

Brief Guidance

1. Using the life charts¹ was part of a process designed to **centre around the young person**, who is a participant and collaborator in the process. This means the work is done **with** them, rather than **to** them. You must ensure that your approach is **ethically sound**. You must also follow **data protection** procedures.
2. It is important to give the young person (YP) the life chart resources to complete at home on their own. Including a stamped addressed envelope if you want the chart to be returned by post.
3. Be aware that the subject matter may be very traumatic for the YP and that they may not wish to complete the life chart, or to talk about their experiences with you. Trust is essential.
4. Once you have received the life chart back, write questions about the events and experiences listed on the chart. Send this question sheet to the YP. Sending questions in advance of the interview helps the YP process the questions in their own time, think about their answers, decide if there are any questions they would rather not answer, as well as helping reduce their anxiety about the interview.
5. Consider the best environment to discuss the life chart and ask your questions. Think about how to ask and record answers. Does it need to be in-person? Can it be via a text-messaging system? Give the YP options so they can choose the least stressful option.
6. In conversation:
 - a. Ask whether there are any areas on the young person's life chart that they don't want to talk about. It is very important that you do this, and that you clearly avoid talking about them.
 - b. Provide paper, pens, pencils and colouring books so the young person can draw or doodle if they wish during the interview.
 - c. Provide reassurance that there are no right or wrong answers or responses.
 - d. Ask what made events positive or negative. What did the school do that helped? What could the school have done differently to prevent or reduce the difficulty of negative experiences, for that YP?
 - e. Provide a means for the YP to let you know if they want a break or to stop completely.
 - f. Allow time for the YP to process what you say; repeat/reword/simplify the questions/ask the questions in a different way if not understood.
 - g. Actively listen to the YP, do not make assumptions, and gently probe answers to uncover meaning.
 - h. Check with the young person that you have understood their meaning correctly.

Please note that this provides only brief guidance. Do contact me if you would like to discuss the process in more detail.

¹ The life chart template is from an idea by Majid (2021), who used it to investigate the journeys of maths teachers as part of her doctoral research at the University of Reading.