

Comic by Jordan Collver & Rik Worth
with Havi Carel, Charlotte Withers, Catherine Lamont-Robinson

EPISTEMIC JUSTICE means recognising and respecting young people as speakers and knowers.

Here are young people's suggestions for promoting epistemic justice:*

LISTEN

- Listen without bias and avoid snap judgements.
- Meet young people where they are, without treating them "like a kid."
- Take an interest in young people on their own terms: get to know who they are and what's important to them.
- Good listening builds trust: "if an adult listens to the small stuff, they will listen to the big things."

BELIEVE

- Take young people seriously.
- Being treated with trust, fairness, and respect is important to young people.
- Reflect on whether age, reputation or assumptions affect whether we believe what they say.
- Be willing to side with young people, even when difficult.
- Be willing to hold other adults to account, recognising they may be mistaken.

TAKE ACTION

- Help young people make sense of their experiences in their own way; especially when they don't fit adult assumptions.
- Simple acts, like asking how young people are, show genuine care and build mutual respect.
- Ask what we might be missing. Professional knowledge doesn't replace a young person's understanding of their own experience.
- Have a way for young people to report issues anonymously. This removes bias about the informant.
- Involve young people in decisions and show how they shape what happens next. Let their knowledge make a difference.

* *created in collaboration with the Young People's Advisory Group at the University of Bristol, 2026. YPAG lead: Lucy Condon Workshop facilitator: Catherine Lamont-Robinson.*

EPIC is a Wellcome-funded research project (226603/Z/22/Z) tackling epistemic injustice. For more info, scan the QR code or visit:
www.EpistemicInjusticeinHealthcare.org

EPIC

University of BRISTOL

wellcome

How do young people experience

EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE?



Adult life and work can be hard – tiring, conflicting priorities, and never enough time. Often, you get little say in what's happening.

But for children and young people navigating a world not built for them, unique injustices can manifest in subtle but frequent ways.

An *EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE* is a harm done to someone by unfairly reducing their ability to share knowledge and make sense of their experiences.

Epistemic = relating to knowledge



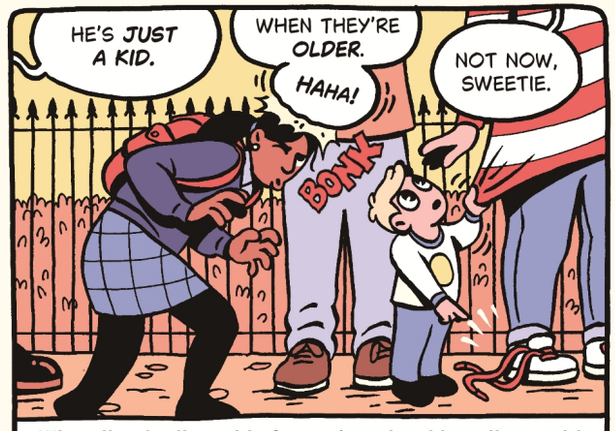
...a young person's opinions are dismissed because adults "just know better."



When it's assumed they're just making things up.



When they're pre-judged because of their age, always "up to no good."



When they're thought of as naive about how the world really works, their perspectives ignored.



When their experiences are considered generic, uniqueness erased.

When they're blamed as a group ...



... not seen as individuals.

When adults are quick to suspect young people's complaints.



Being treated this way makes young people feel small, disrespected, voiceless.



Adults who work with young people see epistemic injustice, so are uniquely positioned to address it.

But how?



Once we recognise and understand the problem, we can start *making space* for young people's voices in a grown-up world.