

Supporting young people's wellbeing during physical activity

Young people co-produced the following top tips to help you support them during a physical activity session.

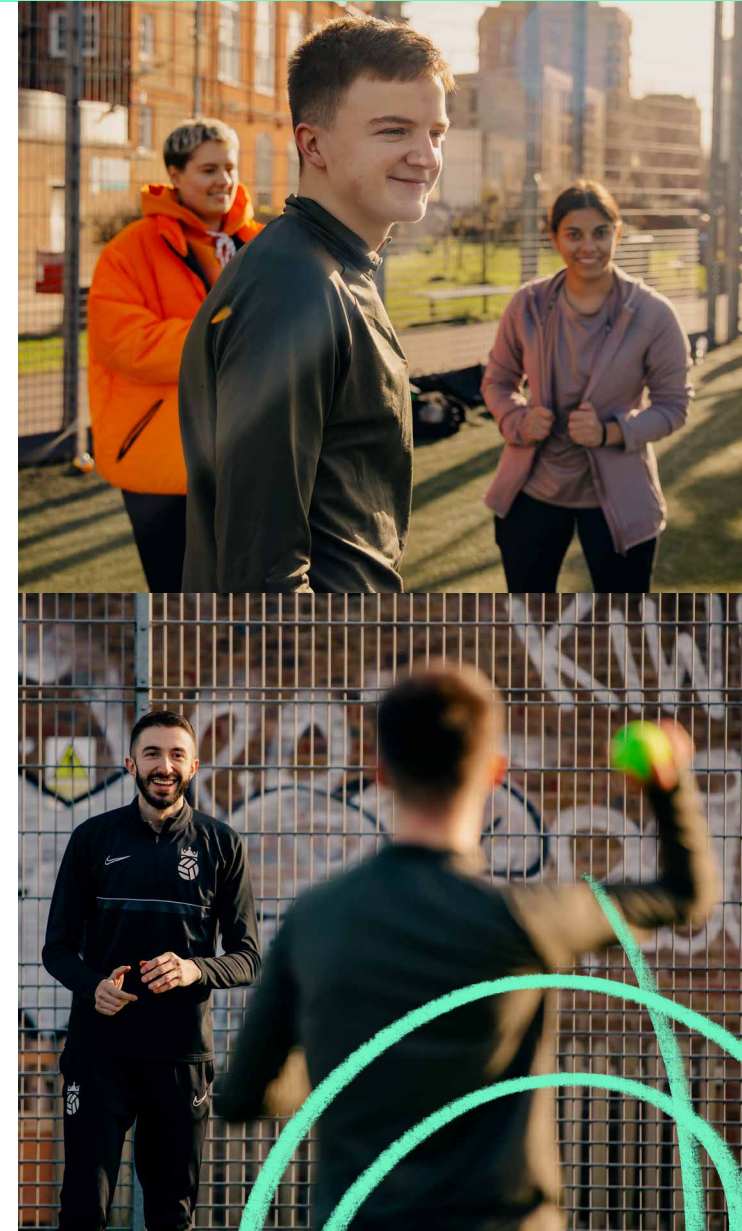
Young person focused: Find out what each young person wants to get out of a session. Allow them time to set achievable goals and review regularly so they can reflect on their progress and personal achievements.

Observe: Observe and listen, before during and after a session, to spot changes in a young person's behaviour. Focus on their thoughts and feelings.

Understand: Aim to better understand mental health problems that affect young people. Learn more about key issues young people face, such as discrimination, body image or the impact of social media.

Non-judgemental questions: When checking-in, avoid closed or intrusive questions. Instead use open, non-judgemental language. For example, "Is there anything you'd like support with, or is there anything I can do to help?"

Give encouragement: Don't force or suggest a particular course of action. Empower the young person to make their own decision by signposting them to a range of options they can choose from. For example, "Would you like some more support or can I point you in the direction of some options?"



Personalise: Everyone is different and has different experiences of mental health. Put young people first by tailoring and personalising your sessions to meet their individual needs.

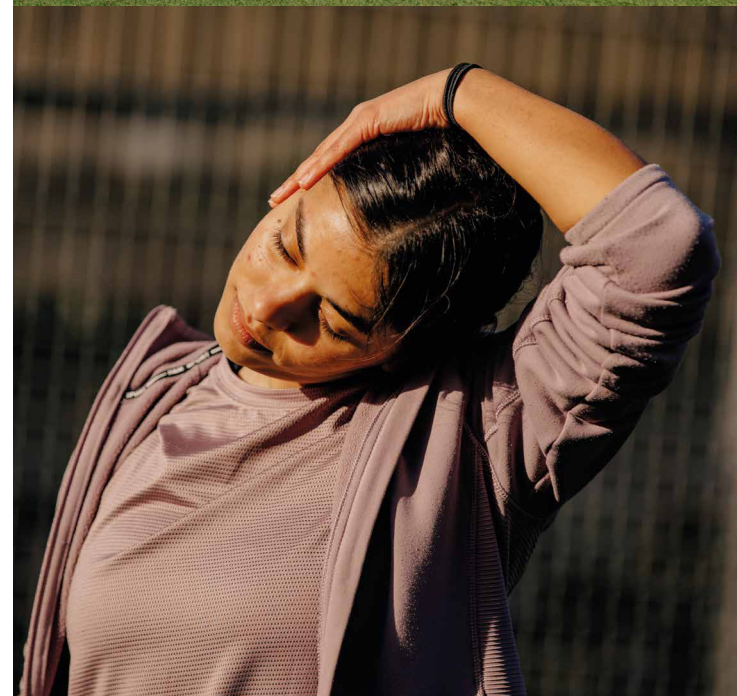
Engage: Follow up with young people you have offered signposting guidance to. You may not have all the answers but checking-in reminds a young person you're there.

Openness: Normalise talking about mental health. Make time to warm up and cool down mentally, in the same way we do physically. For example, get young people thinking about how they're feeling by asking them to describe their feelings in one word or an emoji. Make this optional so they don't feel pressured.

Praise: Focus on positive progress. Avoid shaming or comparing young people. Instead celebrate wins however small they may be. A young person may have missed a catch but you could praise their positioning, or how they judged where the ball was going.

Learn: Get feedback. Ask how you can make sessions more welcoming and wellbeing focused. Check how young people would like to be supported. Invite a group to help create or adapt a session plan.

Enjoyment: Make sessions fun and adapt activities so every young person can experience the positive impact of physical activity. Focus on enjoyment and how each individual feels.



To find out more:
mind.org.uk/sport

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