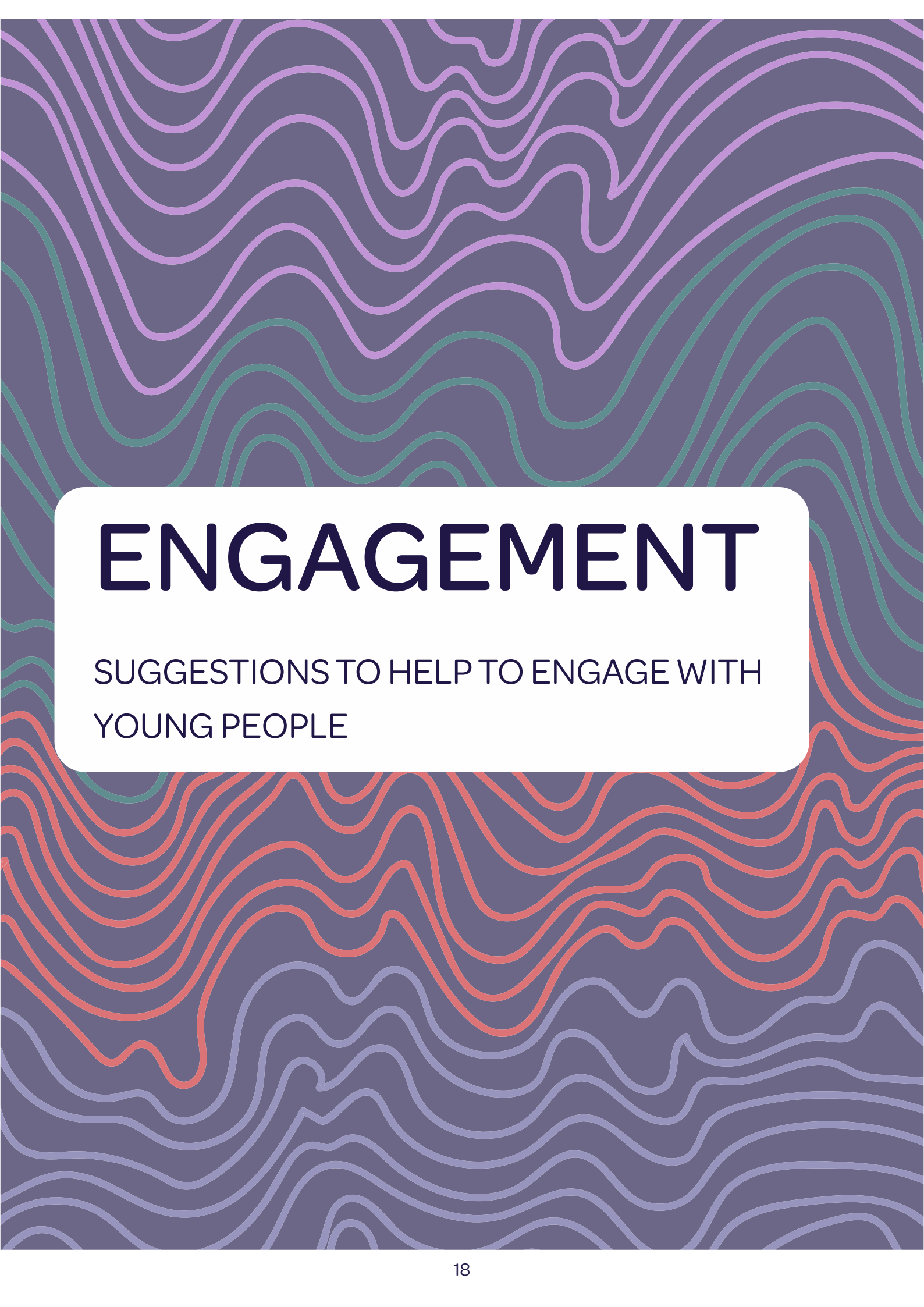




ENGAGEMENT

SUGGESTIONS TO HELP TO ENGAGE WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE

“

you would be
surprised how
much that
actually helps
you - just
listening

”

Anonymous young person, Access to Industry

Enabling Engagement With Young People

Working with young people as partners to work towards shared aims and objectives

Being an advocate (supporting young people by ensuring they have their voice heard and have their rights respected)

Prioritising young people's voices: knowing when to stay quiet, prompting less vocal ones, reminding other staff to make room for their input

Asking questions, listening and allowing young people to come to realisations on their own

Accepting young people as they are - not expecting them to be different, or better, or anything other than they are



Modelling appropriate behaviour, effective communication, acceptance and kindness

Acknowledging young people's strengths, attempts, successes and failures

Trauma Informed Practice in Scotland

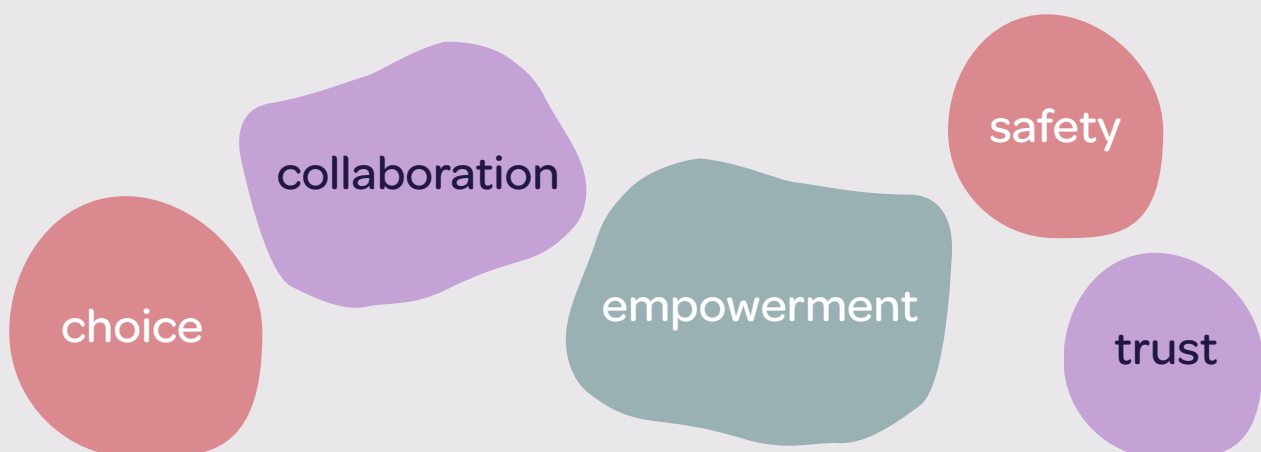
The first step to employing a trauma-informed approach to our work recognises how widespread trauma is. In 2019 Scottish Health Survey asked respondents about ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) for the first time. It found that 71% of adults reported having experienced at least one ACE, and 15% had experienced four or more ACEs.

The following is a well-used definition of trauma from the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration:



Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

The Scottish Government committed to investing significantly in developing a trauma-informed training programme in 2018, led by NHS Education for Scotland (NES). The training outlines the following principles that are key to a trauma-informed approach to working with young people:



How we work with people who have experienced trauma and being appropriately informed can make all the difference to young people's recovery and progress. A short [video](#) was created as part of the training developed by NES and introduces trauma-informed practice.

Creating Safe Spaces



Listening and creating a safe space for young people is at the heart of a trauma-informed approach. Remember that what will follow when you meet a young person is a natural conversation between two people and that you are trying to build a connection and trust with them.

Most importantly, you are physically, mentally and emotionally present for someone. It means focusing on the young person to support them as they share their thoughts and experience their feelings. Young people may be unable to be themselves with anyone else, so this is their chance to feel heard and valued. Building trusting relationships with young people helps their recovery and can be initiated by using the following steps:

- Listen and respond with empathy and without judgement
- Respond by asking what help they need
- Keep in mind that behaviour or reactions might be trauma-related
- Make sense of a person's current difficulties
- Explaining what's going to happen
- Offer choices
- Understand triggers
- Understanding that everyone is unique
- Refer young people to other services if more support is needed



“

Trust is the biggest issue. For someone who has my background, trust will be broken easily. You have never had it your entire life.

”

Anonymous young person

THE BLOB TREE*

Engagement activity for young people

Print out a copy of the worksheet on the next page. The Blobs on the tree are a variety of characters expressing a variety of feelings. It's essential to use the name Blobs rather than he or she, as they are not white males or females, but genderless and colourless. Ask the young person, "Which Blob best describes how you feel today and why?"

The selection of a Blob is a snapshot of how that person feels at that moment. Perhaps if colouring pens or pencils are available, the young person can take a moment to colour in their chosen Blob. The colour they select can also indicate how they are feeling.

The activity can be used as a visual assessment tool or to check in with a young person each time you meet. If you keep a note of this, you can use it to monitor their progress.

*The Blob Tree: <https://www.blobtree.com>

BLOB TREE

