professionalism matters.

Relationships matter.

The most effective facilitators are not those who claim to know everything. They are those who remain curious, accountable and committed to learning.

This framework exists to help ensure that every facilitator delivering Supporting Young Minds works from a shared foundation of safeguarding, inclusion, professionalism and care.

Because safe delivery does not happen by accident.

It is created intentionally through preparation, reflection, accountability and a genuine commitment to the wellbeing of the young people we serve.

**Rise Through Lived Experience. Practical Tools. Real Healing. ❤️**

---

## APPENDIX F

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# POLICY & GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

## Introduction

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground operates within a wider governance framework designed to promote safe, ethical, accountable and consistent programme delivery.

The programme does not operate independently of organisational policies and procedures.

Instead, programme delivery is supported by a range of governance documents that provide guidance relating to safeguarding, health and safety, professional conduct, confidentiality, inclusion, participant welfare and quality assurance.

Together, these policies help ensure that Supporting Young Minds is delivered in a manner that is:

- Safe

- Trauma-informed
- Inclusive
- Accountable
- Ethical
- Participant-centred
- Consistent

The policies outlined within this appendix form part of the wider governance structure that supports all Fynix Project activities.

---

## Governance Framework Overview

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy	Provides procedures for recognising, responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns.
Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy	Sets out how information is handled, stored and shared whilst maintaining participant safety.
Health & Safety Policy	Provides guidance on risk management, venue safety, emergency procedures and participant welfare.
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy	Promotes equitable participation, accessibility, inclusion and respect for diversity.
Code of Conduct Policy	Establishes professional expectations, behaviours and ethical standards.

Complaints & Feedback Policy

Provides processes for raising concerns, complaints and feedback whilst supporting organisational learning.

Together, these documents provide the governance foundations for Supporting Young Minds delivery.

---

## **Safeguarding & Child Protection**

Safeguarding is a central component of programme delivery.

All facilitators are expected to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and operate in accordance with safeguarding procedures at all times.

The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy provides guidance relating to:

- Recognising concerns
- Responding to disclosures
- Reporting procedures
- Escalation pathways
- Roles and responsibilities
- Record keeping
- Referral processes

Safeguarding considerations take priority where participant safety may be at risk.

---

## **Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality**

Supporting Young Minds recognises the importance of creating environments where participants feel safe to engage.

The Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy provides guidance regarding:

- Confidentiality
- Information sharing

- Data protection
- Privacy expectations
- Record management
- Disclosure management

The policy also outlines circumstances where confidentiality may need to be breached in order to protect an individual from harm.

---

## Health & Safety

Supporting Young Minds seeks to provide physically and psychologically safe learning environments.

The Health & Safety Policy provides guidance relating to:

- Risk assessment
- Venue safety
- Emergency procedures
- Incident reporting
- First aid arrangements
- Participant welfare
- Staff responsibilities

Health and safety responsibilities apply to all programme activities and delivery settings.

---

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Fynix Project is committed to creating environments where all participants are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy outlines commitments relating to:

- Accessibility
- Inclusion
- Protected characteristics
- Anti-discriminatory practice
- Equity
- Participation
- Cultural awareness

- Neurodiversity inclusion

The policy applies across all programme delivery, partnerships and organisational activity.

As outlined within the policy:

*"Equality, diversity and inclusion are not optional add-ons to our work — they are central to how we operate safely, ethically and effectively."*

---

## Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct Policy establishes the professional standards expected of facilitators, staff, volunteers and collaborators.

This includes expectations relating to:

- Professional behaviour
- Respectful communication
- Boundaries
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Participant welfare
- Representation of Fynix Project

The Code of Conduct helps promote consistency, professionalism and safe practice across all programme activities.

---

## Complaints & Feedback

Fynix Project recognises the importance of accountability and organisational learning.

The Complaints & Feedback Policy provides processes for:

- Raising concerns
- Making complaints
- Providing feedback
- Investigating issues
- Responding appropriately

- Learning from participant experiences

The policy supports transparency and continuous improvement across programme delivery.

---

## **Relationship to Supporting Young Minds**

The policies contained within the Fynix Project governance framework are not separate from programme delivery.

They actively inform how Supporting Young Minds is designed, delivered, reviewed and developed.

This includes:

- Safeguarding practice
- Facilitation standards
- Inclusion and accessibility
- Participant welfare
- Professional boundaries
- Evaluation and feedback
- Quality assurance processes

Together, these policies provide the foundation upon which safe and effective programme delivery is built.

---

## **Accountability and Review**

All governance documents are subject to regular review.

Policies may be updated in response to:

- Legislative changes
- Safeguarding developments
- Organisational learning
- Feedback
- Good practice guidance
- Service development

This helps ensure that programme delivery remains aligned with current standards and emerging best practice.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, governance is not simply about policies.

It is about responsibility.

Responsibility to participants.

Responsibility to partner organisations.

Responsibility to facilitators.

And responsibility to create environments where people feel safe, respected and supported.

Policies alone do not create safe practice.

People do.

But clear policies help provide the structure, accountability and consistency that allow safe practice to flourish.

Because meaningful wellbeing work must be built upon strong foundations.

And those foundations begin with safety, integrity and care.

---

## **APPENDIX G**

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### **EVALUATION OVERVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground adopts a proportionate, participant-centred and evidence-informed approach to evaluation.

As a prevention-focused wellbeing programme, Supporting Young Minds does not seek to diagnose, clinically assess or provide therapeutic intervention.

Instead, evaluation activities are designed to help Fynix Project, partner organisations and commissioners understand:

- Participant experiences
- Engagement levels
- Perceived learning
- Intended outcomes
- Areas for development
- Programme quality

Evaluation is viewed as a learning process rather than a judgement process.

The purpose of evaluation is to support reflection, accountability, quality assurance and continuous improvement.

---

## Evaluation Principles

Evaluation activities are guided by six core principles:

### **Proportionate**

Evaluation methods should be appropriate to programme aims and delivery contexts.

### **Participant-Centred**

Young people's experiences and perspectives should remain central to evaluation.

### **Accessible**

Evaluation activities should be understandable, inclusive and age-appropriate.

### **Ethical**

Evaluation should respect privacy, dignity and participant wellbeing.

### **Evidence-Informed**

Evaluation should reflect current understanding of good practice.

### **Learning-Focused**

Evaluation should contribute to programme development and organisational learning.

---

## **What We Evaluate**

Supporting Young Minds seeks to understand participant experiences across several intended outcome areas.

These include:

### **Emotional Awareness**

Understanding emotions and emotional literacy.

### **Confidence**

Confidence in participation, communication and self-expression.

### **Wellbeing Awareness**

Understanding wellbeing, emotional health and support options.

### **Communication**

Confidence communicating thoughts, feelings and ideas.

### **Resilience Awareness**

Understanding coping strategies, strengths and personal resources.

### **Participation**

Engagement within activities, discussions and learning opportunities.

The programme recognises that these areas are influenced by multiple factors and therefore adopts a contribution-focused rather than causation-focused approach.

---

# Evaluation Methods

Supporting Young Minds may utilise a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation approaches.

## Pre-Programme Evaluation

Where appropriate, participants may complete a brief pre-programme questionnaire.

This may explore:

- Existing wellbeing awareness
- Emotional literacy
- Confidence levels
- Understanding of support options

The purpose is to establish a starting point rather than assess participants.

---

## Post-Programme Evaluation

Participants may complete a post-programme evaluation following delivery.

Areas explored may include:

- Learning experiences
- Confidence
- Emotional awareness
- Wellbeing understanding
- Participant satisfaction
- Programme relevance

Post-programme evaluation helps explore perceived learning and participant experiences.

---

## Reflection Activities

Reflection activities are embedded throughout programme delivery.

These activities may explore:

- What participants have learned

- What they found helpful
- Personal insights
- Future application of learning

Reflection activities support both learning and evaluation.

---

## **Facilitator Observations**

Facilitators may record observations relating to:

- Engagement
- Participation
- Group interaction
- Responsiveness to activities

Observations are descriptive and non-clinical.

They are not intended to assess, diagnose or evaluate individual participants.

---

## **Partner Organisation Feedback**

Schools, youth services and partner organisations may provide feedback relating to:

- Delivery quality
- Participant engagement
- Relevance
- Accessibility
- Programme implementation

These perspectives contribute to wider programme review.

---

# **Outcome Indicators**

Supporting Young Minds may explore indicators such as:

<b>Intended Outcome Area</b>	<b>Example Indicators</b>
Emotional Awareness	Improved emotional vocabulary, increased awareness of emotions
Confidence	Greater willingness to participate, increased confidence expressing views
Wellbeing Awareness	Improved understanding of wellbeing and support pathways
Communication	Increased communication confidence and participation
Resilience Awareness	Greater understanding of coping strategies and personal strengths
Participation	Increased engagement and involvement in activities

These indicators are intended to support understanding of programme contribution rather than provide proof of causation.

---

## Using Evaluation Information

Evaluation findings may be used to support:

- Programme review
- Quality assurance
- Continuous improvement
- Facilitator development
- Resource refinement
- Commissioner reporting

- Organisational learning

Evaluation information is reviewed alongside participant feedback, observations and programme experience.

---

## Evaluation Limitations

Supporting Young Minds recognises that programme evaluation has limitations.

Young people's experiences are influenced by:

- Family circumstances
- Educational environments
- Peer relationships
- Community factors
- Health and wellbeing needs
- Wider social influences

For this reason, evaluation findings should always be interpreted within context.

The programme does not claim that evaluation findings demonstrate direct causation.

Instead, evaluation seeks to explore whether programme participation may have contributed to intended areas of learning and development.

---

## Data Protection and Confidentiality

Evaluation information is collected, stored and managed in accordance with Fynix Project policies and relevant data protection requirements.

This includes:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

Participant information is handled responsibly and confidentially.

---

# Reporting and Learning

Evaluation is most valuable when it contributes to learning.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to use evaluation findings to:

- Understand participant experiences
- Strengthen programme delivery
- Improve accessibility
- Support quality assurance
- Inform future development

Evaluation therefore forms part of a wider cycle of reflection, learning and continuous improvement.

---

## Evaluation Tools Used

Supporting Young Minds may utilise:

- ✓ Pre-Programme Questionnaires
- ✓ Post-Programme Questionnaires
- ✓ Session Feedback Forms
- ✓ Reflection Activities
- ✓ Facilitator Observation Forms
- ✓ Partner Organisation Feedback Forms
- ✓ Outcome Review Measures
- ✓ Quality Assurance Processes

Templates for these tools are provided separately within the Supporting Young Minds Evaluation Toolkit.

---

## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, evaluation is not simply about collecting data.

It is about understanding experiences.

It is about listening to young people.

It is about learning what has been helpful and identifying opportunities to improve.

We believe evaluation should support learning rather than judgement.

Because meaningful improvement begins with curiosity, honesty and a willingness to keep learning.

And that commitment to learning sits at the heart of Supporting Young Minds.

---

## **APPENDIX H**

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# **SAFEGUARDING ESCALATION SUMMARY**

## **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground operates within Fynix Project's wider safeguarding framework.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All facilitators, staff, volunteers and collaborators are expected to remain vigilant to concerns relating to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people participating in programme activities.

This appendix provides a summary of the safeguarding escalation process used within Supporting Young Minds.

It should be read alongside the Fynix Project Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy.

---

# Safeguarding Principles

Where safeguarding concerns arise, facilitators should:

## **Remain Calm**

Listen carefully and avoid displaying shock, disbelief or judgement.

## **Take Concerns Seriously**

All concerns should be treated respectfully and appropriately.

## **Do Not Investigate**

Facilitators should not question extensively, investigate concerns or seek proof.

## **Record Accurately**

Information should be recorded factually and promptly.

## **Report Promptly**

Concerns should be reported through safeguarding procedures without unnecessary delay.

## **Prioritise Safety**

The safety and welfare of the child or young person should remain the primary consideration at all times.

---

# Types of Concerns

Safeguarding concerns may include, but are not limited to:

## **Physical Abuse**

Concerns relating to physical harm or injury.

## **Emotional Abuse**

Concerns relating to persistent emotional harm, intimidation, humiliation or coercion.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Concerns relating to sexual activity, exploitation or inappropriate behaviour.

### **Neglect**

Concerns relating to unmet physical, emotional, educational or developmental needs.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Including county lines activity, coercion or criminal exploitation.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Including grooming, exploitation or abuse.

### **Online Harm**

Including online grooming, exploitation, bullying or inappropriate online activity.

### **Self-Harm or Suicide Concerns**

Concerns relating to self-injury, suicidal thoughts or significant emotional distress.

### **Other Welfare Concerns**

Any situation where a young person's safety, welfare or wellbeing may be at risk.

---

## **Safeguarding Escalation Pathway**

### **STEP 1**

#### **Concern Identified**

A facilitator, staff member or volunteer becomes aware of:

- A disclosure
- A welfare concern

- A behavioural indicator
- An observation
- Information shared by another person



## **STEP 2**

### **Immediate Safety Consideration**

Consider:

- Is anyone in immediate danger?
- Is urgent medical assistance required?
- Is emergency intervention required?

If there is an immediate risk to life or safety:

### **Contact Emergency Services (999)**

and follow organisational safeguarding procedures.



## **STEP 3**

### **Listen and Reassure**

Where a young person makes a disclosure:

- Listen carefully.
- Remain calm.
- Avoid leading questions.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Reassure the young person that they have done the right thing by speaking up.

Facilitators should only gather enough information to understand the nature of the concern.



## **STEP 4**

## **Record Information**

Record:

- Date and time
- Factual information
- Exact words used where possible
- Observations
- Actions taken

Records should be objective and factual.

Personal opinions should be avoided.



## **STEP 5**

### **Report to Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

All safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as reasonably practicable.

The DSL will:

- Review information
- Assess risk
- Determine next steps
- Make referrals where required
- Maintain safeguarding records



## **STEP 6**

### **DSL Decision Making**

The DSL may decide to:

- Monitor the concern
- Seek further information
- Consult safeguarding services
- Make an Early Help referral
- Make a Children's Social Care referral
- Contact Police where appropriate

- Implement additional safeguarding measures



## **STEP 7**

### **Ongoing Support and Monitoring**

Where appropriate:

- Support plans may be considered.
- Partner organisations may be informed.
- Relevant safeguarding agencies may be involved.
- Concerns may continue to be monitored.

Safeguarding remains an ongoing process rather than a single event.

---

## **Emergency Situations**

Emergency safeguarding concerns may include:

- Immediate risk of significant harm
- Active suicidal intent
- Serious self-harm requiring medical intervention
- Immediate threat to life
- Serious criminal activity
- Immediate risk of exploitation

In emergency situations:

### **Contact Emergency Services (999)**

followed by:

### **Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

as soon as possible.

---

# Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding concerns cannot always remain confidential.

Information may need to be shared where:

- A child is at risk of harm.
- Another person is at risk of harm.
- A criminal offence may have occurred.
- Safeguarding legislation requires action.

Information sharing should always be proportionate, necessary and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

---

## Facilitator Responsibilities

All facilitators are expected to:

- ✓ Understand safeguarding procedures.
- ✓ Recognise safeguarding concerns.
- ✓ Follow reporting procedures.
- ✓ Record concerns accurately.
- ✓ Maintain professional boundaries.
- ✓ Attend safeguarding training where required.
- ✓ Prioritise participant safety and welfare.

Facilitators are not expected to investigate concerns or make safeguarding determinations.

Their responsibility is to recognise, record and report concerns appropriately.

---

## Key Contacts

The following safeguarding contacts apply to Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

## **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

### **Darryl Craig**

Founder & Lead Facilitator  
Fynix Project

Email: [safeguarding@fynix.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@fynix.org.uk)

Website: [www.fynix.org.uk](http://www.fynix.org.uk)

Darryl Craig holds overall responsibility for safeguarding within Fynix Project and is responsible for receiving, reviewing and managing safeguarding concerns arising from programme delivery.

Responsibilities include:

- Receiving safeguarding reports
- Reviewing safeguarding concerns
- Determining appropriate safeguarding action
- Making referrals where required
- Liaising with partner organisations and safeguarding agencies
- Maintaining safeguarding records
- Supporting facilitators with safeguarding decision-making

---

## **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)**

Where applicable, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead may be appointed to support safeguarding responsibilities and provide safeguarding cover when required.

Details will be provided to partner organisations prior to programme delivery where relevant.

---

## **Emergency Services**

### **999**

For situations involving immediate risk to life or significant harm.

---

## **Non-Emergency Police**

**101**

---

## **NSPCC Helpline**

**0808 800 5000**

---

## **Children's Social Care**

Contact details should be obtained for the relevant local authority area in which programme delivery is taking place.

Safeguarding referrals should be made in accordance with local safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance.

---

# **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, safeguarding is not simply a policy requirement.

It is a commitment.

A commitment to creating environments where young people feel safe, respected and supported.

A commitment to acting when concerns arise.

And a commitment to placing wellbeing and protection at the centre of everything we do.

Because every young person deserves to be heard, valued and protected.

And safeguarding is how we help make that possible.

---

# APPENDIX I

---

## HEALTH & SAFETY OVERVIEW

### Introduction

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground is committed to providing safe, supportive and well-managed learning environments for all participants, facilitators, staff, volunteers and partner organisations.

Health and safety considerations form an integral part of programme planning, delivery and review.

Fynix Project recognises that safe programme delivery involves both physical safety and psychological safety. Appropriate measures are therefore implemented to identify, assess and manage potential risks whilst creating environments that support participation, wellbeing and inclusion.

This appendix provides an overview of the health and safety arrangements that support Supporting Young Minds delivery.

It should be read alongside the Fynix Project Health & Safety Policy and relevant risk assessment documentation.

---

## Health & Safety Principles

Supporting Young Minds is delivered in accordance with the following principles:

### **Safety First**

The safety and wellbeing of participants, facilitators and visitors remains a priority throughout programme delivery.

### **Risk Awareness**

Potential risks should be identified, assessed and managed appropriately.

### **Prevention**

Reasonable steps should be taken to minimise foreseeable risks.

## **Shared Responsibility**

Health and safety is everyone's responsibility.

## **Inclusion**

Health and safety arrangements should support accessibility and participation wherever reasonably practicable.

## **Continuous Improvement**

Health and safety procedures should be reviewed regularly and updated where required.

---

# **Health & Safety Responsibilities**

## **Fynix Project**

Fynix Project is responsible for:

- Maintaining health and safety policies.
- Completing risk assessments where appropriate.
- Providing safe delivery frameworks.
- Supporting facilitator competence.
- Reviewing incidents and learning from experience.
- Monitoring health and safety arrangements.

## **Facilitators**

Facilitators are responsible for:

- Following health and safety procedures.
- Identifying hazards.
- Reporting concerns.
- Maintaining safe learning environments.
- Following emergency procedures.
- Supporting participant welfare.

## **Partner Organisations**

Partner organisations are responsible for:

- Providing safe venues.
  - Communicating relevant site procedures.
  - Sharing emergency arrangements.
  - Supporting safe programme implementation.
- 

## Risk Assessment Process

Supporting Young Minds utilises a risk assessment process to identify and manage foreseeable risks associated with programme delivery.

Risk assessments may consider:

- Venue safety
- Environmental hazards
- Participant needs
- Accessibility requirements
- Equipment use
- Fire safety
- Emergency arrangements
- Safeguarding considerations

Risk assessments are reviewed and updated where appropriate.

The aim of risk assessment is not to eliminate all risk, but to ensure that risks are understood and managed proportionately.

---

## Venue Safety

Prior to programme delivery, facilitators seek to ensure that venues are suitable for safe and effective learning.

Considerations may include:

- Room capacity
- Accessibility
- Fire exits
- Emergency procedures
- Seating arrangements

- Lighting and ventilation
- Toilet facilities
- First aid arrangements

Venues should support both physical safety and participant comfort.

---

## Participant Welfare

Participant welfare remains central to programme delivery.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create environments where participants feel:

- Safe
- Respected
- Included
- Supported
- Able to participate at their own pace

Facilitators are encouraged to remain attentive to participant wellbeing throughout programme activities.

Where concerns arise, appropriate safeguarding, welfare or support procedures should be followed.

---

## Psychological Safety

Health and safety within Supporting Young Minds extends beyond physical safety.

Psychological safety refers to creating environments where participants feel able to engage without fear of humiliation, judgement or exclusion.

Supporting psychological safety includes:

- Respectful communication
- Clear group agreements
- Inclusive participation opportunities
- Trauma-informed facilitation
- Appropriate boundaries
- Emotional containment strategies

Psychological safety is considered an important component of effective wellbeing education.

---

## Incident Reporting

Any accidents, incidents, near misses or health and safety concerns should be reported promptly.

Incident reporting helps:

- Protect participants and staff.
- Identify patterns and risks.
- Inform future improvements.
- Strengthen organisational learning.

Incidents should be recorded in accordance with organisational procedures.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, safeguarding procedures should also be followed.

---

## Emergency Procedures

Facilitators should be familiar with emergency arrangements prior to delivery.

This may include:

- Fire evacuation procedures
- Emergency exits
- Assembly points
- First aid arrangements
- Emergency contact information
- Site-specific procedures

In situations involving immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted without delay.

Emergency procedures should always take precedence over programme activities.

---

# First Aid Arrangements

Supporting Young Minds seeks to ensure that appropriate first aid arrangements are available during programme delivery.

Where delivery takes place within partner settings, facilitators should familiarise themselves with local first aid procedures and emergency contacts.

Any injuries, accidents or medical concerns should be recorded and managed in accordance with organisational procedures.

---

# Health & Safety Documentation

Supporting Young Minds may utilise the following documentation to support safe delivery:

- ✓ Health & Safety Policy
- ✓ Risk Assessments
- ✓ Venue Checklists
- ✓ Incident Report Forms
- ✓ Emergency Contact Information
- ✓ Safeguarding Documentation
- ✓ Evaluation and Review Processes

These documents support consistent and accountable practice.

---

# Monitoring and Review

Health and safety arrangements are subject to ongoing review.

Review may take place following:

- Incidents
- Near misses

- Participant feedback
- Organisational learning
- Legislative changes
- Programme development

This helps ensure that health and safety arrangements remain effective and proportionate.

---

## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, health and safety is about more than compliance.

It is about creating environments where young people can participate, learn and develop with confidence.

It is about recognising that both physical safety and psychological safety matter.

And it is about ensuring that the systems supporting programme delivery are robust, thoughtful and responsive.

Because meaningful learning happens best when people feel safe enough to engage, explore and grow.

That commitment to safety sits at the heart of Supporting Young Minds.

---

## **APPENDIX J**

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# **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT**

## **Introduction**

Fynix Project is committed to creating environments where all young people are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground has been designed to promote inclusion, reduce barriers to participation and create opportunities for meaningful engagement regardless of background, identity, experience or circumstance.

We recognise that young people come from diverse communities and bring with them a wide range of experiences, strengths, needs, perspectives and identities.

Our commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility is not separate from programme delivery.

It is embedded throughout the programme's design, facilitation, safeguarding, governance and evaluation processes.

---

## Our Commitment

Fynix Project is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity.
- Respecting diversity and difference.
- Creating inclusive learning environments.
- Reducing barriers to participation.
- Challenging discrimination where appropriate.
- Supporting equitable access to learning.
- Promoting dignity, respect and belonging.
- Encouraging participation and voice.
- Creating psychologically safe environments.

We believe that every young person should have the opportunity to participate, contribute and engage in ways that feel safe and meaningful to them.

---

## Equality

Supporting Young Minds seeks to provide opportunities for all participants regardless of:

- Age
- Disability

- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

These protected characteristics are recognised within the Equality Act 2010.

Fynix Project does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or exclusion on the basis of any protected characteristic.

---

## Diversity

We recognise that diversity extends beyond legal definitions and includes the wide range of experiences, identities, perspectives and circumstances that shape people's lives.

This may include:

- Culture
- Language
- Ethnicity
- Faith
- Family background
- Socio-economic experiences
- Care experience
- Neurodiversity
- Educational experiences
- Life experiences

Supporting Young Minds seeks to create spaces where diversity is recognised, respected and valued.

---

## Inclusion

Inclusion means more than simply being present.

It means feeling welcomed, respected and able to participate.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to promote inclusion by:

- Encouraging participation without pressure.
- Respecting individual differences.
- Using accessible language.
- Creating psychologically safe environments.
- Supporting different communication styles.
- Promoting choice and autonomy.
- Recognising diverse experiences and perspectives.

Meaningful inclusion recognises that young people may engage in different ways and at different levels.

Participation should never require conformity.

---

## Accessibility

Accessibility is considered throughout programme planning and delivery.

Fynix Project seeks to identify and reduce barriers wherever reasonably practicable.

Accessibility considerations may include:

- Physical accessibility.
- Communication accessibility.
- Learning accessibility.
- Sensory considerations.
- Resource adaptations.
- Delivery adjustments.
- Flexible participation options.

Accessibility is viewed as a proactive responsibility rather than a reactive adjustment.

Where possible, barriers should be considered during planning rather than addressed only after difficulties emerge.

---

## Neurodiversity Inclusion

Supporting Young Minds recognises and values neurodiversity.

We understand that young people may think, learn, communicate and process information in different ways.

Facilitators are encouraged to:

- Use clear and accessible language.
- Provide structure and predictability.
- Offer different ways to participate.
- Allow processing time.
- Reduce unnecessary barriers to engagement.
- Respect individual communication preferences.

The programme seeks to create environments where neurodiverse young people feel able to participate without pressure to mask, conform or explain their differences.

---

## Cultural Awareness

Supporting Young Minds recognises that experiences of wellbeing, identity, family, community and support may be shaped by cultural factors.

Facilitators are encouraged to:

- Approach difference with curiosity and respect.
- Avoid assumptions.
- Use culturally sensitive language.
- Recognise diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Reflect on personal biases and assumptions.
- Promote inclusive discussion and participation.

We recognise that there is no single experience of being a young person.

Understanding and respect are essential components of inclusive practice.

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## Participant Voice

Inclusion is strengthened when young people are given opportunities to contribute to discussions about their experiences and needs.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to promote:

- Participation
- Feedback
- Reflection
- Shared learning
- Youth voice

Young people's perspectives help inform programme review, development and continuous improvement.

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## **Psychological Safety and Belonging**

Supporting Young Minds recognises that belonging plays an important role in wellbeing, participation and learning.

The programme seeks to create environments where young people feel:

- Safe
- Respected
- Included
- Heard
- Valued

We recognise that belonging cannot be imposed.

It is created through relationships, trust, respect and inclusive practice.

Facilitators therefore seek to create spaces where all participants have opportunities to engage without fear of judgement, exclusion or discrimination.

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## **Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**

Fynix Project is committed to continually reviewing and strengthening equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility across programme delivery.

This may include:

- Participant feedback
- Facilitator reflection
- Partner organisation feedback
- Accessibility reviews
- Resource development
- Policy review

Learning and improvement form an important part of maintaining inclusive practice.

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## Relationship to Organisational Policies

This statement should be read alongside:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Complaints & Feedback Policy

Together, these policies support the safe, inclusive and ethical delivery of Supporting Young Minds.

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## The Fynix Perspective

At Fynix Project, inclusion is not about treating everyone the same.

It is about recognising that people are different and ensuring those differences are respected.

We believe every young person deserves opportunities to participate, learn and grow within environments where they feel safe, valued and accepted.

Our aim is not to create spaces where everyone fits in.

Our aim is to create spaces where young people feel they belong.

Because belonging begins when people feel seen, heard and respected for who they are.

And that belief sits at the heart of Supporting Young Minds.

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## **APPENDIX K**

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# **QUALITY ASSURANCE & GOVERNANCE SUMMARY**

## **Introduction**

Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground operates within a structured quality assurance and governance framework designed to support safe, consistent, ethical and accountable programme delivery.

Quality assurance is not viewed as a standalone activity.

Instead, it is embedded throughout programme planning, facilitation, safeguarding, evaluation, supervision and organisational review.

The purpose of quality assurance is to help ensure that programme delivery remains:

- Safe
- Inclusive
- Consistent
- Trauma-informed
- Participant-centred
- Evidence-informed
- Responsive to learning and feedback

This appendix provides an overview of the governance and quality assurance arrangements that support Supporting Young Minds delivery.

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# Governance Framework

Supporting Young Minds operates within the wider governance structure of Fynix Project.

Programme delivery is supported by:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding, Privacy & Confidentiality Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints & Feedback Policy
- Facilitator Competency Framework
- Risk Assessment Processes
- Evaluation Framework

Together, these systems provide the foundation for safe and accountable programme delivery.

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## Safeguarding Oversight

Safeguarding forms a central component of programme governance.

Supporting Young Minds operates in accordance with Fynix Project safeguarding procedures and escalation pathways.

Safeguarding oversight includes:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) arrangements
- Safeguarding reporting procedures
- Disclosure management processes
- Record keeping procedures
- Referral pathways
- Safeguarding review processes

Safeguarding responsibilities apply throughout all stages of programme delivery.

### Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Darryl Craig**

Founder & Lead Facilitator  
Fynix Project

Darryl Craig holds overall responsibility for safeguarding oversight across Supporting Young Minds and wider Fynix Project activities.

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## Health & Safety Oversight

Health and safety arrangements support both physical and psychological safety.

Health and safety processes include:

- Risk assessments
- Venue safety checks
- Emergency procedures
- Incident reporting
- Participant welfare considerations
- Accessibility planning

These arrangements help support safe learning environments across all delivery settings.

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## Facilitator Standards

Programme quality is supported through clear facilitator expectations.

All facilitators are expected to:

- Operate within safeguarding procedures.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Follow programme guidance.
- Deliver within the Facilitator Competency Framework.
- Participate in reflective practice.
- Contribute to quality assurance processes.

Supporting Young Minds is delivered using a maximum facilitator-to-participant ratio of:

# 1 Facilitator : 8 Young People

This ratio supports engagement, safeguarding oversight, inclusion and psychological safety.

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## Quality Assurance Processes

Supporting Young Minds incorporates several quality assurance mechanisms.

These include:

### **Observation**

Observation may be used to support facilitator development, programme consistency and reflective practice.

### **Supervision**

Facilitators are encouraged to engage in reflective supervision and professional support processes.

### **Feedback**

Participant, facilitator and partner feedback contribute to programme review and learning.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation activities help explore participant experiences, learning and intended outcomes.

### **Continuous Improvement**

Learning from delivery experiences informs future programme development and refinement.

Together, these processes support a culture of reflection, learning and accountability.

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# Evaluation and Monitoring

Programme evaluation contributes to understanding:

- Participant experiences
- Engagement levels
- Learning outcomes
- Delivery quality
- Areas for development

Evaluation activities may include:

- Pre-programme questionnaires
- Post-programme questionnaires
- Reflection activities
- Facilitator observations
- Partner organisation feedback

Evaluation findings are reviewed alongside wider quality assurance information to support learning and development.

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## Complaints and Feedback

Fynix Project recognises the importance of transparency and accountability.

Supporting Young Minds operates within a formal Complaints & Feedback Policy.

This provides mechanisms for:

- Raising concerns
- Providing feedback
- Investigating complaints
- Responding appropriately
- Supporting organisational learning

Complaints and feedback are viewed as important opportunities for review and improvement.

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# Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility

Quality assurance includes consideration of inclusion and accessibility.

Supporting Young Minds seeks to:

- Promote equitable participation
- Reduce barriers to engagement
- Support neurodiverse participants
- Respect diversity and difference
- Create psychologically safe learning environments

Inclusion is viewed as an essential component of programme quality.

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## Continuous Improvement

Supporting Young Minds adopts a continuous improvement approach.

Programme review may be informed by:

- Participant feedback
- Facilitator reflection
- Partner organisation feedback
- Evaluation findings
- Safeguarding reviews
- Emerging evidence
- Organisational learning

Continuous improvement helps ensure that programme delivery remains responsive, relevant and aligned with good practice.

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## Accountability Framework

Supporting Young Minds seeks to maintain accountability through:

- Clear policies and procedures
- Defined roles and responsibilities

- Safeguarding oversight
- Risk management processes
- Evaluation and reporting
- Complaints procedures
- Quality assurance systems

These arrangements help ensure that programme delivery remains transparent and accountable.

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## Governance at a Glance

Area	Framework
Safeguarding	DSL oversight, reporting procedures and referral pathways
Health & Safety	Risk assessments, venue safety and emergency procedures
Facilitator Standards	Competency Framework and professional expectations
Quality Assurance	Observation, supervision and review
Evaluation	Questionnaires, reflections and feedback
Accountability	Complaints, governance and reporting systems
Inclusion	EDI framework and accessibility arrangements

Continuous  
Improvement

Learning, review and programme development

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## **The Fynix Perspective**

At Fynix Project, quality assurance is not simply about compliance.

It is about responsibility.

Responsibility to young people.

Responsibility to partner organisations.

Responsibility to facilitators.

And responsibility to continually review whether what we are doing remains safe, effective and meaningful.

We believe strong programmes are built on strong foundations.

Those foundations include safeguarding, professionalism, inclusion, accountability and a willingness to keep learning.

Because quality is not something that is achieved once and forgotten.

It is something that must be protected, strengthened and continually improved.

And that commitment sits at the heart of Supporting Young Minds: Finding Your Ground.

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## **APPENDIX L**

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