

# Healthy Relationships Research for Children and Young People

## Guidance for volunteers

### Thank you for supporting this important project

This guidance is here to help you feel confident when supporting activities, surveys, or conversations with young people.

### Content note for volunteers

Some of the research activities involve sensitive topics, such as bullying, boundaries, or unhealthy relationships. These may be difficult, not only for young people, but also for you as a volunteer. If you feel uncomfortable or triggered at any point, step back from the activity and seek support. Please reach out to your Group Lead Volunteer, Scouts' Safeguarding Team, or access support through **Mind (0300 123 3393)** or your GP if needed. Your wellbeing matters just as much as the young people's.

## 1. Consent and ongoing consent

- **Always explain what's happening** in simple, age-appropriate language. For example, 'We're doing an activity to learn about friendships. You don't have to join in if you don't want to.'
- **Seek active consent** to check young people want to take part. For under 13s, parent or carer consent is needed.
- **Seek ongoing consent** to remind young people they can pause or stop at any time and respect their decision without question.

## 2. Creating a safe space

- **Set a positive tone.** Remind the group that everyone's voice matters, and respect is key.
- **Use inclusive language** and avoid judgemental terms. Visit [scouts.org.uk/about-us/policy/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy/](https://scouts.org.uk/about-us/policy/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy/) for Scouts' policies around inclusion.
- **Agree group ground rules together.** For example, 'We listen, we don't laugh at each other, it's OK to pass on taking part.'
- **Keep the focus on learning and sharing,** not personal disclosure.

## 3. Spotting signs of distress or trauma

### Look out for:

- Any sudden change in behaviour or mood. It may be that they withdraw, go silent, or get distracted. They may also have a sudden surge in emotion, such as anger, tearfulness, or refusal to continue. They may also react inappropriately to the subject matter, by laughing, making fun of it, or trying to distract peers.
- Physical signs, like shaking, shallow breathing, or restlessness.

These are all natural reactions if someone's uncomfortable or having a trauma response.

### What to do:

- Don't respond with frustration, anger or annoyance, even though it's natural to feel those emotions in some situations.
- Pause the activity if needed.
- Gently check in by asking 'Would you like a break?'
- Never push for details. Your role is to notice, not investigate.

## 4. Safeguarding procedure

- Always follow Scouts' Yellow Card safeguarding code.

### Remember, if a young person discloses something that worries you:

- Stay calm and listen without judgement.
- Don't promise confidentiality and explain you may need to share it to keep them safe.
- Make sure you have the name, date of birth, address and phone number of each person involved with the concern.
- Find out when the people involved will next be at a Scout meeting or activity.

### Contact the Safeguarding Team

- Use the reporting [form on the Scouts website](#) to report the concern to the Safeguarding Team. Include as much information as possible.
- If you can't fill in the form online, call +44(0)20 8433 7164 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or email [safeguarding@scouts.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@scouts.org.uk).
- In an emergency outside the above times, you can contact the Safeguarding Team by calling the Scouts Support Centre on +44(0)345 300 1818.
- Follow the Safeguarding Team's advice and take no further action unless they tell you to.
- Ask questions if you're not sure what to do.

## 5. Signposting and support

- Let young people know they can always talk to a trusted adult, such as a volunteer, teacher, or parent/carer.
- For older Sections, you can remind them of helplines like **Childline (0800 1111)**.
- If asked a question you can't answer, it's fine to say 'That's a really good question! Let's find the right person who can help.'

### Remember

Your role is to provide a safe, supportive environment where young people can share and learn. By handling consent, safety, and safeguarding well, you're helping make this project meaningful and safe for everyone involved. Thank you.