

## Working with young people

- Be interested** You will not gain the attention of young people if you are not genuinely concerned with what they say to you.
- Approachable** Young people will open up more and respond better if you make it easier for them to talk to you. Being honest and sharing day-to-day experiences can help (remember to keep these conversations appropriate for their age)
- Positive** Positivity and enthusiasm encourages a positive response and helps boost confidence and self-esteem. Don't dwell on failings but highlight the positives.
- Patient** It is important to be patient with young people for activities to be successful and have a positive outcome. Remember that some young people have difficulty in expressing themselves effectively so may need more time than others and their may be factors or barriers preventing them from communicating with you openly.
- A good listener** You may have to act as a sounding board for young people to release frustration or anxieties linked with education, and you will need to be able to make sensible suggestions for overcoming these.
- Realistic expectations** Remember to create realistic targets which the students can achieve. Asking for the young person's input when setting goals allows the young person to feel more responsible for the outcomes and their opinion more respected. If in doubt, check with the teacher or facilitator.
- Enthusiastic** Showing enthusiasm for the work you do with young people encourages them to engage with it and to do well.
- Motivational** You may well be the only role model they have in their lives so try to motivate them as much as possible. Use your own personal experiences if this helps, but remember to maintain boundaries between ambassador and young person.
- Positive feedback** Ensure that you give praise where it's due. Young people who are particularly insecure or lacking in confidence can be given a huge boost by you saying, "Well done", "I enjoyed our session – thank you", "Thanks for working so hard today". If you have some constructive feedback to give on where they could improve, remember to "sandwich" this between two positive points, so they do not feel despondent.
- Respectful** If you can demonstrate that you respect the young people no matter what difficulties they may be going through, they will in turn respect you for understanding them and being patient with them.
- Reliable** As a positive role model being punctual and prepared helps to instil these qualities in the young people you are working with. They will also be more likely to respect you more if you show yourself to be professional.