



**NZ YOUTH
MENTORING
NETWORK**

SUMMER 2019/2020



Connections



The Newsletter
of the NZ Youth
Mentoring Network

E hara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini : My strength is not as an individual, but as a collective



Sharing experiences with Micheal Moeau from Te Tai Tokerau

FROM THE NETWORK



Reflections on Quality Relationships in Youth Mentoring workshops

I sense a shift, an upgrade in youth mentoring practice. I feel mentoring programmes are increasingly connected and collaborating to enable wonderful things with young people.

'Quality Relationships in Youth Mentoring' is a kaupapa about the dynamic between the mentor and the mentee. However, we must also be aware of the multidimensional relationships that surround this core partnership, and consider how healthy are the other connections in our network?

The workshop was created in a diverse and dynamic relationship, mirroring the kaupapa. We connected with each other in large online video conferences, through phone calls and hui kanohi-ki-te-kanohi. The wairua through these conversations was mana-enhancing, warm and critical – in both senses of the word; I felt we could challenge and critique each other, whilst also believing this was critically important, urgent and essential.

As we've travelled the country, visited communities and discovered the reality of youth mentoring initiatives, I've consistently been astonished at the humility, enthusiasm, openness and tenacity of local people doing amazing things AND how congruent this is with other communities across the motu. We seem to be singing the same song! I'm so pleased we've been able to share and extend this kaupapa– and I'm excited to see where it may go once the roadshow wraps up. My hope is that our strengthened networks and relationships continue to explore the wisdom of Te Ao Māori, as well as the broader literature referred to, for the benefit of young people and their whānau.

Rod Baxter, Workshop Developer and Facilitator

Generosity – The best way forward

Tohaina ō painga ki te ao : Share your gifts with the world

As we all observed in the tragic events in Christchurch this year, we carry the potential to move through barriers, stigmas, competition, fear and disconnection, to reach for a better way - be it tolerance, love, compassion, or as it is in our line of work – the power of mentoring.

As the National Coordinator of Big Brothers Big Sisters, I champion within our organisation the need to not just promote the incredible programme we offer, the wonderful work our mentors do, but to champion at every opportunity, the organisations who run alongside us, who are also working tirelessly in reaching and changing the lives of our young people.

Big Brothers Big Sisters has an impressive legacy, over 100 years of proven international impact. However, if we are not able to work well in our communities, with other agencies and programmes, then we will always be limited in delivering the best outcomes for youth. None of us can achieve that alone.

An unfortunate downside of our current not-for-profit sector is that although it provides life changing social services, it is also a sector where those good-willed organisations are forced to compete with each other for the limited funding available from the same limited pots. This has unfortunately created an unhelpful culture of competition.

Among the many mentoring organisations across the country, this culture told us to 'protect our patch' and, out of a fear of 'scarcity' and 'preservation', has caused many of us to hold back from encouraging each other and being willing to share resources, knowledge and experience.

I truly believe we are 'bigger' than this culture and can rise to the challenge to not compete, to rest assured in knowing that as one programme grows and benefits, there are ways to share the success around. In championing MENTORING as an overarching concept despite the programme or organisation that delivers it, by working together to raise awareness and educate the public about the POWER OF MENTORING as a whole and promoting its 'unbranded' impact I truly believe we will all see wider benefits and a great return for our own 'patch'. Let's not forget that by us 'coming together' as a network it will be the lives of so many more of our tamariki and rangatahi that ultimately benefit.

Comment from Rachel Hewitt, National Coordinator Big Brothers Big Sisters



Regional workshops

Over the last year, thanks to the Tindall Foundation, we have shared the Quality Relationships workshop with close to 450 mentors in 15 regional centres from Te Tai Tokerau to Otākou. We have a few more to go in 2020.

During the workshops we have collected ideas about what mentors need to build the best relationships possible with young people. One of the biggest responses is that mentors want to network with others to share good practice. They were also, unsurprisingly, keen to learn new skills and were seeking some very practical advice. One mentor said his aim was *“to learn something new and to have a reminder of what I know.”* Others were more specific wanting ways to build rapport with teenagers, finding ways to connect despite the challenge of risky behaviour. As one mentor said she wanted to learn how to

“ Develop achievable goals for young people and work with them to enable future growth. ”

A clear purpose for these workshops has been building capability in effective and safe practices when working with youth across Aotearoa. These workshops have been a true network experience. We have worked with over 100 non-government organisations, including iwi services. There have been participants from over 25 schools and kura and close to 40 individuals. Some of the mentors had a wealth of experience but a number were only a few months into the work, but all were seeking a *“greater understanding of ways to engage more productively with young people”*.

The Exceptional Range and Reach of Mentoring

Tēnā te ngaru whati, tēnā te ngaru puku : There is a wave that breaks, there is a wave that swells.

Mentoring is an ancient and profound practice, arising spontaneously in human societies – an intuitive force for the good of young and old, that becomes more intentional and effective with reflection and deeper knowledge.

While much high-quality mentoring is delivered by skilled professionals in youth-focused fields, this special dimension of shared humanity can operate in the full range of interactions between adults and young people. Pivotal moments of personal growth happen spontaneously, when people are spending time together for some shared activity, then the kindness and care of mentoring words or actions send a powerful message of personal worth, to address a young person’s needs.

Mentoring is a relationship - a dimension of our humanity, not a profession. NZYMN cannot operate as a membership organisation but needs to be available to the full range of people who willingly volunteer their time and life knowledge for the well-being of our rangatahi, whatever the context that makes this mentoring possible.

Researcher Jean Rhodes recognises that one good relationship can transform a life; it can become the means by which

a young person connects positively with others. **Significant adults** acting as mentors offer **mutuality, trust and empathy** - essential elements for these life changing relationships to develop, over time.

As one young man from South Auckland says about the person who volunteers to support his literacy

“ ... is the best-ever reading tutor I have ever met in my life and he really cares about me, because he comes to see me play rugby even on the coldest, rainy winter days. I look up and there he is. ”



The second Quality Relationships workshop in Te Tai Tokerau





The Highly Effective Mentor (HEM) project



Dr Pat Bullen, from the University of Auckland's Faculty of Education and Social Work, is a leading researcher in the field of mentoring. She and colleague, Dr Kelsey Deane, lead the mentoring programme Campus Connections Aotearoa | Tūhono Aiopipi.

I sat down with her to discuss some of her latest work. We talked about the Highly Effective Youth Mentor (HEM) project she is leading in partnership with Brothers in Arms.

Q What did you set out to discover?

A The project really started with a visit to Aotearoa from Professor Renée Spencer, a leading youth mentoring researcher based in the US. Among other things, Renée has written extensively on why matches fail. During her visit we discussed developing a collaborative project that focusses on the factors that contribute to highly successful matches. I also felt this project really spoke to my interest in positive youth development and factors that contribute to thriving.

Q Who did you work with?

A The project was guided by Renée's work and supported by a Faculty Research Development Grant

here at the University of Auckland. My Research Assistant Kiri Wilder has also been a key member of the team. This project is shaped by Tom Keller's Systemic Model of Youth Mentoring. Tom proposes that if we want to understand what is happening for the young person, we must take a holistic view by also looking at the influence of the mentor, the family, the programme supervisors. We completed interviews with 8 clusters of mentors, whānau, and young people – 24 interviews in total. For this project we were only interested in highly effective matches and were able to partner with Brothers in Arms, an organisation that had a long history of success in New Zealand. Brothers in Arms identified the matches and were instrumental in connecting us with the participants.

Q What did you find out?

A The data collection phase took far longer than we anticipated so we are still at an early stage of analysis, but we have been having a close look at what whānau are telling us.

- **The match:** Whānau comment that the right match is critical, and they appreciate the time and care the programme took with matching their young person with the right mentor.
- **Whānau engagement:** Whānau noted the importance of mentor-whānau interactions. Although they respected the mentor-young person relationship, several whānau talked about the how of the mentor became part of the family.
- **Mentor characteristics:** Whānau also discussed how important it was for the mentor to be non-judgmental and to get to know the young person and their story. Whānau observed the unique way mentors seemed to interact with their young person. How mentors seemed to be able to tune into their young person's needs

and adapt their approach based on how the young person was feeling.

Q What does this mean for mentoring in Aotearoa?

A It seems to me that this level of whānau engagement may be particularly important to the Aotearoa context. Programmes need to be aware that whānau buy-in and participation matters, right from the beginning of the relationship. It is important that programmes include whānau engagement in their mentor training. This should include how to navigate and respect the needs of the whānau as well as the needs of their young person. Programmes should also ensure they are providing regular supervision to their mentors, especially those working in the community. This will give mentors ongoing support to work with young people and their whānau in a safe and respectful way. Regular check-ins with whānau as well as the young person are also essential.

Q What are your next steps?

A We are keen to analyse the clusters. This incredibly rich data set will allow us to look at the perspectives of the different groups who play an important role in the mentoring relationships. We will also be able to examine shared, as well as discrepant views within clusters. It is our hope that the findings from this research will enhance youth mentoring practice by increasing our understanding of the factors that lead to highly effective mentoring relationships. This work will also allow us to explore possible contextual differences between the US and Aotearoa. We are excited to see where the findings will lead us and confident this work will make an important contribution to our understanding of youth mentoring locally and globally.

Joy Eaton, General Manager NZYMN

Youth Strategy

The second half of 2019 saw some major developments in a national strategy for people working with youth. After extensive consultation across the motu Ara Taiohi, the peak body for youth development, launched *Mana Taiohi*, a principle-based framework for those who work with young people in Aotearoa, see <https://arataiohi.org.nz/resources/training-and-resources/mana-taiohi/>. The framework identifies 4 elements of mana that young people have – Mauri (life force), Whakapapa (family connections), Hononga (holistic connections), Te Ao (their world). It then goes on to highlight 4 elements that enhance this mana – Whanaungatanga (quality relationships), Manaakitanga (kindness and respect), Whai Wāhitanga (social contribution), Mātauranga (good information).

These are powerful concepts that form the foundation of all developmental relationships for future work with youth in Aotearoa.

In August the government launched its *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy* <https://childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz> and the Ministry of Youth Development started its consultation to draw together a national Youth Plan. The strategy has six key indicators of success – that children and young people are loved, safe and nurtured, they have what they need, they are happy and healthy, they are learning and developing, they are accepted, respected and connected, and they are involved and empowered. These elements underpin the government's actions relating to our young people and form the fundamental beliefs that will lead to an improved, fair and progressive society in a future Aotearoa.

COMET Auckland AGM

October 2019 saw the COMET Auckland Annual Meeting held in the hidden gem that is the Metro Theatre, in Massey Road, Mangere East. It was a celebration of COMET's 20 years as advocates for Education in the Auckland scene. The meeting showcased five aspects of their work

- **Strategic Leadership:** working towards evidence-based systems change through connecting leaders to plan collaborative action, giving key stakeholders the important data.
- **Talking Matters:** COMET's key project that advocates for early language development by the actions of adults deliberately talking to children.

- **Youth Employability:** teaching and learning by experience the 'soft skills' young people need to succeed in the workplace.
- **Mātauranga Māori and Rangatahi Consultation:** key platforms for iwi, educators and young people to develop and share approaches to enhance Māori success in education.
- **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics: projects to boost student interest in the sciences.

After 20 years, COMET Auckland is still working hard for the young people of Tāmaki Makaurau. Read about their work at www.cometauckland.org.nz.

Joy Eaton

NZYMN: Upcoming events

Sharing the Kaupapa: Quality Relationships in Youth Mentoring

Three workshops remain to complete this series in 2020. Details will be available on our website www.youthmentoring.org.nz

- Wellington, 12th February 2020
- Auckland, 4th March 2020
- Invercargill, 25th March 2020.

Mentor Plus Workshop

This 2-day workshop is designed to explore foundational skills in mentoring and is an introduction to the practical skills of being a mentor. Our next workshop will be in May 2020. Details will be available on our website www.youthmentoring.org.nz.

INVOLVE 2020: Our Waka, New Seas

A national conference for all involved in the youth sector to come together to connect, share, learn, grow and celebrate our diversity and strengths. Website www.involve.org.nz or follow on Facebook.

- 17/18/19 August 2020, Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington

Calls for presentations will be open mid-December 2019 and close in February 2020.

See www.involve.org.nz for details.

Health Resources for those who mentor migrants and former refugees

Dr Samantha Bennett, the Asian, Migrant & Former Refugee Health Gain Manager, Auckland and Waitemata DHBs, has some important resources to share with mentors who work with young people and their families from Asian, Migrant & Former Refugee backgrounds.

Resources have been developed that may assist your communities:

- **Your Local Doctor website** to promote enrolment with a family doctor/GP, <http://www.yourlocaldoctor.co.nz/>
- Various **NZ health system resources** and health service information and multilingual **NZ Health & Disability System podcast videos** have been uploaded to YouTube for ease of viewing on smart phones, visit <http://www.yourlocaldoctor.co.nz/useful/>

- **English:** <http://www.yourlocaldoctor.co.nz/useful/english-videos/>
- **Mandarin:** <http://www.yourlocaldoctor.co.nz/useful/chinese-videos/>
- **Hindi:** <http://www.yourlocaldoctor.co.nz/useful/hindi-videos/>.

There are also flyers on the **Healthcare - where should I go?** <http://www.yourlocaldoctor.co.nz/useful/the-nz-health-system/>.

— Newsletter is available on our website —

www.youthmentoring.org.nz

LIFTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
YOUTH MENTORING IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

