

## Tips for Engaging Different Personalities

A diverse group of young people will naturally include a host of different personalities. Adapted from [SuperFriend](#), here are some tips on how to work with young people with a variety of different personality types.

**Observe personality differences as strengths:** People have different ways of communicating and behaving. Some people take charge while others listen first. Some are more organized while others are more visionary. Take some time to identify the different personalities in the room and reflect on how those may differ from your own. Try to see the different styles as individual strengths.

**Recognize cultural differences:** The way we communicate may reflect our culture, which can lead to some confusion if people come from different cultural backgrounds. Take the time to get to know and communicate about the cultures represented in the room. There may be differences in how people speak, listen, or interact with others. When you are uncertain about how you interpret a message or think someone is rude or evasive, ask for clarification instead of assuming something based on your own cultural norms.

**See objectively, not personally:** Focus on what people are saying and their ideas instead of judging them as people or deciding if you like them. Listen and interact with them as they are instead of through your own biases or how you think things should be. It is helpful to assume people are speaking and acting with good intent and ask for clarification or check for understanding rather than take something personally. Removing our judgment from a conversation can help keep things on-topic and in the present.

**Embrace differences; ask questions:** If someone has a different opinion about a topic, take time to discuss and understand why you may have differing views. Say, "Tell me more about how you came to that." This can expand your own thinking and show that you respect the other person's views and how they formed them.

**Look for the common agenda or goal:** If the differences of opinion seem too far apart, or compromise seems impossible, pause to reflect on the common goal. If the group steps back to articulate the goal or agenda, it can help unite people on the task instead of focusing on the differences.

**Decide what to let go:** While it can seem like backing down is a sign of weakness, letting go of some sticking points can relieve tension and help you focus on the most important common goals of the group. Respecting yourself isn't about being right or holding firm.

**Be flexible with your communication style:** As you get to know the different personalities in the room, you can adjust your communication style to promote positive interactions. For example, some people open up more through one-on-one communications. Pay attention and be respectful of others' styles while building your own flexibility.

**Remember that people are complex:** Personality types, culture, moods, emotions, areas of expertise, and more can affect how people show up day to day. Remember that you may not know what is going on with a person, so give them space to make sure they are heard and understood.

**Take charge of your well-being:** Our differences do not have to divide us. How we choose to react and respond to differences can set the tone and working environment. You cannot control other people, but you can control how your interactions impact your well-being.