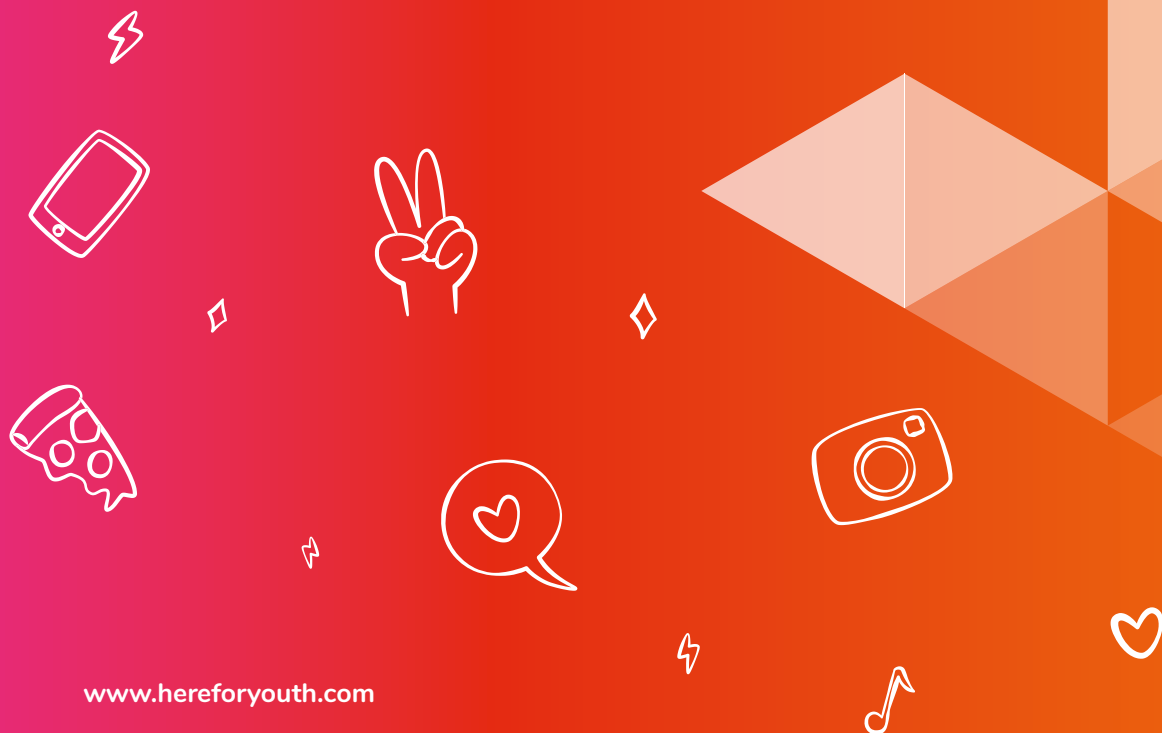




How to

# EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE TEENAGERS



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# Introduction

**It is a communal responsibility upon us to effectively engage the young people in our community. Moreover, the ever-changing world presents new situations that young people have to overcome in their journey towards adulthood.**

According to the 2011 Census, young people (under 25) make up 48% of the Muslim community in the UK. In recognising that they are a significant segment of our society, we have developed this module of our youth engagement framework to help you engage and nurture them into becoming the future leaders of our community.

Due to successive government policy, we have seen youth clubs and specific youth facilities closed. This has been detrimental to young people, especially Muslims, leaving a gaping hole in catering to their ever-growing needs.

Our youth engagement framework plugs this hole by establishing the Mosque or other local community organisations as a hub for weekly youth engagement activities. Through this, the young men and women will find a welcoming, safe, and supportive environment in their local area.

**Follow us on Social Media:**



## About Here For Youth



### Who Are We?

Here For Youth is a registered charity focused on establishing local youth hubs that will engage young people every single week. Young people will be confident in their identity when they have access to safe spaces, and to positive role models that help them develop strong positive character traits that set them up for life.

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- ✓ Confident in their **Identity**
  - ✓ Strong Positive **Character Traits**
  - ✓ Access to Positive **Role Models**

### Our Vision

Our vision is to see every Mosque transformed into the hub of the community. Led by young people who have a clear sense of their identity. Who strive to be the best in all areas of their life, act as role models for each other and the wider society.

### Our Mission Statement

Our mission is to research and deliver effective online and offline youth engagement strategies that can be implemented by Mosques and other community organisations.

This builds a generation of fit, active young people who are confident in their identity, have excellent characters and are equipped to understand and practice Islam in their everyday life.



## What is Effective Youth Engagement?

**As a leader in your community, what do you take from this statement? When you ponder and think about it, what comes to your mind? For us, we can't know if our neighbour is hungry if we don't have a good enough relationship with them. It is important to care about their wellbeing, without them having to ask.**

The reality for all of us, particularly young people, is that we lack face to face, human interaction. Studies show that young people are immersed in their devices for at least 9 hours a day or more.

These devices and platforms are addictive. The companies and developers behind them invest in research specifically to keep our attention and engagement as long as possible. Young people get lost and overloaded with thought, opinion and information. Not to mention the worst of human behaviour and depravity.

Through our youth engagement framework, young people will build their social interactions and access positive role models who sincerely have their best interests at heart.

The bottom line is that If we don't engage them, they will be getting their engagement elsewhere.



**“He is not a believer whose stomach is full while his neighbour goes hungry.”**



## What Young People Are Looking For

A space where young people can feel confident in choosing what takes place, the culture they want to create and how the space grows. This is what we aim to create in our local Youth Hubbs.

### GROWTH

A young person should be **appreciated and valued as active community members**. It should be a space for them to learn and grow in all areas of their lives - spiritually, intellectually and physically.

### AUTONOMY

The youth engagement sessions should be an environment **where young people are entitled to have and express their views and frustrations**. In this space they must have the ability to make their own choices.

### LEADERSHIP

The sessions should allow young people to **express their creativity**, lead projects and gain valuable leadership experiences.

### SUCCESS

Every young person needs positive affirmation in their journey. The youth engagement sessions **will build young people's aspirations and deliver positive experiences** for them to taste success.

**THE MOSQUE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A COMMUNITY HUB FOR ALL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY. MAKING SAFE SPACES FOR WEEKLY YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IS A REVIVAL OF PROPHETIC TRADITION.**

## Safeguarding Values

# For Your Young People

**1** Be young person-centric - their interest always comes first

**2** Treat everyone with dignity and respect

**3** Be professional, act with integrity, be honest, open and carry yourself with humility and humbleness

**4** Be committed to your role and be motivated to achieve the best outcomes for young people

**5** Be committed to your team and the young people you serve and give at least four-weeks notice if you can no longer commit



## Communicating With Love



### The 5 Love Languages™ by Dr Gary Chapman

The premise of The 5 Love Languages is simple: different people with different personalities give and receive love in different ways. By learning to recognise these preferences in yourself and in those around you, you can learn to identify the root of your conflicts, connect more profoundly, and truly begin to grow closer.

#### Acts of Service

For these people, actions speak louder than words.

#### Receiving Gifts

For some people, receiving a heartfelt gift is what makes them feel most loved.

#### Quality Time

This language is all about giving the other person your undivided attention.

#### Words of Affirmation

This language uses words to affirm other people.

#### Physical Touch

To this person, nothing speaks more deeply than appropriate physical touch.

Discover your love language at [5lovelanguages.com](https://5lovelanguages.com)

**“Love is a decision, it is a judgment, it is a promise. If love were only a feeling, there would be no basis for the promise to love each other forever. A feeling comes and it may go. How can I judge that it will stay forever, when my act does not involve judgment and decision.”**

— Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving



**“None amongst you believes (truly) until he loves for his brother” - or he said “for his neighbour” - “that which he loves for himself.”**

— Prophet Muhammad  
(Peace be upon him)



# Be Normal With Them

Start by wanting the best for those in your community. Have a long term vision for growth, however **being an authoritative figure is not the way forward**. Create a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere, **as if you are hosting friends over to your house**. When you're among friends, there is no authority; everyone is equal to having fun. **When young people feel comfortable, safe and respected, they will also do the same to others, including yourself.**

## Back Them To Grow

Now you have a foundation built on rapport and mutual respect with young people, **give them real authority and autonomy to treat the environment you've created as their own**. Don't be afraid to let them fail or make mistakes as they come into their own as leaders. **Have their back and don't let others stand in the way of their growth**. Where you see they can improve, advise them on how to do better.

## Three Important Character Traits Of A Host

1. Humbleness
2. Empathy
3. Humility

Young people may say or do things that are out of character, your role is to have empathy and try to understand why.



“The (true) servants  
of the Most  
Compassionate are  
those who walk on  
the earth humbly,  
and when the  
foolish address them  
(improperly), they  
only respond with  
peace.”

— Qur'an 25:63



# Have Thought-Provoking Discussions

## The Three Types Of Thought-Provoking Discussions

Once you've built a rapport with young people, ask their honest opinions on topics and share your own life experiences. **You can use your experiences by using it as an example** or a third person, if you don't wish to disclose anything personal. No matter how their life experiences may seem, they're just as valuable and insightful as yours. **Active listening is key, whilst providing a safe and non-judgmental space.** Random lectures are discouraged when listening to a young Muslim. Instead you should consider their thoughts and opinions with respect. **Having someone to talk and listen to, can be therapeutic and a great way to safeguard a young person.** A safeguarding issue is more likely to be disclosed if the young person feels they're in a safe space. This can save a young Muslim's wellbeing, safety and circumstances.

### 1. TO DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING AND CREATIVITY



Critical thinking enables young people to put their knowledge into action and to sharpen their necessary reasoning skills. The idea is for **young people to engage constructively with each other** to demonstrate their understanding.

During weekly youth engagement sessions, create discussions for the attendees to put their knowledge into practice and develop their views on the content.

**Every young person should have a voice.** There should be clear rules established so that there is no talking over one another and everyone has the space to explore the topic. Young people should work together to find the best way to express their ideas.

Young people need the valuable skills to assess the nature of an issue or problem and then diagnose the root cause. **Activities that allow young people to think through problem-solving can develop resilience and reflective thoughts**—a step by step approach to evaluating builds real-life skills in the youth.

### 2. WELL BEING



The best learners ask the most questions. Young people **must be allowed to ask questions** which they feel are important to them. We mustn't shut down young people who have questions.

**Questions challenge and inspire young people to think** before they respond critically. Questioning also allows young people to connect with broader concepts and the natural world outside their reality.

### 3. FOR LEARNING



When young people are faced with moral or ethical dilemmas, **this becomes a learning opportunity** by exploring concepts from different perspectives. This will give them a broader understanding of the topic and empower them with the **tools to engage in dialogue and debate.**

At times, it is encouraged to discuss controversial issues that the youth face so that this way of thinking develops.

Facilitate

## Their Development

There will be a natural progression with some of the young people in your hub who want to develop spiritually and intellectually. This development needs to be formal and planned.



Your role as the Imam or Youth Leader **should be to facilitate character and intellectual development for them** via external speakers or organisations.

**As much as you want to be the one teaching them, your role as being their friend and mentor is much more valuable than as their teacher.** When they're facing difficult life choices, you will be the one who is there as they grow to express themselves with power in your community.



If you would like to start engaging young people in your local area, get in touch:

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[www.hereforyouth.com](http://www.hereforyouth.com)