

## How to host a ‘5 Whys’ workshop with children and young people

This activity outlines how to host a workshop with children and young people using the ‘5 Whys’ – to explore a problem and its root causes, generate helpful insights and understanding, and avoid focusing on the wrong solution

This can be undertaken as a face-to-face workshop or be done online. Remember to keep it REAL\*.

### Time

Allow 30 mins to 1 hour

### People

3–8

### Materials

- Post-its
- Butcher’s paper
- Marker pens

### Steps

#### 1. Set the stage

Explain that the purpose of the exercise is to curiously explore and learn from mistakes – not blame.

There is no such thing as a wrong answer.

#### 2. Agree on the problem statement

#### 3. Brainstorm – why did this happen?

This will immediately provoke early solutions.

Record the solutions as they arise in a way for everyone to see.

#### 4. Select one of the answers as the next problem statement

Or breakout into smaller groups to follow several different threads.

#### 5. Repeat the process until you get to a meaningful root cause

Select several solutions to focus on. Some problems might take a few more ‘Why?’ questions than 5, but this gets things started.

#### 6. Consider reframing the chosen solution/s as a design question/s “How might we”...

Depending on the scale of the matter consider following a design thinking process, a collective impact process or taking a collective intelligence approach.

*\*Read [The Field Guide](#) to keep it real when engaging children and young people.*

### **Further resources**

---

#### **Design Thinking – Field Guide to Human Centred Design**

A tool kit of teaching tools and a step forward in sharing the practice and promise of human-centered design with the social sector.

<https://www.ideo.com/post/design-kit>

#### **Collective Intelligence – The Collective Intelligence Design Playbook by NESTA**

Tools, tactics and methods to harness the power of people, data and technologies to solve global challenges.

<https://www.nesta.org.uk/toolkit/collective-intelligence-design-playbook/>

#### **Platform C**

A platform of tools and resources for those tackling complex challenges collaboratively.

<https://platformc.org/>