

Kailo

Making the most of motivations: Why young people attend YPAGs

Created by the Kailo Evaluation YPAG
members



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What is this guide?

This guide is a collection of advice from the two YPAGs about what motivated them to attend the sessions. It is designed to help other researchers in the future to advertise YPAGs in the right way and offer advice about how they can make sessions meaningful and motivating for young people from all different backgrounds. This guide is co-designed and co-produced by YPAG members.

Why does this matter?

- Young people have the right to have a voice in all decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about their mental health, and decisions in research.
- Including young people in research is increasingly recognised as essential, but we need more guidance about how to do this well, especially from young people.
- If we understand why young people attend YPAGs and similar groups, researchers can:
 - Make sure they are recruiting in appealing ways
 - Make sure the groups are interesting and engaging to young people
 - Think about how to welcome and include a diverse range of young people in their groups



What is Kailo?

Kailo is a new approach to supported young people's mental health. It aims to help local communities, young people and public services better understand and address the social contexts which can impact young people's mental health. To support the development of Kailo, a team of researchers have been leading a developmental evaluation to explore how and why Kailo works, for whom and in what situations.

Who is in the advisory group?

Two YPAGs have been supporting the Kailo evaluation. Members are young people aged 16–25 years, living in either North Devon or Newham, London. All the members either have lived experience of receiving mental health support, or are interested in improving support in their local area. The groups met monthly between October 2023 and August 2024.

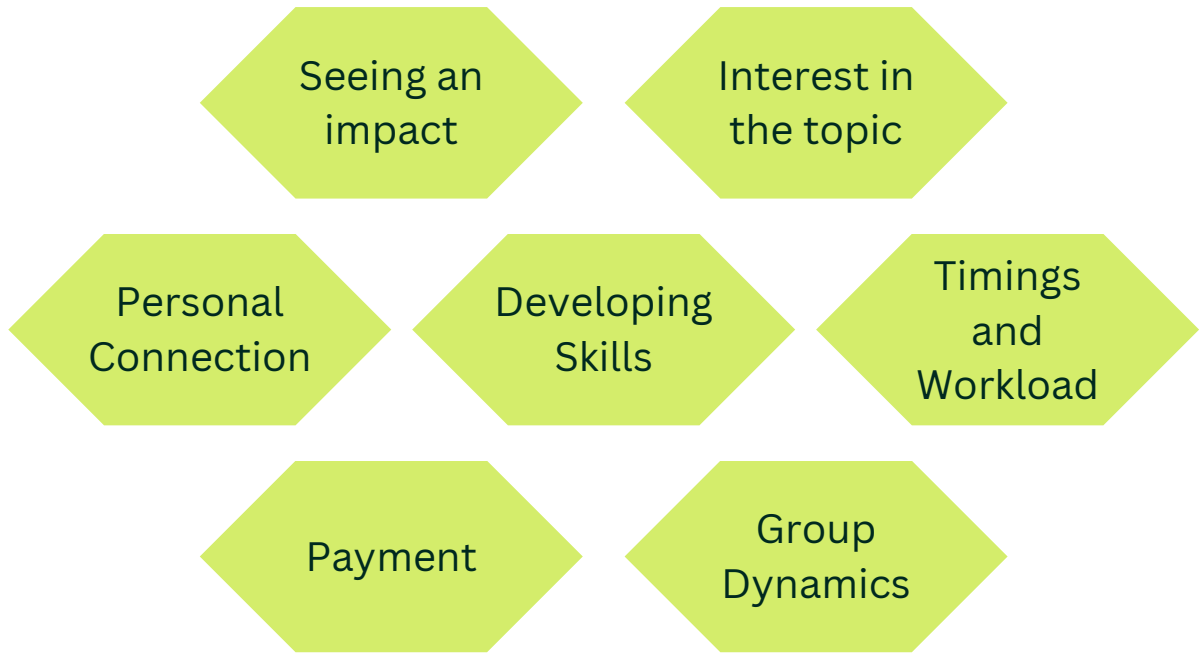
How did we collect this advice?

1. We came up with a list of questions about our motivations for joining this group.
2. We interviewed each other, in pairs, and either made notes or recorded our answers.
3. We looked through our notes/recordings to find common themes.
4. We reviewed the themes as a group, discussed which were most important, and talked about any gaps in our answers.

What motivates young people to get involved in YPAGs?

What motivates young people to join YPAGs?

Across our interviews, seven themes emerged.



The YPAGs anonymously ranked the themes in order of what is most likely to draw young people into a project. The three most popular motivations were: interest in the topic; making an impact or difference; and CV and skills development.



Interest in the topic

What motivates young people to join YPAGs?

One of the main motivators for joining the group was interest in mental health as a topic. Young people shared that they recognised the importance of the topic, either because they wanted more experience and knowledge for themselves, or because it was something they hadn't thought about before and wanted to understand more. Two young people mentioned they were motivated to spread awareness about mental health.

"I'm Interested in mental health and research – it's a good way of gaining experience related to that".

It wasn't really a topic that I had thought about a lot beforehand and I thought it would be a really interesting opportunity".

"I was really motivated to apply for [the YPAG] because I thought it was a really important topic and something that kind of balanced off very nicely and is relevant for what I want to do for a career".



Seeing an impact

What motivates young people to join YPAGs?

The most frequently mentioned motivation for joining the advisory group was feeling like they were able to make an impact or difference on a topic which was important to them and to their community. The group also reflected that feeling like they were listened to and that their ideas in the sessions were making an impact was a key motivator in them continuing to attend

"I saw it as an opportunity to not only voice my opinion but to also help our community improve in certain aspects of their lives"

"With the feedback, it's like we are making a difference to research".

"I'm motivated to participate in something with a positive impact."

"Mental health support's not the best round here, I just wanted to come up with other services that could help people get better support."

CV and Skills Development

What motivates young people to join YPAGs?

The YPAGs highlighted that being involved was not just beneficial for making a difference to others; it was also equipping them with skills and experience which would be useful to them. Several young people mentioned that the advisory group experience would enhance their CV, and others recognised this experience as particularly relevant for their career or further education plans. Some also mentioned specific knowledge and skills development that motivated them to attend, or they had seen develop.

"It makes you feel you can share your views and build confidence and think more about topics that you perhaps wouldn't have thought about before"

"It's relevant for what I want to do as a career"

"I'm interested in mental health and research, so it's a good way of gaining experience related to that."

"Having an experience to put on my CV and gain some further understanding of mental health and research too."

Timing & Workload

What motivates young people to join YPAGs?

Young people reflected that the group didn't feel like too much of a time commitment, both in terms of applying and in terms of attending the meetings. Having an accurate description of the meetings and setting clear expectations was highlighted as really important in helping young people decide if they wanted to commit to the group. Similarly, scheduling sessions in the evening meant that young people could attend around their school or work commitments.

"It's not time consuming and fitted around my job".

"My advice is be transparent and not be afraid to say "this is exactly what will be asked of you and this is what we will do in return". It enables people to make that decision and get consistent engagement."



Payment

What motivates young people to join YPAGs?

Young people varied in the extent to which money motivated their attendance to the group. Some felt that being paid doesn't make a difference as their motivation is to spread awareness or make a difference. Others shared that the reimbursement was the key reason for their participation.

However, the most common notion was that payment was not their main motivator for attending, but being paid makes a difference in terms of showing young people their value and ensuring that they could prioritise dedicating time to the cause. In essence, payment is a facilitator which enables motivated young people to attend, rather than a reason for joining a group in and of itself.

"I'm more focussed on helping other people than the money aspect of it"

"Being paid does make a difference. I've been on boards that aren't paid, and the atmosphere can be different. When there's not respect for people's time in the past it's been, felt more condescending."

"People who work full time don't understand that people in school don't have a lot of time either. Payment means I can dedicate to it."



Personal Connection

What motivates young people to join YPAGs?

Almost all the group had been recommended the project through a personal connection or a project they had worked with before. These were mostly through staff at youth and community groups, but also through managers at work and through a friend.

The local element of the Kailo Advisory Groups was a significant draw for group members. In both Newham and North Devon, young people noted that the focus on their local area initially drew them to the project. There was recognition that mental health is not a priority for their local communities and a desire to improve this.

"I was recommended to this group by [Community Group] where they told me there was a group that was looking for young people."

"This stood out because it was about North Devon specifically, and obviously that related to me."

"One of the main reasons was because of the focus on Newham. The accessibility of it but also my desire to try to in some way contribute to some change within the community".

Group Dynamics

What motivates young people to join YPAGs?

The opportunity to make new friends and spend time with like-minded people was a motivator for joining the advisory group. The relationships between young people were also a key contributor to creating a positive group atmosphere to which young people wanted to return. The group reflected that the group felt supportive and safe, and an accessible space where opinions are valued. Some also commented that being with similar, like-minded people also contributed to their positive experience of the group.

"I expected there to be people that wanted to change society slowly and wanted to do things positively. I think that it did live up to it as the people there were ambitious and ready to spark change."

"Being surrounded by like-minded people with the same interest."

"it's a great way to be part of something and share ideas or conversations with like-minded people."



Advice for those setting up YPAGs

Advice for running YPAGs

After reviewing the themes above, we collated any other advice that would be useful to know for anyone setting up an advisory group with young people.

Figure out your ideal demographic to create a group that gels but is also helpful to the project

Emphasise the importance of youth voice

Don't be afraid to have people from different walks of life in one group (e.g. professionals and children)

Work with the group to figure out how to make the space safe

Know your group – work with their interests and needs, and adapt to that

Give an option to join online when people can't attend in person

Making the space a bit informal can work best and allow more productivity

Having in-person groups in the same location will help people feel more comfortable

Set expectations at the beginning and make sure everyone is on the same page

Kailo

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