

Menu of Programs



create
FOUNDATION



CREATE Foundation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners of the lands, skies and waters where we live and work. We pay deep respect to Elders, knowledge holders and community leaders across all Aboriginal communities.

We acknowledge that Australia is culturally rich with the oldest living cultures on earth. And we acknowledge over 60,000 years of growing kids strong, connected to culture and Country.



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CONNECTION EVENTS

Building Bonds: CREATE's Connection Events

CREATE Foundation's Connection Events are the cornerstone of our mission to foster a sense of belonging and community among children and young people in the out-of-home care system. These events are designed to provide a safe, fun, and supportive environment where participants can meet peers, share experiences, and build lasting friendships.

The Importance of Connection

Being in out-of-home care can often feel isolating, and children and young people in this system may struggle to find peers who understand their unique experiences.

Connection Events address this by offering:

- **A sense of belonging:** Participants meet others with similar backgrounds, creating a community of support and understanding.
- **Opportunities for friendship:** Children and young people can form natural friendships in a safe environment, realising they are not alone in their journey.
- **Fun and engagement:** Through a variety of activities, these events provide joy, laughter, and memorable experiences.

Event Highlights

Connection Events are diverse and inclusive, catering to different interests, needs and occasions. Some of the exciting events we offer include:

- Halloween parties: Trick or treating and games in a safe and supportive community.
- Easter parties: Celebrate with egg hunts, crafts, and festive games.
- Christmas parties: Enjoy the holiday spirit with gifts and holiday-themed activities.
- Sibling connection events: Specially designed to help siblings living in different placements to reconnect and strengthen their bond.

"Keep doing stuff like this CREATE – it's so important for us to make these connections." (Young person)

"The kids had a ball and this is one of the best events that they go to!" (Carer)





Who Can Participate?

Our Connection Events are open to:

- **Children and young people:** The primary focus, providing them with a day of fun and camaraderie.
- **Carers:** Encouraged to participate and engage, fostering positive relationships with the children in their care.
- **Workers:** Invited to join and support, helping to create a supportive environment and circle of caring adults.

**"Connection Events are a great way for kids in care to hang out together so they don't feel alone."
(Young person)**

"It was great for our daughter to see other children as she is feeling rather isolated from children... It also gave us the opportunity to explain to her that there are other children like her who can't live with their birth families. So, thanks very much." (Carer)

Creating Positive Experiences

These events are more than just fun-filled days; they are pivotal in helping children and young people:

- **Build confidence:** Through social interactions and group activities.
- **Share stories:** Finding solace and understanding in shared experiences.
- **Develop social skills:** Engaging in structured activities that promote teamwork and communication.

A Path to Belonging

CREATE Foundation's Connection Events are vital in supporting children and young people in the out-of-home care system. By providing a platform for connection, these events help to build a supportive community where participants can thrive. Join us in fostering a sense of belonging and joy through our exciting and inclusive Connection Events.



Regional Connection Events

Strengthening Communities: Creating Connections in Regional Areas

CREATE Foundation's commitment to fostering connection and community extends far beyond urban centres. By hosting Connection Events in regional areas, we ensure that children and young people in out-of-home care have access to the same opportunities for connection, belonging, and support – regardless of their location. These events are not just a chance to bring people together. They are a crucial part of our mission to create inclusive and supportive environments for all young people in care.

The Benefits of Regional Engagement

- **Inclusive outreach:** Ensuring that all young people, regardless of where they live, have access to the same opportunities for connection and support.
- **Enhanced community spirit:** Strengthening the sense of community and belonging for young people and their carers in regional areas.
- **Localised impact:** Tailoring events to the specific needs and characteristics of regional communities, ensuring they resonate and have a lasting impact.

Why Regional Events Matter

- **Reaching the unseen:** Children and young people in regional areas often face additional barriers to connection due to geographical isolation. Regional Connection Events bring the sense of community directly to them, ensuring they don't miss out on vital opportunities to connect with peers who share similar experiences.

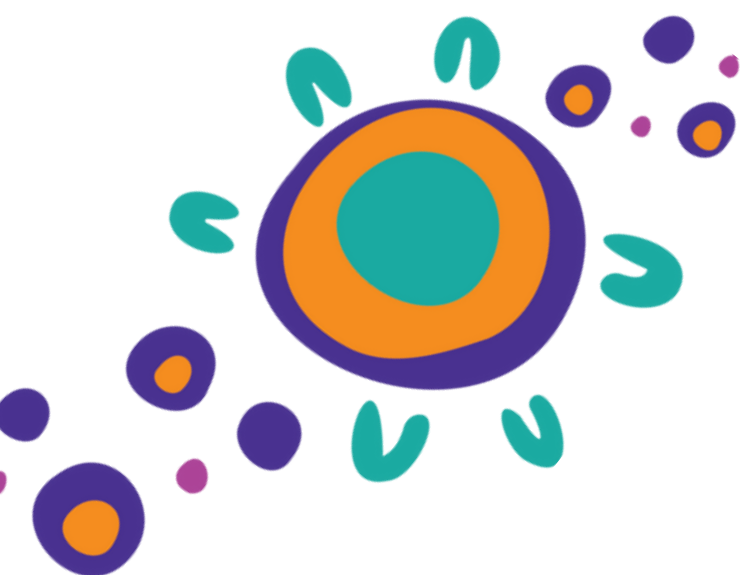


- **Reducing isolation:** Living in a regional area can heighten feelings of isolation for young people in out-of-home care. These events help to combat that isolation by providing a safe space where participants can meet others who understand their journey, making them feel part of a larger community.
- **Strengthening local support networks:** Regional events encourage the development of local support networks. By connecting young people, carers and workers within the same area, these events lay the foundation for ongoing relationships that extend far beyond the event itself.
- **Showcasing regional pride:** By holding events in regional locations, we celebrate and acknowledge the unique culture, identity and strengths of these communities. This not only fosters pride among participants but also highlights the importance of supporting young people wherever they live.



**"We love what CREATE does,
bringing the community together."
(Carer)**

**"It was the best day of my life."
(Young person)**



Creating Equal Opportunities for All

By expanding our reach through Regional Connection Events, CREATE Foundation is committed to ensuring that every young person in out-of-home care feels connected, supported and valued—no matter where they live. These events are a living testament to inclusion and our belief that every child deserves the chance to build lasting bonds and experience the joy of community.

YOUTH ADVISORY GROUPS

YAGs: Amplifying Young Voices to Create Change



What are Youth Advisory Groups?

CREATE Foundation's Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs) are a youth empowerment program designed to ensure the voices of young people aged 10 to 25 with out-of-home care experience are heard. YAGs provide a platform where young people—whether still in care or having transitioned out—can share their experiences, opinions, and concerns about the care system. The insights gained from these meetings directly inform CREATE's advocacy, shaping resources, programs, and policy developments that drive positive change.

What Happens at a YAG?

YAGs are informal group sessions that blend meaningful discussions with engaging activities. These meetings create a safe and supportive space for young people to connect with peers and CREATE staff while having fun. Activities include:

- Arts and sports events
- Cultural learning experiences
- Social outings and celebrations

"I like being involved in the YAGs because being around other young people that have been through care makes me feel like I'm not alone." (Young person)

Objectives of YAGs

The primary goals of YAGs are to:

- Facilitate the voices of young people in a safe, supportive environment.
- Create opportunities for young people's leadership in shaping what they want to have a say about.
- Provide a forum for sharing experiences and fostering a sense of belonging.
- Foster connections among young people and CREATE staff to build self-confidence and wellbeing.
- Identify issues of concern to inform CREATE's services, advocacy, and strategic priorities.
- Inform young people about CREATE's projects, programs, and advocacy efforts.



"The reason why I like being a part of Youth Advisory Groups is because I feel heard, I can share my opinions and experiences, get to know people and be able to be yourself."
(Young person)

"The YAGs mean a lot to me because of how they contributed to the building of my advocacy voice in my teen years. I enjoy being involved in them for the same reason - a place to share my views, opinions and experience in a collaborative and impactful way."
(Young person)



Impact of YAG Meetings

The information provided by young people during YAG meetings is used to:

- Inform CREATE's teams at the state and national levels.
- Advocate directly to governments and sector on changes needed in child protection, out-of-home care and other related systems.
- Contribute to submissions, reports and practice frameworks that influence positive system, policy and practice changes.
- Provide feedback to young people on how their voices have influenced change.

Get Involved

YAGs are held regularly in person across all states and territories, with online sessions also available to support broad engagement of young people in regional areas. We encourage all young people aged 10 to 25 who have a care experience to join us in raising their voice and connecting with others who share their journey. Together, we can create meaningful change in the care system.

SPEAK UP



SPEAK UP, STAND OUT: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ADVOCACY WITH CREATE

Speak Up is an empowerment program designed for young people aged 14-25 years with a statutory care experience. Delivered by trained CREATE Foundation staff across all states and territories, Speak Up is a series of interactive, workshop-style sessions aimed at fostering confidence, self-awareness, self-advocacy and effective communication. Through Speak Up, young people gain a deeper understanding of their care experience and the care system, and they learn to work as part of a team.

Key Benefits of Speak Up

- **Develop confidence, self-awareness, leadership and advocacy skills:** Empowering young people to recognise their strengths and build self-esteem.
- **Understand the care system:** Developing systemic thinking skills, understanding the care system and intersecting service systems, and incorporating insights into the care experience.
- **Effective and safe communication:** Teaching valuable skills for communicating effectively with others and working collaboratively.

"Speak Up (SUP) was sooooo good. Great to meet other people who have survived care and great to learn there is somewhere I can put my passion." (Young person)

Becoming a Young Consultant

Upon completing Level 1 of Speak Up, participants have the opportunity to become a 'Young Consultant' with CREATE. As Young Consultants, they:

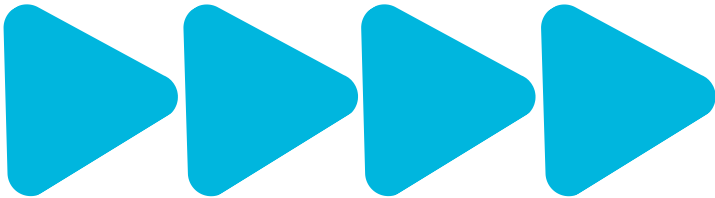
- **Advocate for change:** Work alongside CREATE to advocate for children and young people with a care experience.
- **Organise events:** Help in organising fun events for children and young people.
- **Train professionals:** Assist in training child protection staff, sharing their unique perspectives and experiences.
- **Voice their opinions:** Participate in forums and workshops, providing valuable insights to improve the care system.

"Speak Up gives young people the chance to speak and stand up for what is missing, what is ineffective but more importantly giving them the opportunity to empower other people by empowering themselves." (Young person)

The Impact of Young Consultants

Young Consultants are instrumental in creating change, both for themselves and for other young people in care. CREATE believes that everyone with a care experience has a unique and important perspective. By participating in Speak Up, young people are given the skills and platform to have their expert voices heard.

"You'll get the chance at CREATE to do some really fun and interesting things, but it's the serious meetings, consultations and launches with the Minister or other agencies are where you can really make a difference. Some might see them as boring, but I see it is the best use of my time." (Young person)



Speak Up – a catalyst for change

Speak Up is more than a program. It's a journey of empowerment, advocacy and change. By joining Speak Up, young people are not only developing essential skills but are also contributing to a brighter future for themselves and others in the care system.

Speak Up Program Levels

LEVEL 1 – INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

The entry level for Speak Up focuses on self-development and building confidence. Participants learn about advocacy and the importance of strengths-based communication.

LEVEL 2 – SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Building on the communication skills from Level 1, participants learn about personal boundaries, rights and responsibilities, and how to use their voice safely and effectively.

LEVEL 3 – ADVANCED SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

The advanced level of SUP focuses on equipping participants with skills for large-scale and national advocacy work. Participants learn to represent their peers in high-level forums, apply systemic thinking, facilitate group discussions, and use basic media skills for advocacy.



CREATE YOUR FUTURE

Navigate the Journey to Adulthood with the CREATE Your Future Program

The CREATE Your Future (CYF) program is designed to equip young people aged 15 to 25 with care experience with the essential skills and knowledge they need to confidently transition from care to independence. CYF is an empowering, interactive, and tried and tested program that promotes change, growth and connection amongst young people.



Why Choose CYF?

Through a series of dynamic workshops, the CYF program focuses on key areas such as:

- Life Skills
- Decision-Making
- Self-Awareness

Our experiential approach to learning encourages participants to explore their own knowledge, beliefs, and experiences. The workshop modules cater to all learning styles by balancing visual, auditory, and tactile activities, ensuring every participant is engaged and supported.

"I definitely think CREATE Your Future should be made more available to young people, because you don't get always taught skills in foster care placement. CREATE Your Future gives you another chance to learn things that you aren't taught about, and you can't learn these things at school."
(Young person, CYF participant)

Key Benefits

Participants in the CYF program will:

- Gain practical skills: Learn to manage finances, maintain a healthy lifestyle, and navigate the rental housing market.
- Develop critical thinking: Be guided through steps to think critically, make informed and independent decisions, and understand their identity and role in the community.
- Experience personal growth: Engage in a proven program that promotes change, growth and connection among young people.

Course Content

The CYF program covers a diverse range of content to guide young people in their transition, which includes:

1. Legit Wellbeing // Wellbeing:

engages young people to explore the different aspects of wellbeing, create a wellbeing plan, and learn about where to find support for their own wellbeing issues.

2. Selfhood // Identity:

provides young people with information, activities and ideas about their personal identity, and how having a strong sense of identity can contribute towards achieving their life goals.

3. You and Your Peeps // Relationships:

provides young people with activities, information, skills and ideas about healthy, equal and supportive relationships, in order to help them identify and establish positive relationships throughout their lives.

4. Rolla Casholla // Money:

provides young people with information on budgeting and banking skills to help manage their money, understand the benefits of doing so, and make informed financial decisions for themselves.

5. Create Ur Crib // Housing and Independent Living:

engages young people who are in or transitioning out of the care system towards independent living with information, ideas and resources about their housing / accommodation needs.

6. Learn to Earn // Employment:

engages young people who are making the transition from care to independent living with skills and knowledge that will assist them to understand, explore and plan for their future employment options.

7. Call Your Shots // Participation and Inclusion:

provides young people who are in or transitioning from out-of-home care towards independence with an understanding of the term “participation” and some of the ways that young people can participate in organisations, communities and society.

8. Great Race 4 Life! // Accessing Support Services:

provides young people who are in or transitioning from out-of-home care with information about a range of support services that may be useful to them in their transition to independence, including giving them a positive personal experience of accessing these services.

Unique Approach

Whenever possible, a CREATE Young Consultant co-facilitates the workshops alongside a CREATE staff member. This not only provides a valuable leadership opportunity for the Young Consultant but also positively impacts group dynamics, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.

Additional Resources

The CYF program is supported by a comprehensive website (www.createyourfuture.org.au) and offers an annual grant scheme to further support young people in their journey to independence.

Help support the CREATE Your Future program and help young people with a care experience take the first step towards a confident, independent future. Empower young people with the skills and knowledge to excel beyond care.

“The program enabled me to change and grow and gave me opportunities to work around negative experiences, and change my behaviours to positive ones.”
(Young person, CYF participant)



Sortli (short for Sort Your Life Out) is a mobile app designed specifically for young people transitioning to independence. Developed in consultation with 15 to 18-year-olds with care experience, Sortli helps users set future goals and confidently transition from care to adulthood. The app also supports young adults aged 19 to 21 who wish to continue using this valuable resource.

Why Sortli?

Sortli provides essential information to guide young people through critical life decisions across eight key domains:

1. Identity
2. Relationships
3. Housing
4. Education and Employment
5. Health
6. Living Skills
7. Finances
8. Legal Matters

Each domain features actionable prompts, concise descriptions, key terms, step-by-step guides, direct links to forms, and access to support services.

"It's easy to use. I have been using it for years! I am now teaching my brother how to use it. He is 15 and also finds it easy to use. We work through making a budget together." (Young person)

Continuous Improvement

To ensure Sortli remains engaging and relevant, we regularly update content and enhance app functionality. CREATE achieves this through:

- Continuous review and evaluation
- Collaboration with government stakeholders and key organisations
- Regular feedback and consultation with young people

"The Sortli app has changed so much from the beginning. They really listened to young people and made it more relevant and concise to our lives and needs."
(Young person)

Tailored and Insightful

Sortli's content is tailored to each state and territory, providing a localised experience while leveraging CREATE's national insights into issues affecting young people transitioning from care. This broader perspective allows us to explore innovative features and keep the app fresh and engaging.

A Proven Track Record

Since 2014, CREATE has been managing Sortli, working closely with the app developer to implement significant improvements driven by the insights of young people across Australia. Join us on Sortli and empower young people's transition to independence with confidence and support.

GO YOUR OWN WAY KITS

Charting the Course to Adulthood with the Go Your Own Way (GYOW) Kit

CREATE's Go Your Own Way (GYOW) Kit is an essential resource for young people aged 15 and above, designed to support their transition to adulthood and independence. Developed through extensive consultation with young people across Australia and with the help of state and territory child protection agencies, CREATE Foundation has been distributing the GYOW Kit since 2014, helping thousands of young people prepare for their future.

Comprehensive Support for a Successful Transition

The GYOW Kit is packed with valuable resources and information to aid in the planning process. It provides caseworkers and young people with the tools they need to plan for a successful transition, including the centrepiece GYOW Workbook—a practical tool filled with information and useful links.



Key Features and Benefits

- **Nationally consistent resource:** The GYOW Kit is a standardised resource across Australia, ensuring that all young people leaving care receive the same high-quality support.
- **Holistic approach:** The kit covers essential areas such as education, employment, housing, health and life skills training, providing a comprehensive guide to navigating adulthood.
- **User-friendly:** Written in accessible and easy-to-understand language, the kit is designed to be practical and engaging, helping young people think about important aspects of independence they might not have considered.
- **Facilitates discussion:** The kit encourages conversations between caseworkers and young people, enabling them to use it as a checklist to ensure all needs are met.
- **Tailored support:** Recognising the diverse needs of young people, the kit supports individualised planning, and considers culture and identity to provide personalised guidance.

Aligning with the National Framework

The GYOW Kit supports several key principles outlined in Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, including:

- **Comprehensive planning:** Helps young people access individualised plans to prepare for leaving care.
- **Collaborative support:** Ensures young people have access to a wide range of supports through collaboration with caseworkers.
- **Youth involvement:** Encourages active involvement of young people in planning and decision-making processes, respecting and prioritising their voices and preferences.
- **Holistic and tailored approach:** Provides a coordinated and youth-centred support system to ensure young people are equipped with the necessary skills and resources for a successful transition to adulthood.

"Becoming an adult is hard enough without the right preparation." (Young person)

"Just remember, our wings aren't fully developed—so don't push us out and expect us to fly by ourselves." (Young person)



Better Outcomes Through Gradual Transition

Young people leaving care achieve better outcomes when their transition is gradual, supported, and well-planned. The GYOW Kit is instrumental in this process, helping young people navigate services and obtain the necessary information to support their journey into adult life. Help equip young people with the Go Your Own Way Kit so they can embark on their path to independence with confidence and support, and successfully transition to independent life.

CREATE Foundation's Expo is a dynamic and interactive event designed to empower young people with the tools, knowledge, and connections they need to shape their futures. Whether eager to learn something new, connect with local organisations, or simply explore what's available to them, the Expo is a one-stop-shop for everything related to jobs, education, health, and more.

Empowering Young People with Resources

The CREATE Expo is a unique opportunity for young people to gather invaluable advice, resources, and skills in a supportive environment. Designed specifically for those with a care experience, the Expo brings together multiple stakeholders, organisations, and services, all focused on addressing the key issues that matter most to young people.

Key Components

- **Mini Workshops:** The Expo features a series of tailored workshops that focus on critical aspects of youth development, including mental health, job skills, financial literacy, life skills, and more. These sessions are designed to equip participants with practical knowledge and tools they can apply immediately.

- **Forming Connections:** Attendees will have the chance to meet and connect with a wide range of organisations dedicated to supporting young people. This is an opportunity to gather information, build relationships, and discover the many resources available to help them succeed.
- **Young Consultants:** Meet other CREATE Young Consultants who share their experiences, offer tips, and provide guidance to help young people create the life they want and deserve.

Why attend?

- **Comprehensive Resources:** Gain access to a wide array of services and programs, all in one place.
- **Network with Experts:** Connect with young people with lived expertise and with professionals and organisations committed to supporting young people.
- **Empowerment Through Knowledge:** Leave the Expo equipped with the knowledge and skills to take control of your future.

Creating a Better Future

We are excited to host these transformative events and bring these vital services directly to young people. The CREATE Expo is a chance to get the best head start in creating the life they envision. Whether preparing for their next step in education, looking for job opportunities, or simply seeking support, our Expos are designed to help young people with a care experience succeed.

Lived Experience Governance: Young People Advisory and Oversight Groups

Creating Better Systems Through Advisory and Oversight Groups



The Need for Lived Experience Governance

To truly improve the care system and the systems around it, it is essential to engage directly with the young people it serves. Young people with lived experience offer critical insights to inform the safety and quality of services and the directions of reform. By involving young people in advisory roles, we can ensure that services, systems and supports are truly effective in meeting their needs. Their perspectives are critical in evaluating current systems and driving improvements and reform.

CREATE's Role

CREATE Foundation is uniquely positioned to establish and coordinate advisory groups with young people with out-of-home care experience to provide essential advice and insights. This includes Ministerial Advisory Groups and groups focused on particular parts of the system or service continuum, such as transition supports. CREATE's advisory groups bring together diverse young voices to:

- Advise on the implementation and evaluation of programs and services.
- Inform service design, practice improvements, policy changes and system reform.

- Contribute to improving outcomes for all children and young people in care.

Building Effective Groups

CREATE will take the lead in forming and coordinating these groups by:

- **Developing a Terms of Reference:** Collaboratively creating a document that outlines the group's purpose, membership, meeting arrangements, and standard operating procedures.
- **Running an Expression of Interest (EOI) Process:** Selecting group members through a transparent process, ensuring representation from diverse backgrounds, and conducting induction sessions for new members.
- **Providing Secretariat Support:** Coordinating meetings, including agenda development, minute-taking, and producing youth-friendly communiqués that highlight key feedback and actions.
- **Supporting Young People:** Conducting needs assessments, offering workshops, pre-briefs and debriefs, supporting young people to prepare their thinking on priority topics, facilitating payments to acknowledge their contributions, and ensuring strong feedback loops are in place.

- **Building Capability:** Delivering Speak Up training to young members to support skill development in areas related to respectful communication, safely and meaningfully using lived experience to influence system change, professional boundaries, advocacy and systems thinking.
- **Reviewing Effectiveness:** Regularly evaluating the group's impact and effectiveness.

Purpose of the Groups

The primary goal of these groups is to empower young people to use their lived experience to drive systemic change and advance government and sector reform agendas. Previous groups have been instrumental in providing valuable insights and recommendations in several key areas including reform design, residential care, and transitioning to independence. By identifying gaps and opportunities, these groups will provide advice to governments and the broader sector to enhance policies, practices, services and systems for children and young people in care. As members of these groups, young people will:

- **Offer Expertise by Experience:** Share their knowledge to improve the care system, representing the voices of children and young people in care.
- **Drive Change:** Identify what is working, what needs improvement, and suggest actionable solutions.
- **Represent Diversity:** The selection process will ensure diverse representation, considering factors such as regionality, cultural identity, gender, ability and unique support needs.

CREATE's Commitment

CREATE is dedicated to ensuring all members feel prepared, safe and confident. We will:

- **Provide Pre-Meeting Workshops:** Help members prepare for meetings by building their confidence and ensuring they feel supported.
- **Offer Post-Meeting Support:** Follow up with members to discuss how the meeting went and address any concerns.
- **Develop a Team Charter:** Co-create guidelines that emphasise respectful communication, privacy, confidentiality, and collaborative problem-solving, ensuring a safe space for all members.
- **Create Safety:** Through deep support and scaffolding, create the relational safety needed to ensure young people's meaningful participation.

Expert Advice

Incorporating the voices of young people with lived experience is not just beneficial—it is essential. By establishing Advisory and Oversight Groups, CREATE offers a structured and impactful way to gather expert advice from those who understand the care system firsthand. This initiative provides government and sector stakeholders with a unique opportunity to engage with young experts whose perspectives are crucial for driving meaningful improvements. By partnering with CREATE, you can ensure that policies, practices, and services are shaped by the very individuals they are intended to support. Together, we can achieve better outcomes for all children and young people in care, creating a system that truly reflects their needs and aspirations.

Young Person-Led Youth Forum

Empowering Youth Voices: Young Person-Led Youth Forum

The Young Person-Led Youth Forum is a powerful platform that amplifies the voices of young people, enabling them to plan, design and deliver a program direct to stakeholders on issues of importance to them. Attendees might include practitioners, educators, youth workers, health workers, service leaders, or policy makers. At these forum, young people deliver presentations, workshops, reflective sessions and panel discussions on pressing service or practice issues. Unlike smaller group sessions, these forums provide a larger, structured and young-person led environment where diverse voices can be heard, and deep, nuanced discussions can take place. What truly sets these forums apart is that they are entirely designed and led by young people, ensuring that every aspect—from the agenda to the outcomes—is shaped by those whose voices matter most.

Key Features

- **Authentic Youth Leadership:** The forum is fully youth-led, guaranteeing genuine representation and leadership throughout the process. This ensures that the discussions are relevant and impactful from a youth perspective.
- **Broad Stakeholder Engagement:** The forum brings together a diverse range of stakeholders, including care providers, educators, mental health professionals, and youth service providers. This broad participation fosters richer discussions and opens up greater opportunities for advocacy.
- **Catalyst for Change:** The forum serves as a springboard for practice development, service improvements, broader community action and awareness campaigns. The discussions and insights generated can lead to tangible changes in practice, policy, and systems.

Program Highlights

The Young Person-Led Youth Forum is meticulously planned by young leaders over several months. These exceptional individuals design the program, develop presentations, and translate their lived experiences into actionable advice for professionals across various sectors. Throughout the day, participants will experience:



- **Compelling Presentations:** Young leaders share powerful stories and expert insights that highlight the critical issues facing young people today. These presentations are designed to inspire action and drive change in practices and policies.
- **Interactive Workshops:** Participants engage in hands-on workshops that delve deeper into the topics discussed. These sessions provide practical tools and strategies that professionals can implement in their own work.
- **Panel Discussions:** Stakeholders and young people come together in panel discussions to explore different perspectives on the issues at hand. This format encourages open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.
- **Connection Activities:** Facilitated activities throughout the day encourage participants to build connections, share experiences, and reflect on what they've learned.
- **Reflective Exercises:** The day concludes with reflective exercises that help solidify the day's insights and translate them into actionable steps for participants to take into their practice.

Impact and Outcomes

The Young Person-Led Youth Forum is more than just an event—it's a compelling call to action. The stories and insights shared by young leaders have the power to catalyze significant change across systems, policies, and practices. These forums have consistently shown that when young people lead, the results are transformative. By participating in the forum, stakeholders not only gain a deeper understanding of the issues facing young people but also leave equipped with practical advice and strategies to improve their practice. The forum's impact extends beyond the day itself, often sparking further community action plans, stakeholder engagements, and broader awareness campaigns. By empowering young leaders to share their experiences and expertise, we can drive meaningful change in the systems and practices that shape their lives.

"It was one of the most moving and impactful forums that I have ever been to. It was incredibly brave to share such personal stories and reflections and I had conversations with others who indicated that they were going to change their practice as a result of hearing their experiences, including the things that made a difference. Your passion, commitment to change and creativity shone throughout the day." (Youth Forum attendee)



Worker Training

Hear Their Voice: Enhancing Practice Through CREATE's Worker Training

CREATE Foundation's Worker Training Program is a unique and impactful initiative designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of professionals working in child protection and care services. Facilitated by CREATE staff and Young Consultants, the program aims to deepen participants' understanding of the needs and experiences of children and young people in out-of-home care. By involving young people directly in the training, the program fosters a powerful exchange of perspectives, ensuring that sector professionals hear directly from those with lived experience.

Purpose of the Training Program

The primary objective of the Worker Training Program is to bridge the gap between the sector and the children it serves. By providing a platform for young people to share their insights, the training allows participants to contextualise these experiences and apply them within their own professional practice. The training is a crucial component of CREATE Foundation's role as a systemic advocate, working alongside government, agencies, and other stakeholders to drive progressive and positive change in child protection and care systems.

"We're not just our case file notes, we're more. We're human. We're kids." (Young person)

Key Components of the Training

The Worker Training Program is designed to be interactive and engaging, with a variety of activities that keep participants actively involved. The training covers several core areas:

- **Understanding the experience of being in care:** Participants gain insights into what it's like to be a child or young person in care, fostering empathy and understanding.
- **Characteristics of a good worker:** The training explores the qualities and actions that define an effective caseworker, as identified by young people in care.
- **Supporting the voices of children and young people:** CREATE Foundation's approach to amplifying the voices of children and young people is shared, highlighting how their insights contribute to positive systemic change.

"Keep regular contact. Involve me in decisions that impact me. Listen to what I have to say." (Young person)

Insights from Young Consultants

A key feature of the training is the direct involvement of Young Consultants—young people with lived experience of care who share their personal stories and insights. This includes:

- **Personal care experience:** Young Consultants introduce themselves and provide a brief overview of their care journey.
- **Motivation for becoming a Young Consultant:** They explain why they chose to take on the role and what it means to them to engage in systems advocacy.
- **Reflections on caseworker relationships:** They share both positive and negative experiences with caseworkers, emphasising what worked well and what could have been done differently.
- **Key takeaway message:** Each Young Consultant provides a closing message they want participants to remember, driving home the importance of the insights shared.

Building a Stronger Child Protection Workforce

CREATE's Worker Training Program is an opportunity to reshape the sector by centring practice on the voices of those it serves. By participating, professionals not only enhance their skills but also contribute to a broader movement toward more responsive, compassionate, and effective care for children and young people.

Applying Insights in Practice

The training concludes with a focus on translating insights into actionable steps.

Participants are encouraged to consider:

- **Integrating insights into practice:** How the sector can incorporate the perspectives and experiences shared by young people into everyday practice – behaviours, skills and practices.
- **Supporting workers in practice improvement efforts:** The tools, resources, and support that workers need to adapt their practice in response to the voices of children and young people.

Training Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the training, as identified by children and young people, are:

- **Amplifying voices:** Ensuring the voices of children and young people are heard and valued.
- **Defining a good caseworker:** Gaining a clear understanding of the qualities that make an effective caseworker.
- **Promoting strengths-based communication:** Learning how to communicate in a person-centred and strengths-based manner that empowers young people.
- **Contextualising insights into practice:** Applying the insights and lessons learned to improve practice at all levels.

"So when working with young people in care, treat them as an individual and listen to what they want before acting and assuming you know what's best for them."

(Young person)

Student Seminars and Guest Lectures

From Theory to Practice:

Youth-led Insights for Emerging Professionals

CREATE Foundation's Student Seminars and Guest Lectures offer an invaluable opportunity for second and third-year students in fields such as social work, law, youth work, and related disciplines to engage directly with the lived experiences of young people in the child protection and care systems. These sessions, led by CREATE's Young Consultants with the support of staff, provide an essential complement to academic coursework, enriching students' understanding of trauma-informed, relational, and rights-based practices.

Purpose of the Student Seminar

The Student Seminar aims to equip the next generation of professionals with a deeper understanding of the real-world implications of their future work. By centring the voices and experiences of young people who have navigated the care system, the seminar challenges students to reflect critically on their practices and prepares them to enter the workforce with a commitment to relational and trauma-informed care.

Core Elements of the Seminar

The seminar provides a multi-faceted exploration of key themes crucial for emerging professionals:

- **Lived Experience of Care:** Students gain first-hand insights into the realities of life in the care system, including the challenges and unintended consequences of current practices and policies. This segment fosters empathy and a nuanced understanding of the systemic impacts on young people.
- **Defining Effective Practice:** The seminar explores the attributes and behaviours that define a successful practitioner from the perspective of those who have experienced the system. Discussions focus on the gaps in support, what young people need more or less of, and actionable advice for professionals.
- **Amplifying Youth Voices:** Participants learn about CREATE's approach to advocating for children and young people, emphasising how the insights gained from these voices can drive meaningful, systemic change.



Insights from Young Consultants

A highlight of the seminar is the active participation of CREATE's Young Consultants, who bring their lived experiences to the forefront:

- **Personal Narratives:** Young Consultants share their care journeys, offering students a rare and powerful glimpse into the realities faced by children and young people in the system.
- **Worker Relationships:** They reflect on their interactions with workers, detailing both positive and negative experiences. These stories provide concrete examples of what effective support looks like and how practitioners can better serve their future clients.
- **Key Takeaways for Future Professionals:** Each Young Consultant offers tailored advice, urging students to approach their future roles with greater sensitivity, awareness, and a commitment to prioritising the needs and rights of young people.

**"I can't tell you how much we appreciate having CREATE each year, you make a huge impact."
(University Lecturer)**

**"CREATE has been speaking at this course for the last 10 years and it has always been a highlight of the course."
(University Lecturer)**

Seminar Outcomes

The seminar is designed to leave students with several key takeaways:

- **Empowerment Through Voice:** Recognising the importance of listening to and valuing the voices of children and young people in their care.
- **Understanding Effective Practice:** Gaining clarity on what makes a good practitioner and how to embody these qualities in their work.
- **Strengths-Based Communication:** Learning techniques for person-centred, strengths-based communication that empowers young people rather than diminishes them.
- **Practical Application:** Encouraging students to translate the insights gained into tangible improvements in their practice, ensuring they enter the workforce equipped to make a positive impact.

Building a Compassionate and Competent Workforce

CREATE's Student Seminars and Guest Lectures are more than just educational opportunities—they are a call to action. By engaging with these sessions, future professionals are challenged to reframe their approach to practice, placing the needs, voices, and rights of children and young people at the centre of their work. This engagement not only enriches their academic learning but also prepares them to enter the sector as informed, compassionate, and effective practitioners committed to making a difference.

Educator Training

Know Ur Students: The Care Project



The title of the program, Know Ur Students: The Care Project, was conceived in collaboration with Young Consultants during a Youth Advisory Group at CREATE. It reflects the importance of meaningful relationships between teachers and students in promoting a sense of security and physical and mental wellbeing for young people in out-of-home care within the school environment.

Program Overview

CREATE Foundation is launching a school-based program aimed at improving the educational experiences of young people who have experienced out-of-home care by reducing the stigma surrounding them. This program includes:

- **Teacher training:** Educating teachers and the school community about the care system and its impacts.
- **Peer education:** Presentations co-designed and delivered by young people with lived experience in out-of-home care.

"I had to fight for my education and fight for everything and tell myself I am worth so much more than what they can see. We can achieve a lot more if people believe in us and see the potential in all of us."
(Young person)

Rationale for the Project

Education has been a recurring topic in our Youth Advisory Groups in recent times. Feedback from children and young people highlighted significant gaps in support on offer within the school system, adversely affecting those with a care experience. Children in out-of-home care are known to experience higher rates of school disengagement compared to their peers. Young people in care may experience disrupted education due to frequent placement moves, moves out the area, moving schools, financial hardship, difficulty with transport to school and the complexities associated with trauma experienced before entering care and while in care. This can show up in attendance rates, chronic absence rates, educational outcomes and attainment levels.

Young people in care often struggle to succeed in school due to past and ongoing trauma, compounded by a lack of understanding about their experiences and life circumstances. CREATE Foundation recognises education as a crucial gateway to health, emotional wellbeing, purpose and independence. Unfortunately, barriers to engaging in education contribute to enduring disadvantage for those with a lived experience of care.

Project Objectives

- **Enhance staff awareness:** Increase understanding among school staff about the care system, its profound effects on young people, and how this may impact their ability to engage in school.
- **Reduce student stigma:** Educate students about the care system to foster empathy and reduce stigma toward peers with care experience.
- **Ongoing support:** Provide continuous advice for school staff and support for identified young people with care experience.

Program Design and Delivery

The Know Ur Students: The Care Project will be co-designed and delivered by young people to their peers, teachers, and the school community. This approach ensures that the program is grounded in real experiences and addresses the specific needs of those it aims to support. Key aspects include:

- **Therapeutic connections:** Establishing meaningful relationships with teachers to provide relational safety and stability, fostering connection and participation, enhancing feelings of self-worth, and alleviating isolation.
- **Consistent support:** Recognising teachers as a consistent presence in the lives of young people, providing stability outside the care system.

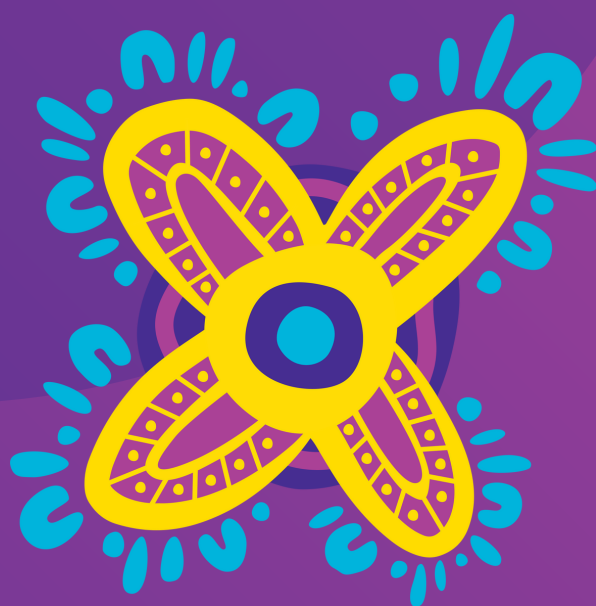
Impact and Goals

CREATE Foundation aims to reduce the stigma surrounding children and young people in care by building capacity in educational settings. This program will reframe care experiences in the eyes of the school community, bridging gaps in understanding and fostering safety and engagement. Improved participation and understanding will lead to better educational outcomes and wellbeing for those with a care experience.

Improving Education Outcomes

The Know Ur Students: The Care Project is a transformative initiative designed to create a supportive and understanding school environment for young people in out-of-home care. By building meaningful relationships and reducing stigma, this program will significantly improve the educational experiences and life outcomes of those it serves. Join us in making a difference – support Know Ur Students: The Care Project and help create a more inclusive and understanding school community.





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