

How to Build Rapport With YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS



One of the most important aspects of building rapport with transition-aged youth is lowering the power differential.

1

BE AN AUTHENTIC PRESENCE

- Don't use a bunch of clinical jargon (such as big/fancy words or acronyms)
- Throw in some humor and sarcasm
- Relax your posture, and focus on exuding friendliness and warmth
- Talk to your client about their interests and passions

BE FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTIVE

- Be open to using alternative means of communication (like texting instead of calling)
- Be flexible with meeting times and locations
- Provide space for clients to discuss topics/concerns that are troubling them that day, rather than focusing rigidly on their set goals and treatment plan

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ENCOURAGE SELF-ADVOCACY

- Remind these clients that they are allowed to disagree with professionals, including yourself
- Ask for permission before starting a difficult conversation or offering up feedback
- Be mindful that some individuals may not feel comfortable in advocating for themselves

CREATE A SAFE & INCLUSIVE SPACE

- Don't sit behind a desk
- Bilingual Considerations - As often as possible, use in-person interpreters
- Provide fidget toys, paper, and colored pencils
- Display identity affirming symbols (pride flags, for example)

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STRATEGICALLY SELF-DISCLOSE

- Sharing some of your experiences can demonstrate to youth and young adults that you have the ability to empathize with their experience
- Be mindful of over-sharing or sharing explicit details of trauma that may re-traumatize an individual

RECOGNIZE YOUR PRIVILEGE & BIAS

- Recognize the power that you hold as a professional, as well as the privileged identities you hold
- Examine your personal biases around this age group. Are there any stereotypes that come to mind?

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BE TRANSPARENT

- Be transparent about the treatment process
- Allow clients to take an active role in the documentation process to build trust (collaborative documentation)