

GET RESEARCH READY WITH ME

OUR BLOG

MARCH 2025

**"I WAS REALLY
MOTIVATED BY
EVERYONE AND
EXCITED BY WHAT WE
MIGHT ACHIEVE"**

Authors: we recognise all contributors and contributions to this blog, including written content, graphics, and those who have shared their ideas and reflections in non-written form.

For our first GRRWM blog, this includes:

- Ash, Hayleigh, Sophie, MF and Oriel; Youth Co-researchers from CYZ
- Lauren Wyatt, Co-production Worker, BeingBeing Foundation
- Emily Hopley, Co-researcher BeingBeing Foundation
- Georgia Denham, Senior Youth Worker, CYZ
- Ro Borgia, Youth Worker, CYZ
- Professor Amanda M.L. Taylor-Beswick, University of Cumbria and volunteer at CYZ

WALKING THE TALK OF YOUTH CO-RESEARCH

Get Research Ready with Me (GRRWM) is a new project for all of us and whilst we all have our own specific reasons for taking part, we share a curiosity about how research can be more genuinely inclusive of different backgrounds, ideas and priorities so that the focus and findings can inform work that will make an actual difference.

Amanda, Lauren and Emily already have experience of co-research, including with young people. One of the experiences was with the Resilience Revolution in Blackpool which has led to Lauren and Emily now becoming paid Youth Co-researchers in the town (we have put some links to their work at the end of this blog). Amanda knew this already, and after listening to some of us who attend CYZ Senior Youth Club (Amanda is a volunteer at CYZ as well as working at the university), about issues we had views on, she started to connect us together to see if co-research might be a way we could turn our ideas in to change.

Our Youth Co-research Collective was born and GRRWM is our first project - we are already learning lots!



We have chosen to use 'Get Research Ready With Me' (GRRWM) as our project title as it draws on current youth culture, that involves posting videos on social media platforms, with the aim of providing a description of the steps necessary to get ready for an event or activity. These video's cover all sorts of 'getting ready', including getting ready for school, for work, for a night out, for the gym, for applying makeup, or for a date. They can be found by typing the #getreadywithme hashtag into an online platform. Our project is rooted in peer-to-peer knowledge and skills exchange, and so we wanted to find a name and a framing which is relevant to us and our social worlds. In practice, this meant that the getting research ready workshops needed to be facilitated by people who are already youth co-researchers >> Lauren and Emily << and who know what getting ready to do research can involve. Thanks to some small research funding from University of Cumbria which we applied for, Lauren and Emily from the **BeingBeing Foundation** in Blackpool, were actually able to travel to **Carlisle Youth Zone** to join our collective. As it happens, none of us actually like being on film! So we have adapted and found other creative ways to share our steps to getting research ready.



AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE 'HOW' IN GETTING RESEARCH READY IS BEING OPEN TO FLEXING AND TO HEARING EVERYONE'S VOICE AND IDEAS (AND CONCERNS), SO THAT WE CAN CHOOSE METHODS THAT MEAN EVERYONE (OR AT LEAST MORE PEOPLE) CAN TAKE PART.

This first phase of GRRWM involved sessions and activities that were designed to **CONNECT** us through a series of online spark activities; to **ENGAGE** us through a one-day peer-to-peer co-research workshop; and then to **MOBILISE** us to reflect on and share our learning. This blog focuses on our experiences of the workshop and has been written through a range of 'mobilise' activities including a shared online space where we can all add content, and Amanda coming in to Senior Youth Club (a 'research residency') so we can keep working in-person together.

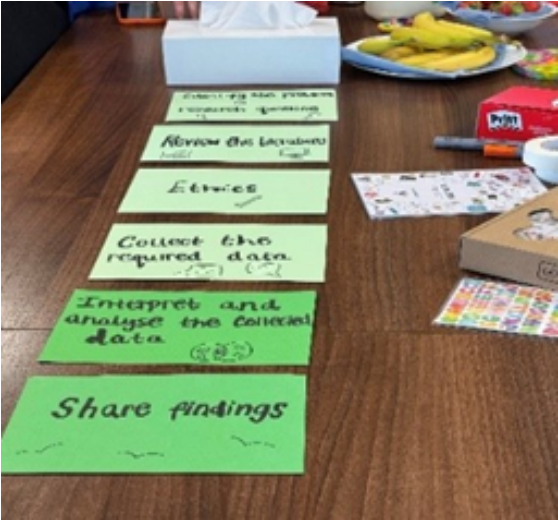
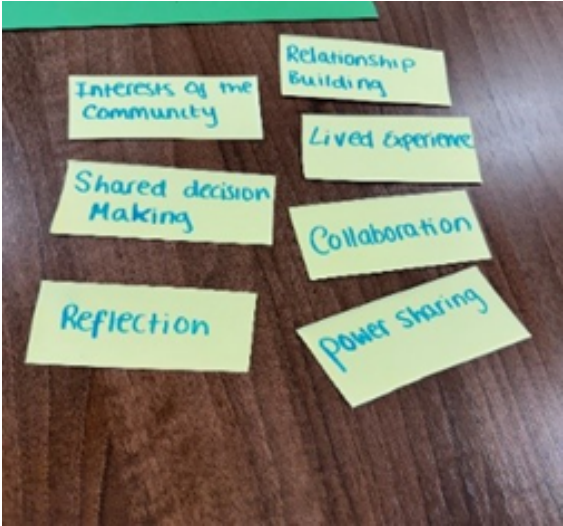
CONNECT

ENGAGE

MOBILISE

On to our **ENGAGE** workshop, which was on Saturday 1st February 2025 from 11am – 4pm at CYZ, and involved a GRRWM takeover CYZ's top floor (did you know the Youth Zone has 3 floors?!), which is normally reserved for team meetings and training but on this day involved our colourful beanbags, snacks (we had all made our requests in advance!) and music. Some of us already knew each other but not everyone and it was important for us to recognise that this project was different to how we usually come together in Youth Club. Activities were organised to ensure that we all got to take part in conversations, share opinions and interests about topics that were new from the ones we normally talk about.

WE LEARNT THAT TO GET RESEARCH READY AND TO DO YOUTH CO-RESEARCH WELL, YOU NEED TO MAKE SPACE AND GIVE VALUE TO SPENDING TIME GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, TRUST AND UNDERSTANDING.



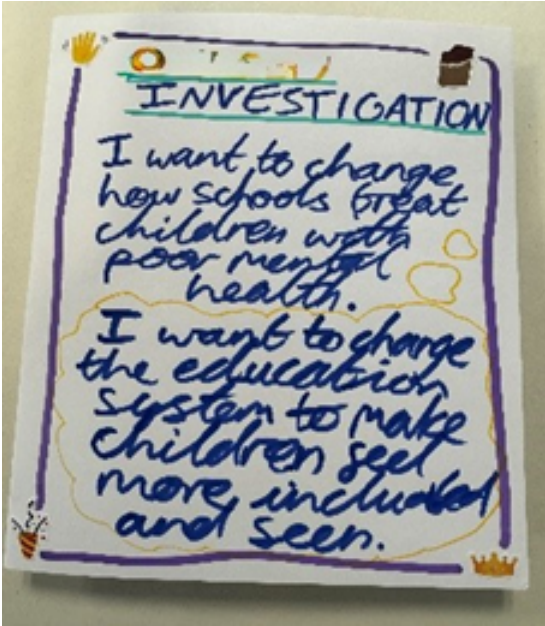
From our **CONNECT** activities, we found that most of us enjoyed thinking and learning in creative and practical ways. This meant that Lauren and Emily had prepared to share their knowledge of getting research ready through using and making some creative outputs. But first we began by learning about and organising the elements of a research process. We worked as a team and got the order of a research project right first time!

Following this we created investigation cards which explored what we each would like to change and find out about in our communities, schools or systems we interact with. Here are some examples:

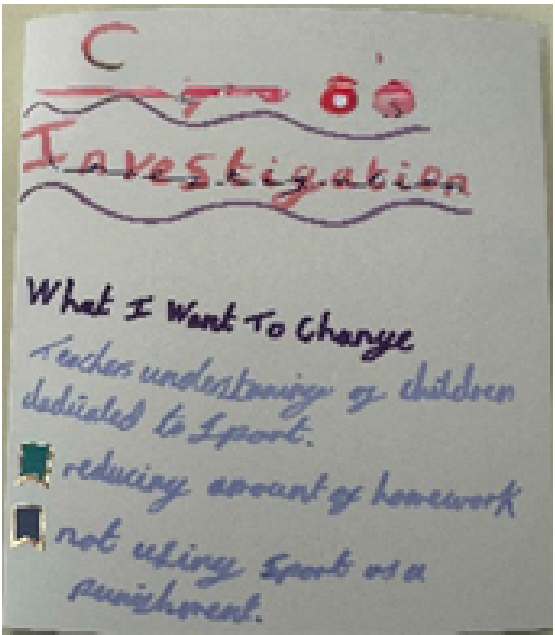
"THE DAY WAS INTERESTING AND GAVE SOME IMPORTANT INSIGHTS AND PERSPECTIVES THAT WE HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT, FOR EXAMPLE, POWER SHARING INTERPRETATIONS"

"THE PEOPLE FROM BOINGBOING FOUNDATION KNEW WHAT THEY WERE DOING!"

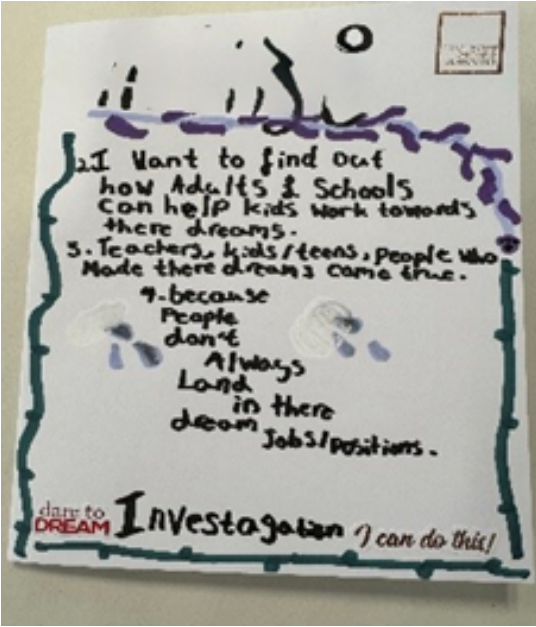
Throughout the day we unpacked the difference between research and co-research, exploring some of the elements that make co-research 'co'. For example, we did an activity with beanbags visually displaying power dynamics, arranging the beanbags so that one beanbag had more power than the others. This was important because in co-research there should be a big effort to consider power dynamics and how to level them out or at the least be aware of them and how they impact group dynamics. This was also so we had a better understanding of what it might mean to be involved in co-research and who might want to **LISTEN** to it, so we could consider how we might get ready to do it.



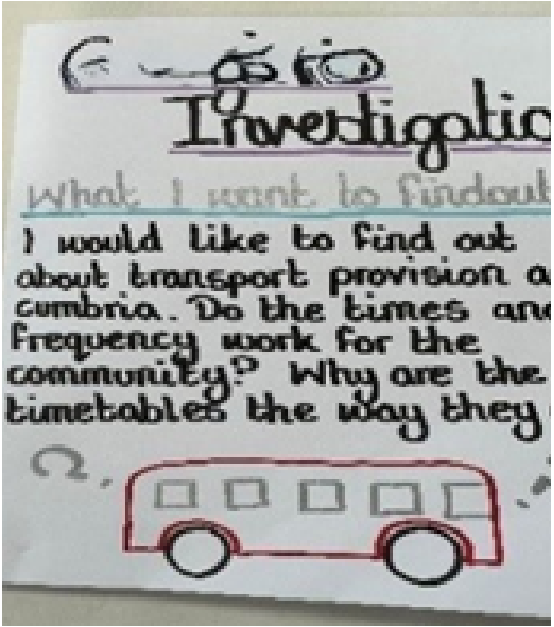
MENTAL HEALTH



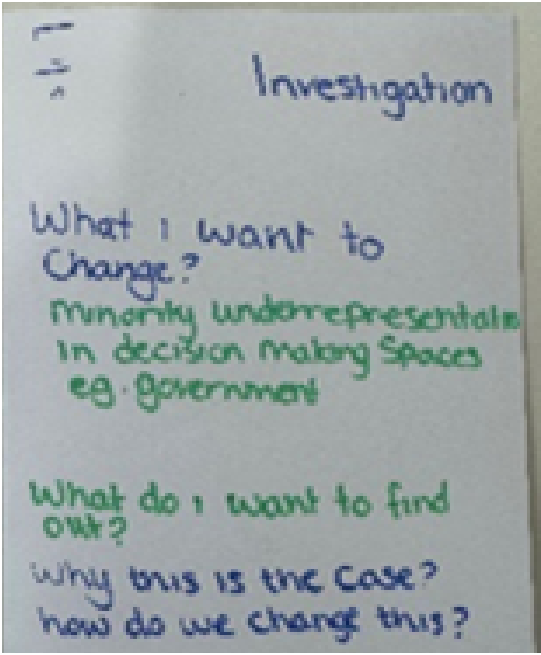
SPORT IN SCHOOLS



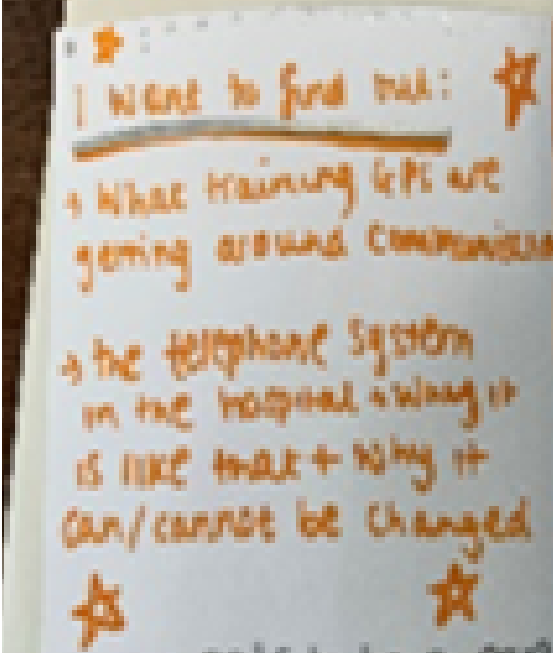
ACHIEVING DREAMS



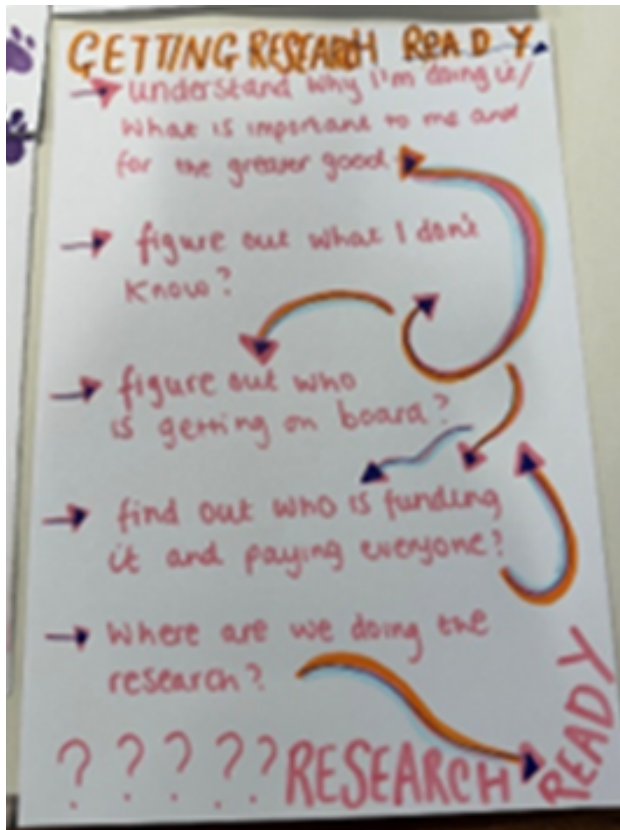
TRANSPORT



DECISION MAKING








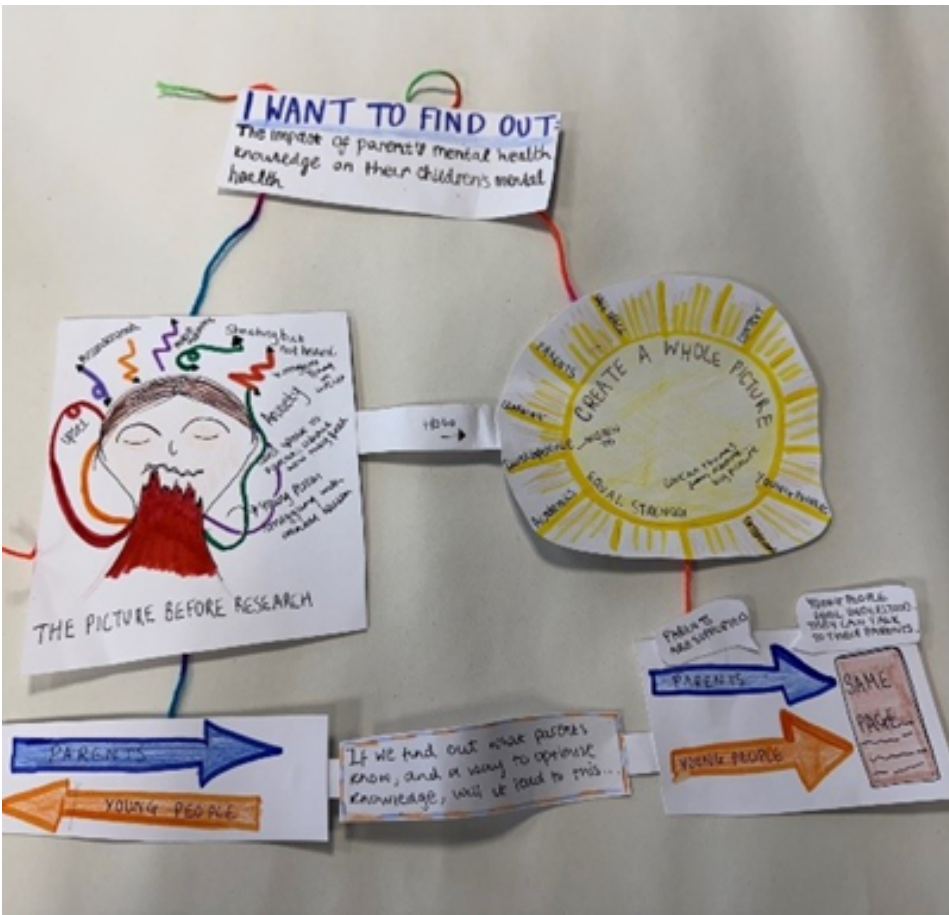
GP COMMUNICATION



**"WE DID A LOT IN THE
TIME WE HAD BUT IT
WASN'T TOO MUCH"**

"INSPIRING!"

-  Spend some time thinking about **the things that are important to you** (you can write these down, illustrate them in art form, or share them verbally for someone else to draft out)
-  Spend some time thinking about **how** you will go about your research (see our examples about steps involved above)
-  Spend some time thinking about **the people you need** to get involved in your research team and in being research participants (think wide and big)
-  Spend some time thinking about **the resources you have** and those you will need to find (enlist people to help)
-  **Don't give up** – the things that are important to you will be important to other young people and some adults too



**"IT WAS GREAT MEETING
PEOPLE WHO THINK THE
SAME AS ME. IT WAS A
FUN DAY, AND I LEARNT A
LOT OF NEW THINGS."**

Here are some of the other blogs that Amanda, Lauren and Emily have written and that we have been learning from:

- Nothing About Us Without Us; Working as a co-research team exploring Civic Activism as a mental health intervention (July 2021)
- Reshaping the Research Ready Communities Pilot Project (2023)

JOIN US - CUMBRIA YOUTH CO-RESEARCH COLLECTIVE

If you are interested in what we are learning and doing, we would love to hear from you, to connect, and to join with other young people involved in research. If none of these things apply but you can use your role, position, voice to share our project, please do like, share, repost or circulate our blog post, across Cumbria, and far and wide!

SATURDAY 22ND MARCH
11 - 4PM
CARLISLE YOUTH ZONE

