

Group agreements, planning and evaluating

Group Agreements

When working with any group, it is important to create a group agreement together at the start of the project. Having the group create the agreement together makes them more likely to abide by it and feels less strict than the leaders coming in with a set of rules which must be followed. With our group, we were aware that the girls were from different friendship circles and wanted to make sure that they felt safe sharing anecdotes and ideas, so we made sure that our group agreement covered confidentiality. Sarah refers to this as ‘the Vegas rule’ - what happens in the group, stays in the group.

Planning

We used a planning and evaluation sheet for each session that we ran with the girls to make sure we stayed on track with the limited time we had. Even if you prefer to work without a plan in front of you for individual sessions, it is important to do some planning to give your project structure and make sure you complete everything you need to do within your time frame. Planning can be as simple as jotting down on a blank piece of paper the final outcome for your project and writing bullet points for the things that need to be done to reach that outcome. Next to each bullet point write down a rough estimation of the time you are going to give to that section. Even if the project ends up being very free flowing, having this list to refer back to every so often helps you to achieve everything you need to do in the time you have.

Evaluating

Evaluation is an important tool to measure what is being achieved through your project. We evaluated after each session to ensure we had completed what we had set out to do that session, and also to make notes on individual group member’s own personal progress. For example, one of the girls was very shy about speaking out in the group when we began the project, but started to participate in discussions and games as the sessions went on. It was lovely to see her progress and be able to celebrate her personal development over the project, as well as the research that she had done. Session to session evaluation can be as simple as ticking off items on a to do list to keep the group on track, or can involve note taking about individual group member’s achievements as we did.

Project in partnership with:

