

Kaiparahuarahi

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BEYOND RĀHUI INTO **RECOVERY**: Responsive Youth Work in the **COVID-19** Pandemic



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BEYOND RĀHUI INTO RECOVERY: Responsive Youth Work in the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Dedication

This issue of Kaiparahuarahi is dedicated to the team of 5 million, our leaders, the essential workers and particularly our taiohi who inspired us to stay home, stay safe and be kind to one another. He waka eke noa.

Editorial

He waka eke noa.

'In the eye of a hurricane there is quiet, for just a moment...'

Lin-Manuel Miranda

This issue of Kaiparahuarahi captures a strange moment in time. It shares our thoughts, experiences, what was important to us and most of all, just how quickly it all happened.

It celebrates that we stood up and got through it, but acknowledges that it was hard. This issue is about youth work during a global pandemic. We discovered how the Mana Taiohi principle Te Ao can rapidly connect something global with the local and the personal. We'd like to open this issue by remembering what happened, and acknowledge Te Ao.

In late December 2019, a Chinese ophthalmologist, Li Wenliang was censured by police for warning others of an outbreak of a SARS-like illness among his patients. As 2019 became 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported a cluster of unusual pneumonia cases in Wuhan, China. By early January the world media slowly began to report on a novel coronavirus being transmitted across this region. Within a week or two, the virus was appearing in other nations. February revealed the virus' name: COVID-19.

As the WHO ramped up their response, we here in Aotearoa were enjoying our summer, perhaps following the reports through the news, but generally blissfully unaware of what was coming our way. Our news began to be dominated by stories of outbreaks of the virus in Italy, Iran and across Asia. We heard reports of cruise ships struck

down by the virus, and sent an Air New Zealand flight to Wuhan to bring a group of Kiwis home. We started to hear from a certain Dr Ashley Bloomfield, our Director-General of Health.

For most of us, we were preoccupied with enjoying the last of the summer holidays, planning a new year of mahi or study, preparing to welcome or farewell family members and thinking about where our passion for youth work might take us this year. A new year, with new goals, challenges, achievements and experiences.

Throughout February we became more engaged with what was occurring across the world. Our borders to impacted nations begin to close. Supermarkets and pharmacies reported that people were stock-piling toilet paper, sanitiser, masks and tinned food - colloquially criticised as 'panic-buying'. And as February became March, we recorded our first reported case here in Aotearoa. This was soon followed by others.

We were washing our hands more frequently, using our elbows to say hello, and beginning to stay home and cancel plans. Thanks to the work of amazing science communicators like Siouxsie Wiles, and the creativity of others like Toby Morris, we learned new words and concepts, and began to appreciate virology. It became more apparent that this virus is more than "just" a flu.

On Wednesday 11 March, the WHO declared an official global pandemic. Cases in New Zealand were slowly increasing. Auckland's Pasifika was cancelled, the Black Caps played to an empty stadium, and people were whispering about where to find Cottonsofts. Self-isolation for international travellers returning to Aotearoa was compulsory. The epicentre of the pandemic relocated to Europe as thousands died. A memorial service for the Christchurch terrorist attack was cancelled.

Time started to slow as each day had significance...

17 March: the first inaugural Korowai Tupu members hui. We greeted each other with foot-taps, elbow bumps, sanitiser and hand-washing. Many cancelled their attendance as the needs of whānau, mahi and taiohi ramped up and staying home feels safer. For many long-lost friends, it felt weird not to hug.

19 March: Dr Bloomfield cancelled all gatherings of more than 100 people and our Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

announced that our borders were closed to all but New Zealand citizens and permanent residents. We were told to expect big news over the next few days.

20 March: it was announced that the Involve conference will both be postponed (kanohi ki te kanohi) and moved online. For many, this was their last day in the workplace for some time.

21 March: in a direct address from her office in the Beehive, our Prime Minister announced a four-level alert system in response to suspected community transmission. We were confronted with what these levels might mean for us. We were immediately placed at Level 2: Reduce, and to expect rapid change.

23 March: Dr Bloomfield confirmed community transmission. The PM immediately moved us to Level 3: Restrict. People were told to go home; some could work, but many couldn't. Schools were closed and our new message was to stay home, save lives. We were given 48 hours until we moved to Level 4: Eliminate.

25 March 2020: Lockdown. Rāhui. A state of national emergency. Bubbles. Daily news briefings at 1pm aka the Jacinda and Ashley show, essential viewing. Essential workers. Skype, teams, Zoom. Teddy-bears in windows, empty motorways, baking banana bread. Isolation.

And somewhere in among all of this... youth work.

Youth work experienced the sunshine and normality of January, the slow-burn and challenge of February, the fear and disruption of March, the long slog of April, the nervousness and anxiety of May and a unified re-emergence in June. Youth workers survived the sudden shut down, the slow process of coming back into the world, the return to a new-normal and the reality of an uncertain and frequently tense, changing and challenging world.

Youth work flexed across this time. We moved quickly and competently to meet and exceed the expectations of our communities. Many youth workers were deemed essential workers, some were supporting young people who were essential workers, and others were wrestling with the complexity of how to be a youth worker online. Some were in their community delivering food, medicines, basket-ball hoops and checking on those now severely isolated.

This issue celebrates and highlights that mahi. It is intentionally informal, and intentionally left in the tense that it was written. It's a part of our national time capsule of this hurricane we found ourselves in, and at the time of writing, still are.

In our last issue we explored Mana Taiohi: Ngā Tikanga Whanaketanga / Youth Development Principles Aotearoa. Mana Taiohi's principles are evident in our collective and natural response to this pandemic.

We quickly turned to mātauranga to ensure we practiced safely and effectively. Ara Taiohi and many others moved quickly to share information around how we could work safely over this time, while also keeping ourselves well, safe, supported and connected. Supervision became comfortable via video, and we increased our time in professional development. Webinars (such as Ara Taiohi's Kōrero Cafe series), shared resources and reliable information became important. Innovations, funding

applications, board meetings and planning didn't stop and in some cases increased. We leaned into the manaakitanga of our communities, sharing what we had and asking for what we needed.

We continued to meet young people in their worlds, with taiohi leading in this space, showing those of us who are "youth adjacent" how to make it all work. Their rangatira-tanga in Te Ao Taiohi shone through, whai wāhitanga embodied. We saw the mauri and mana of young people enhanced and heightened in this new present on so many levels. Zui, digital bingo, Youth Week online, TikTok, movie nights and Messenger chat groups, were just a small sample of ways we came together to do what we needed to do with young people. We stayed connected and connecting - hononga and whanaungatanga. Many of us experienced a deeper connection to the whenua as we slowed down and stopped, to our own communities and to the stories of our whānau and how we belong - our whakapapa.

Kaiparahuarahi is an emerging journal. We have attempted, thus far, to be responsive and reflective of the current expression of youth work. This issue shares a series of blogs exploring ethical issues we suddenly discovered, written during the breadth of our nationwide rāhui. Also included are reflections from youth workers across the motu after lockdown ended, and a celebration of the electronic talanoa that welcomed new members into Korowai Tupu over this time.

We share an interview with one of Ara Taiohi's Board Members about a new initiative from her mahi that began over lockdown.

And we are so excited to include a piece from students working towards their Bachelor of Youth Development showcasing their leadership over the rāhui - we can all learn a lot from their passion, innovation and aroha.

We face an uncertain future on so many levels; right now Aotearoa retains its hard earned calm in the eye of the global hurricane. The challenges the taiohi and tamariki of this time will face is like nothing we have experienced in many a generation. Rapid societal change, economic uncertainty, and the potential for increased inequity on a range of levels are only some of the things we will continue to face and to challenge.

Youth work is a passion, but it is also a profession grounded by research and experience, shared standards of practice, ethically sound and growing. We have learnt and grown through this storm, and will need to continue to do so as we come through the other side. Youth work is one of the most effective tools we have to support our taiohi and tamariki as we build this new world together. We need to continue to come together as a sector to strengthen one another, to support one another and grow the mana of what we do while remaining connected to why we do it.

To paraphrase our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern, we have proven that it is best to be both compassionate and strong. We will need both of these virtues moving forward - he waka eke noa.

Nikki, Rod and Jane
August 2020

Tensions, ethics and COVID-19

Blog 1 from Jane Zintl, 6 April 2020



This current global pandemic has pushed Youth Workers into challenging places with competing tensions:

- The tension of being forced away from meeting with young people *kanohi-ki-te-kanohi*.
- The tension of looking after ourselves and our own *whānau*, as well as the young people we have relationships with.
- The tension of transferring what we know as good ethical decision making into an area that is new for many.
- The tension of our responsibility to keep young people safe, with the limitations of lockdown.
- The tension of increased uncertainty with funding.
- The tension of remaining culturally appropriate during intensely restricted conditions.
- The tension of navigating the digital divide, and not increasing the inequity experienced by so many young people.

As everyone is saying, these are unprecedented times.

The good news is that we, as Youth Workers, are experts at navigating ethical tensions. Youth Work has never been black and white. Ethical tensions are an indication that there are competing factors that need to be considered. Often the most challenging ethical decisions are not the extreme circumstances (for example sexual abuse of a young person), because whilst the situation is heart breaking, the ethical actions required are clear. Tensions arise in the grey. Youth Work has a lot of grey. As a relational, *mana*-enhancing profession, our boundaries often require a higher level of flexibility than others (we are often not bound by time and place in our practice). Being intentional about our boundaries is even more important. Our experience in navigating ethical tensions is needed now more than ever.

This blog is only the first step in exploring ethical tensions, and it's the first in a new series. We'll offer scenarios and unpack ethical dimensions, relevant clauses in our Code of Ethics¹ (COE) and offer reflective questions for you to consider. At the end of this blog there are a bunch of other resources.

Scenario

A Youth Worker is struggling under lockdown. Their parents are isolated and in their 70's. They work with a large group of young people in a city, who mostly have access to technology and wifi. Two of the young people they are working with were already in homes that were less than ideal. They are very worried about the safety of these two young people.

Ethical Tensions, Code Connections and Reflective Questions

Tension 1: Primary responsibility and self-care

Clause 1 of the COE acknowledges the many demands on a Youth Worker and defines our *primary relationship* as being with the young people they engage with. There are challenges with this when we consider a collective worldview, as opposed to an individualistic worldview (this is a discussion for another day).

Our primary relationship responsibility (which is clause 1 for a reason!), is in tension with clause 17 (*Tiakitanga/ looking after yourself*) which states that ethical youth work practice is based on the social, emotional, mental, physical, spiritual, *whānau* and cultural wellbeing of youth workers.

How can we put our primary focus on young people, especially vulnerable young people, when our energy and attention is also needed to look after our own wellbeing? I believe the key for this is thinking long-term, not short-term. The second sentence in clause 17.1, also focuses on personal and relational wellbeing: *allows youth workers to develop their full potential and equips them to best serve young people*.

We cannot fulfil our primary relationship responsibility unless we look after ourselves, and our own whānau. This might feel selfish to some, however, it is actually selfless, as it acknowledges that our enduring relationships with young people will continue long after lockdown, and believe it or not, COVID-19. This need for 'self-care' creates a limitation (clause 9), which requires us to seek assistance outside of ourselves, and even outside of our own organisations should we need to.

Tension 1 - Reflective questions:

1. What do young people actually need right now? How can you acknowledge their resilience, capability and mauri?
2. Who else is supporting the young people you are working with (clause 14)? What contact have you made with them?
3. How is your team/network working together to support one another, allowing for people to tag in and out as required?

If you are concerned, and just cannot be as present with a young person as you want please check out this Immediate Risk Referral sheet to find places that are available to support young people - <https://tinyurl.com/y63ltqay>.

Tension 2: Safety of vulnerable young people:

Clause 23 of the Code states that it is a youth worker's responsibility to maintain the safety of young people in any service, programme, event or activity provided. Pre-lockdown we have already heard from Youth Workers who have actively supported young people away from accommodation situations that are now unsafe for them in lockdown. This includes paying for transport back to home towns, and considering taking young people into their homes.

Empowerment (clause 21) states that youth workers, as part of the young person's wider community, seek to empower young people, ensuring they have a greater say in decisions that affect them. Sometimes in our concern for young people, especially when in high risk, low control situations, we can slip into 'rescuing' mode and look to takeover for a young person. Clause 20.3 (self-determination) acknowledges where a young person lacks capacity, we might need to act in a way to protect the young person's rights and welfare. However even then, we must as much as possible ensure the power in decision making rests with the young person.

Confidentiality: Clause 6 outlines this. Making sure you are clear about the limits of confidentiality, and that you have explained these to your young people, especially those who are particularly vulnerable is essential.

Tension 2 - Reflective questions

1. If you are worried about a young person, have you looked at a safety plan?
2. Are you aware of your limitations (clause 9), and have you considered what other services might be needed (clause 14 and a risk referral sheet completed - see our website for a template)?

3. When is your next supervision session? If you don't receive supervision (clause 18) and would like to, Ara Taiohi has a supervisor directory on our website that might help.

Tension 3: Considering emergency accommodation and bringing young people into your home:

The Code of Ethics does not prevent this. Some Youth Work contexts prohibit this, and for good reason. However, in many Youth Work contexts our relational, mana enhancing, community spaces of operating mean we cannot eliminate this as a possibility. However, a Youth Worker should never be forced into this. We note a few important things to consider:

- a) Legally under the age of 16 you cannot take a young person out of their home without parental permission, or involving Oranga Tamariki, as this could be considered kidnapping.
- b) Where possible it is best for a young person to be with their extended whānau/community (Aunty, friend's home etc.).
- c) There are many emergency or respite accommodation services that might be better for a young person to connect to (although there are geographic and other potential limitations to this).

Tension 3 - Reflective Questions for Youth Workers who consider offering emergency accommodation for a very unsafe young person:

1. What is your home like? Who else is there? Is it clean? Do you have pets? Children? What impact will it have on them? What will this do to your bubble?
2. How will you maintain your relationship (clause 1) as a Youth Worker with the young person (as opposed to becoming a caregiver)? What might be unexpected gains or losses here? Who else in your wider community might be able to take this role?
3. What do your boundaries need to look like (clause 7)?
4. How will this impact on your relationship with the young person's whānau (clause 13)?
5. Who do you need to be transparent with (clause 4)?
6. What does informed consent look like, especially for under 16-year olds (clause 5)?
7. What aspects relating to the young person's culture do you need to consider (clause 13)?
8. Who can you talk to (supervisors (clause 18), colleagues, Ara Taiohi/Korowai Tupu practitioners (listed on the Ara Taiohi website)?
9. What are your organisation's policy requirements and restrictions?
10. Will this set a precedent for the future?

Alternative Reflective Questions for Youth Workers who cannot offer emergency accommodation for a very unsafe young person:

1. How else are you maintaining the young person's safety (clause 23)?
2. How are you maintaining your connection and relationship with the young person (whole Code!).
3. How are you looking after yourself? These situations can weigh heavily on us.

I would say this is one of the trickiest situations a Youth Worker might need to navigate. We know Oranga Tamariki and the Police and other services will be stretched. We know that there are concerns domestic violence is already rising. Youth Workers may well be called on during this season to make decisions that don't feel ideal, and might never be made in other circumstances. This is a reality. It is not something I envy. If you are in a situation like this, we'd love to support you. Please contact us for a chat so that we can support you with this.

Now what?

This blog is only the first step in exploring ethical tensions. We will add voices weekly, allowing us to explore new tensions as they arise. We've mentioned several resources that are currently hosted on the Ara Taiohi website, under the "digital youth sector hub" (at the time of printing):

- COE online
- Exploring ethical maturity
- Training events
- Immediate Risk referral sheet
- Directory of Support Services currently open

Please join our Facebook ethics group to share your thoughts, ideas and questions, kind of like a community 'ask Abbey' that we all get to contribute to, with a few practitioners leading the conversation on these or other ethical situations.

Stay well and stay tuned!

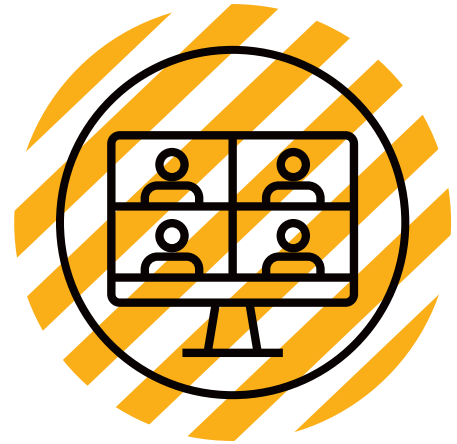
Jane Zintl leads the team at Ara Taiohi. She is passionate about the mana of Youth Work and youth workers, and ensuring there is support for this mana to be enhanced.

References:

- 1 Ara Taiohi, The Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa, 2nd Ed.
<https://arataiohi.org.nz/career/code-of-ethics/>

Digital ethics for Youth Work online

Blog 2 from Rod Baxter, originally written
14 April 2020, revised 2 August 2020



Jane acknowledged that the global pandemic nudged youth workers into challenging territory.

At the Government's Alert Level 4 lockdown (preferably renamed *rāhui*), we suddenly found ourselves in a position where we were managing our workload and hauora whilst working at home. This abrupt new reality tested our boundaries, created new questions about the safety of the young people we work with, highlighted inequalities with technology, rebuilt our self-care systems, and created Chronic Zoom Fatigue!

The Prince's Trust New Zealand, like many other youth organisations, embraced this opportunity to connect with colleagues across the globe and consider digital adaptations of our programmes. We developed an *Online Engagement Framework* to underpin everything we do with young people online, featuring three categories:

- 1. Virtual facilitation skills:** this is the most practical stuff, like knowing when to un-mute yourself, how to balance verbal discussions and typed chat, and how to run an engaging programme when most of your participants are lounging around in their bedrooms. It also includes all the cool tricks you can do on Zoom, using creative platforms for brainstorming and post-it notes, and other fancy things that haven't even been invented yet. These nitty-gritty skills change depending on the technology available and are often what we become distracted by.
- 2. E-learning pedagogy:** this is the approach to learning that wraps around your virtual facilitation skills. It's the more intentional stuff like when you schedule sessions, and for how long. It's also about distinguishing synchronous learning (when you're together) and asynchronous activities (when young people are learning in their own time, at their own pace). There are many advantages to e-learning, and formal education has been developing this pedagogy for years.
- 3. Digital ethics principles:** at the widest and most conceptual level, digital ethics offer philosophical guidance to keep everyone safe. These enhance, rather than replace, our existing ethical foundations.

This article presents a refined version of our digital ethics principles. It's evolved somewhat since it was first posted on the Ara Taiohi website. It's also nothing new (hopefully you'll see how it resonates with the Code of Ethics), however we're thinking we need some simple and familiar concepts to hang onto during complex and confusing times.

This was born in one of those annoying 2am epiphanies. A series of concepts that my mind was replaying from the Zoom meetings throughout the earliest days of the lockdown/*rāhui*. It's settled into three clusters of three principles:

- **Agency, Safety and Responsibility:** these principles are existing and common in youth work ethics
- **Digital Equity, Digital Literacy and Digital Privacy:** these buzzwords are unique to the online landscape but actually also have roots in our existing ethical paradigm
- **Ecology, Treaty and Positivity:** these staples to youth work practice felt like they were needed in the framework to emphasize the distinctive dimensions of youth work.

I'll also continue the trend Jane started and offer a scenario. This is entirely fictitious and not inspired by anything other than my imagination! You may find it useful to think about this scenario whilst you read through the following principles.

Scenario

A rural youth organisation has a longstanding reputation for mentoring, camps and school-based ABL programmes. Their youth advisory group has suggested everything be immediately replaced with online alternatives. The small team of youth workers are concerned about two things: a) losing the local flavour of their community-based projects, and b) the fact that many of the homes in their region don't have internet access. The Chairperson of the Board has asked for a plan by the end of the week.

Digital Ethics Principles

Youth work online is still youth work. Our existing philosophies, policies and practice remain steadfast. This first principle of agency reminds us that our work is relational, it's participatory and empowering, it contributes to self-efficacy, it's mana-enhancing, it's strengths-based, and it's grounded in the voluntary engagement of young people. When we suddenly find ourselves in a restricted world, that is more defined by where we can't go (the park, the movies, our mates' places) than where we can, the ability of young people to choose to engage with youth workers feels incredibly important. Forcing young people into virtual youth work really doesn't sit well with me.

1. AGENCY

Our starting point is young people's choice to engage with us online.

Agency recognises young people already are active participants and contributors to online communities, and youth workers should seek to enhance such positive behaviours.

Hopefully this first principle is encouraging for you. You already have the ability to make ethical decisions in youth work, and your skills can be translated online. A European paper called *Ethics in Digital Youth Work*¹ asserts: delivering youth work online is about transferring our offline practice to an online setting.

You're probably already aware of the dangers young people may face online: cyberbullying, trolling, impacts of pornography, excessive gaming and other addictive technologies. As an explicitly strengths-based practice, youth workers have an opportunity to create safer spaces for and with young people online. This means we need to think carefully and critically about our own use of the internet.

Are you aware of your own screen time (your phone is probably keeping data on this) and where you spend most of your time online?

2. SAFETY

Online youth work relationships and programmes remain committed to the safety of young people, their whānau, the youth organisation/s and the profession of youth work.

Safety recognises all internet users need to take responsibility for boundaries and balance, and youth workers are in a powerful position to role model appropriate behaviour online.

How do you distinguish between personal and professional time online? Does your organisation have a policy for social media? You need to consider how and when you communicate with young people, specifically the time and length of your messages. Use clear and unambiguous language, with a careful use of emoji (the innocent eggplant has been corrupted)! Discuss with your team: if you'd have had another person in the room for a physical meeting, how can you do that in an online conversation?

3. RESPONSIBILITY

Youth workers carefully consider their responsibilities online, the scope of their role and actively manage boundaries.

Youth workers are aware of their capacities and limitations, online and offline, making conscious decisions when, where and how to engage with young people. Youth workers strengthen networks with other organisations, staying informed and offering relevant services to young people.

Imagine that the online environment is another social space where youth workers and young people connect, much like school, marae, church, youth centres and the street. Each social space has a set of expected behaviours that guide our responsibilities. Sometimes the expected behaviours are less clear online, especially when young people invite us into social spaces where they have set the parameters. For example, some young people have private Instagram accounts and they carefully curate their followers; if you accept the invitation and then witness risk-taking or concerning posts (such as self-injury or drug use), what is your responsibility? How does the context of your organisation or employer influence this? What's the difference between a young person telling you about their life and showing you photographs via social media?

The online youth worker must be careful not to become 'all things to all people'. This ethical principle also means we relax any propensity towards possessiveness of young people, or superiority in online practice, focusing instead on collaboration, humility and grace. Youth work online can rapidly connect young people with other services, further information and other relevant communities. We need good information that fuels our work, and it can take time to find it! Reliable websites are an excellent source to improve youth work outcomes for young people.

During lockdown, many youth workers contributed to crowdsourced resource sharing and I hope this continues!

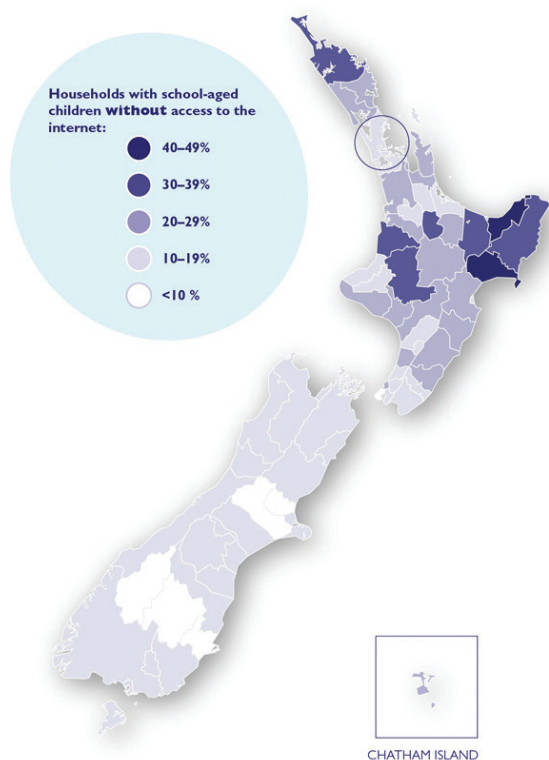
4. EQUITY

Youth workers actively work to ensure young people can engage online, challenging the limitations and systemic discrimination that prevents fair and equal opportunities.

Digital Equity recognises the inconsistencies in internet coverage, the variety of devices young people or their families have, and any other related issues of access. Youth work online must be flexible, adaptive and responsive whilst creating fair and equal opportunities.

This is where we need to start suspending our assumptions and do some research. There are significant regions across Aotearoa where up to 50% of households with school-age children do not have access to the internet⁴. During Alert Level 4, the Ministry of Education responded to this inequity, and this is something youth workers must be well-informed of. The Workshop⁵ have published a series of helpful documents, especially the Digital Divides report⁶.

Youth organisations establishing online initiatives might need to provide access through purchasing data or technology, and if you cannot, are you inadvertently privileging some young people over others, and therefore should you be doing so? Ask yourself if you are flaunting the latest iPhone or using apps that only some can access? How are you proactively removing barriers to participation?



Source: Statistics New Zealand 2014

5. LITERACY

Youth work online builds upon common language and extends capability for young people and youth workers alike.

Digital Literacy recognises young people and youth workers will have preferred platforms, and can teach each other new skills, raise awareness, challenge assumptions and ultimately improve our own digital footprints.

There's a dangerous myth that young people are "digital natives", and in fact the person that invented the term has changed their mind!⁷ Migrating some of our youth work into an online setting is an opportunity for youth workers and young people alike to learn new things, increase fluency with apps and boost confidence with emerging technologies. An online environment also has potential to explore new forms of youth work that were previously not possible or considered, and there are plenty of youth organisations leading the way with this. Whilst the internet can feel fast-paced and temporary, we are in fact accumulating a digital footprint. Conversations are now recorded and can be revisited and youth workers must consider the pros and cons of this. Dr Bex Lewis has written an excellent book covering this topic⁸.

6. PRIVACY

Youth workers ensure, wherever possible, that anyone's personal or identifiable data is private and the youth work relationship remains confidential.

Digital Privacy recognises that various platform policies (especially social media sites) regularly refresh their privacy statements, and even if these seem inaccessible, youth workers and their organisations will be aware of the implications of these.

The protection of privacy during this pandemic feels somewhat nebulous. Governments worldwide, including our own⁹, have needed to restrict some communication and investigate how clear platforms like Zoom are about security and encryption. Similarly, youth workers must be committed to additional investigation into platform privacy, beyond public awareness or assumptions about the internet and data. On a simple level, this includes obtaining consent for sharing photos online, just like we would in a printed document. On a complex level, it may mean clarifying with a young person what is and isn't discussed via messaging, and why or if there are limits.

7. ECOLOGY

Youth work online remembers young people are located within complex social systems, despite the individualism of most social media profiles creating perceptions otherwise.

Ecology recognises the benefits of connecting with young people, their whānau, their friends, their school and/or workplace/s, and their culture online, as young people are global citizens.

Firstly, this ethical principle locates young people within their whānau and relationships, aligning with an indigenous focus on intergenerational connectedness. It's also a term I've borrowed from Urie Bronfenbrenner and Howard Sercombe, who helped inform some of our earliest versions of youth work ethics in New Zealand¹⁰. The ethical term 'ecology' features in Australian codes¹¹ and has also be named 'non-discrimination' and 'context' in later iterations¹².

Essentially this principle means that online youth work enhances young peoples' other online relationships and seeks to enable positive change. Youth workers need to consider how visible our work is online, particularly with whānau, and if parental permission is required. It also raises questions about whether or not we have dual accounts on social media, if we become 'friends' with young people on Facebook, whether or not we 'like', 'love' or 'haha' a post, and what impact this might have on the offline relationship. (Sidenote: I once replied to a text message with "K", I thought acknowledging the response affirmatively. However, the 14 year old thought I was mocking him because he often replied that way! I thought I was speaking his language, and he felt highly offended. He let me know in front of our youth group before the next gathering!)

Inherently, many social media sites are individualistic and encourage users to carefully curate their profiles, feeding a type of narcissism; the irony of 'selfie' is not lost on us! We also need to be wary of online impersonation, authenticity and catfishing.

8. TREATY

Youth work online may be inherently global yet celebrates the strengths of Aotearoa's bicultural fabric and multidimensional superdiversity.

Treaty-based practice is consistent: applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi online means youth workers recognise iwi-led internet initiatives, learning from these and contextualising young people.

I'm concerned that a dark edge to the increased international connectivity afforded by the internet might be the homogenisation and dilution of culture, particularly towards Americanisation. Think about the young people you work with and the content they engage with: where is it from? In Aotearoa we celebrate the wisdom of mātauranga Māori in and around youth development. Therefore, we must consider where Te Tiriti o Waitangi fits within digital ethics. Ask yourself how tikanga manifests for you online? How can we create and explore kawa with young people virtually? Youth work online also means young people can connect with youth workers anywhere in the world. It means the time zone becomes important as we explore the differences in place-based and kaupapa-driven programmes. If these digital ethics are explored in other countries, this principle might be renamed 'Diversity', and the essential orientation still applies.

On a more simplistic, pragmatic and potentially reductive level, this Tiriti principle also encourages youth workers to create a 'treaty' or covenant for your online group and associated relationships. What's your mutual agreement? Where is this recorded and how often is it referred to? Is it visible and has everyone signed up to it? Contracting in this way is common practice in group facilitation and one-on-one mentoring. Consider how this translates into your e-learning pedagogy and virtual facilitation skillset.

9. POSITIVITY

Youth work online prioritises fun!

Positivity recognises young people often access the internet for recreation, entertainment and to socialise. This principle means that appropriate memes and carefully chosen gifs are crucial!

When I've asked young people a question like, "why are you part of this youth group?" they usually tell me one of three f-words: the food, my friend, or its fun. This is actually something to take seriously! Whilst discussing the first draft of these digital ethics principles with my boss, the inimitable Anya Satyanand, I mentioned how we needed to include 'fun' but 'funny' felt trivial. Anya suggested 'hilarity', which made me Actual LOL. Over time, I realised this

placed unrealistic pressure on me and I started behaving like a comedian or clown, creating banter in group chats that distracted from what my co-facilitators needed to achieve. This isn't what this principle is about.

The ethical principle of Positivity means youth workers need to stay current around what's happening in young people's lives online, which includes #hashtags and TikToks! It doesn't justify spending all day mucking around surfing the net or 'researching' memes!

On a scale of Baby Yoda, how are you feeling today?



But wait, there's more!

There were three other principles that emerged in my original brainstorming and I haven't included them because I think they appear in subtle ways in the draft framework. If we remember that youth work online is still youth work, and existing ethics still apply, perhaps it's less important to emphasise these? I'm unsure and would love to hear your thoughts!

- **Paramountcy:** serving young people's needs first and doing no harm
- **Transparency:** being open and honest; informing young people, whānau, employers and other stakeholders where relevant
- **Integrity:** maintaining congruent vocational and professional lives online and offline; upholding the reputation of youth work.

There is a summary table of the framework on the next page that aligns with clauses in the Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand, 2nd edition.

A final question

When should youth work not be offered online? Just because we can, doesn't mean we should. As you explore the digital potential of your youth work practice, make some decisions about what you won't do, alongside what you are able and willing to do. During lockdown/rāhui, I thoroughly enjoyed the unique opportunity to be creative and learn new skills. I still haven't worked out how to facilitate ABL¹³ activities like Group Juggle online, and I'm pretty sure I don't want to. Likewise, there are many conversations I'd rather have with young people kano ki te kano. As we reflect on what we learned from lockdown, have an IRL¹⁴ conversation with some fellow youth workers about what how and when you make decisions about youth work online.

Rod Baxter is Director of Impact for the Prince's Trust New Zealand, Chairperson of Korowai Tupu and offers supervision at Te Whare Manaaki o Korimako where he lives with his fiancé, two ridiculous cats, and countless kererū, tūi and kākā.

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- 1 <https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/3533/ethics-in-digital-youth-work.pdf>
- 2 Check out recent research by www.classificationoffice.govt.nz
- 3 Do we even need to reference Mana Taiohi? www.arataiohi.org.nz
- 4 <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/99584845/internet-access-improves-the-life-of-many-but-these-new-zealanders-are-being-left-behind>
- 5 <https://www.theworkshop.org.nz/publications>
- 6 <https://report.digitaldivides.nz/>
- 7 <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/digital-society/0/steps/23824>
- 8 Check out: Raising Children in a Digital Age: Enjoying the best, avoiding the worst by Bex Lewis, 2014. There's a section for youth workers! Search @drbexl
- 9 <https://www.ncsc.govt.nz/newsroom/zoom-security-advice-for-public-servants/>
- 10 Read about the history of our Code on the Ara Taiohi website: <https://arataiohi.org.nz/career/code-of-ethics/history-of-the-code-of-ethics/>
- 11 http://www.youthaction.org.au/2004_code_of_ethics
- 12 <https://www.yacwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Youth-Work-Code-of-Ethics.pdf>
- 13 Adventure Based Learning aka experiential education
- 14 In Real Life

YOUTH WORK ONLINE: A Digital Ethics Framework		Code of Ethics (2nd edition, 2011) clause connections
1. Agency	Our starting point is young people's choice to engage with us online.	1. Te Kawenga: Your Primary Relationship 5. Whakaae Tika: Obtaining Informed Consent 24. Kawenga: Agents of Change
2. Safety	Online youth work relationships and programmes remain committed to the safety of young people, their whānau, the youth organisation/s and the profession of youth work.	2. Wehenga Tūmanako: Behaviour 3. Ārahitanga: Your Conduct 7. Āhua Tika: Boundaries 23. Ngā Mahi Ora: Safe Practice
3. Responsibility	Youth workers carefully consider their responsibilities online, the scope of their role and actively manage boundaries.	9. Noatanga: Knowing Your Limits 10. Utu Painga: Personal Agendas 14. Tautauamoa: Working Collaboratively
4. Digital Equity	Youth workers actively work to ensure young people can engage online, challenging the limitations and systemic discrimination that prevents fair and equal opportunities.	21. Hakamanatia: Empowerment 27. Rangahau me Wāriutanga: Research and Evaluation
5. Digital Literacy	Youth work online builds upon common language and extends capability for young people and youth workers alike.	15. Hakapakaritanga: Working Holistically 16. Āhua Pononga: Working Positively 26. Mana Akoranga: Training and Professional Development
6. Digital Privacy	Youth workers ensure, wherever possible, that anyone's personal or identifiable data is private and the youth work relationship remains confidential.	4. Puatatanga: Being Transparent 6. Noho Matatapu: Confidentiality 8. Manatū Tangata: Sexual Boundaries
7. Ecology	Youth work online remembers young people are located within complex social systems, despite the individualism of most social media profiles creating perceptions otherwise.	13. Papakāinga: Ensuring Key Connections 18. Whakahaeretanga: Supervision
8. Treaty	Youth work online may be inherently global yet celebrates the strengths of Aotearoa's bicultural fabric and multidimensional superdiversity.	12. Āhua me te Oranga: Diversity and Cultural Safety 19. Matatau: Personal Awareness 20. Hiringa: Personal Determination 22. Ōu Tikanga: Rights and Responsibilities 25. Māramatia Aotearoa: Understanding Aotearoa
9. Positivity	Youth work online prioritises fun!	11. Āhua Kōrero, Āhua Taonga: Exchanges 17. Tiakitanga: Looking After Yourself

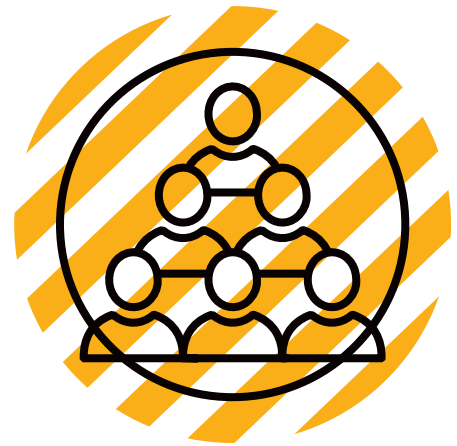


Your learning and reflections

Mana-enhancing practice in challenging times

Multi-disciplinary mahi in tension and some options

Blog 3 from Nikki Hurst, 20 April 2020



One of my favourite parts of having been a lecturer, is when past students come back to me with stories of their mahi.

This particular scenario came about when a past student contacted me to share something she has become really aware of during this period of rāhui – not everyone is strengths-based, and it shows.

This incredible now-colleague, is an essential worker in a mandated setting, supporting those going through an amazing but tough transformation. As a youth worker she brings mana-enhancing practice, buckets of empathy and a sense of fun and openness. She had really noticed that while mana-enhancing practice was at the core of her work, it wasn't necessarily the case with others. And that this difference in approach was leaving her uncomfortable and the young person involved emotionally unsafe.

Inspired by this, I've fictionalised an example scenario to help us reflect on the inherent ethical implications. Stressful and uncertain times, such as this COVID-19 rāhui, can exacerbate the differences in practice across multiple professions who need to work with the same people. Here's the scenario for you to think about as you read my reflections:

Scenario

After completing her youth work qualification, Sam found full-time work in residential care. Sam loves the kaupapa of her work. As a result of COVID-19, everyone has moved onto a roster and established teams are being mixed up. One of the people that Sam now works with consistently runs the young people down, with staff and in front of the young people. When asked why, the other employee states that they believe in saying it how it is, pulling no punches and not sugar-coating. Some of the young people have come to Sam upset and angry about this. The most recent incident saw the other staff member tell a young person during a group session that they should just give up on the programme, that it was clear that they didn't really care and that they might as well get used to being locked-down as they are definitely headed for prison. The young person is understandably furious and has come to Sam for help and to cool off.

A lot of us work in multi-disciplinary contexts, with a range of other professionals who may or may not share a similar philosophy to being with young people. Where that work may occur in settings that have been mandated for young people, or in a crisis situation such as during the national lock-down, these differences can feel even more jarring. And needing to resolve them can feel very urgent.

There are actions that this youth worker can and did take that are obvious, but there are also longer term approaches that can also be addressed. And our Code of Ethics (CoE) can help us to lay the whole situation out. Breaking down the issue from an ethical perspective, there are a lot of things going on. I see it in a few parts (and I'm sure there will be nuances that I miss, aroha mai):

1. Keeping the young person safe
2. Speaking up
3. Supervision
4. Being professional.

Keeping the young person safe

Currently the Code of Ethics opens with the role of Whānaungatanga - Quality Relationships (Ara Taiohi, 2011). The very first clause (Te Kawenga - Your Primary Relationship) in the CoE states that, **despite the many competing demands on them, the youth worker's primary relationship is with the young people they engage with.** (Ara Taiohi, 2011, p.26).

It's clear in this scenario that the youth worker, their concern and subsequent practice are coming from this place. While we may have loyalty to our organisations, and respect for our colleagues, if we really take this clause on board, the very first consideration must always be that relationship with the young person.

Secondly, as the issue here is around mana-enhancing practice, the area I find hugely relevant is within our strengths-based practice area of the Code. Clause 16.1 (Āhua Pononga - Working Positively) states that, **Young people are an integral part of our society. Youth workers seek to have this acknowledged and valued by society as a whole.** (Ara Taiohi, 2011, p.34)

In this context, the youth worker's workplace can be seen as a subset of society. Not meeting young people from a mana-enhancing place ignores their place in our society (and breaches a number of international agreements...), and so challenging this behaviour works towards having our taiohi "acknowledged and valued by society as a whole" (Ara Taiohi, 2011). If those who work alongside young people don't value them, broader society certainly won't.

Thirdly, this scenario is occurring in a space that the young person is required to be in. They haven't chosen to be there and can't leave if they want to. In these situations our role as advocates become crucial, and the Code (through clause 20.3, Hiringa - Personal Determination) tells us exactly what is expected of us to keep these young people safe, **If a young person... is otherwise unable to act with self determination there is a responsibility to protect the young person's rights and welfare.** (Ara Taiohi, 2011, p.37)

Our youth worker is certainly embodying this concern.

Speaking up

It's clear that in this scenario the youth worker wants to and will act. But how does the CoE support us to do this? I've picked out a few clauses that provide both a requirement to act, and give us advice on how to do this.

Clause 3.5 (Ārahitanga - Your Conduct) requires that if we find ourselves in an unethical situation that we take action (Ara Taiohi, 2011). It suggests that we notify those that we are accountable to, minimise the negative consequences of the actions and put in place strategies to avoid this situation in this future.

Clause 12.7 (Āhua me to Oranga - Diversity and Cultural Safety) tells us to, **challenge the attitudes, beliefs, policies and practices that act as barriers to safe youth work and undermine young people and their culture.** (Ara Taiohi, 2011, p.30)

Clauses 24.1 and 24.2 (Kawenga - Agents of Change) are where we find our requirement to act (Ara Taiohi, 2011). That as youth workers it is our role to **"remove barriers that restrict life opportunities for young people"** (Ara Taiohi, 2011, p. 39) and that youth work **"extends to the social context in which a young person lives"** (Ara Taiohi, 2011, p. 39).

These clauses are where we get our mandate to take this further, some ideas on who to take it to and that this is both a short-term and long-term action. As acknowledged above, our first requirement is to support the young person. From there to then ensure that they are acknowledged and if possible empowered to take action with our support. If they don't feel that they are able to do that then we are required to do so on their behalf. And that the actions resulting from this need to be immediate and long-term, and we must be there across that journey.

Supervision

And it is incredibly easy for me to tell my colleague to take action. After all, I'm quite literally hundreds of miles away, work in a very different context, and have a few more years of experience and knowledge to back me up. (Not to mention I am fairly lippy...) Our youth worker needs a closer ally, someone who they trust that knows them, the sector and the context of their youth work. Someone to work on an actual strategy to tackle this.

This is where the gold that is supervision comes into its own. In ascribing to our CoE we also agree to engage in supervision (Ara Taiohi, 2011). We are even required under clause 18.1 (Whakahaeretanga - Supervision) to take issues to supervision and use it to tease things out and develop solutions. Supervision with an experienced supervisor (internal or external) who knows you, your context and the subtleties of this, can be your greatest help in these less straightforward challenges.

Being professional

So if we are clear that there is a risk to our taiohi here, have been to supervision and used it to help develop a plan, and are ready to engage with our organisation to create and support change. What next? Well, I think it's also worth thinking about how as professional youth workers, we act in professional ways. And the CoE gives us some additional guidance there too.

Clause 19.3 (Matatau - Personal Awareness) **"Youth workers will approach differences in others with respect"** (Ara Taiohi, 2011, p.35). The important part in this sentence to me is the "in". It's not about the argument that we might have with another, rather it is acknowledging that our differences are inherent, and that in engaging with them we have to come from a place of respect. This is reinforced in Clause 10.2 (Utu Painga - Personal Awareness).

Clause 14.1 (Tautauamoa - Working Collaboratively) gives us a start-point for the actions that we want to take in the longer term (Ara Taiohi, 2011). It reminds us to, **respect and co-operate with other professionals... to secure the best outcomes for the young people (we) engage with.** (Ara Taiohi, 2011, p.32)

It doesn't mean that we can't disagree, rather that in disagreeing we acknowledge that we are working together towards the best possible scenario for the taiohi we are working alongside.

And of course, underpinning all of this must be that our practice is informed by good information, reflected upon and that we engage with research to support our approaches. Our CoE requires this (Clauses 25-27), and particularly in this setting being able to speak to the issue with the mana of those who have evaluated, reported and published evidence of what works makes our argument not with our colleague, but rather with an approach to practice (Ara Taiohi, 2011). And anyone who has read the incredible piece of work that is *Ngā Tikanga Whānaketanga – He Arotake Tuhinga, A Review of Aotearoa New Zealand Youth Development Research* (Deane, Dutton & Kerekere, 2019) will know that not only do we have that mana and evidence, we can prove it is working over time.

Overall, I guess my main point is - breaking an issue down, and looking at it through the lens of our Code of Ethics can help us to make the grey less so, and give us ideas of where to next. Many of the challenges that we face are not new, or uncommon. We are blessed to have CoE that doubles as a code of practice, and with good supervision gives us a strong support system to enhance our practice.

And one last shout out to a few important principles that this scenario highlights.

1. As our amazing Lloyd Martin has always held, and the rest of us evidence every day - youth work is about relationships (Martin, 2002). Our core of practice is, and must always be, that we build relationships not to do things with or to young people, rather we build relationships with taiohi to have relationships with taiohi.

2. Education in youth work is invaluable, that this education is underpinned by sector knowledge and research is crucial. With the on-going challenges to youth work education in our current climate we need to come together to fight this. Or we will lose the ability to attain the qualifications that help give us mana, knowledge and experience to lead, advocate and support Taiohi alongside other professions.
3. Having a strong professional body that requires us to understand, practice and adhere to our Code of Ethics is increasingly urgent. Professional youth workers are the experts in working with young people. If you haven't already, join Korowai Tupu and help us lift our voices to ensure Taiohi are served with passion, ethics, experience and professionalism.

Nikki Hurst is ridiculously proud to be a member of Korowai Tupu, the Rōpu and pretty much anything else she can be roped into. Nikki has been super blessed to teach on a range of our tertiary quals across Aotearoa and is currently with the Open Polytechnic as a Programme Delivery Manager. She has big dreams for what the coming together of Polytechnics can mean for Youth Development and Youth Work in Aotearoa.

And a huge, massive thank you to the colleague who inspired this piece. You are the real MVP!

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When sea creatures can sign forms

Blog 4 from James Harris, 27 April 2020



I became a youth worker because I have an innate desire to make the world a better place.

I think that is common for most youth workers. When we look out into the world, we know that things aren't quite right - but have found our little patch to make a difference in.

This is the fourth blog in a series, looking at the Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa through the lens of our current circumstance, the COVID-19 rāhui. Mihi to Jane, Rod and Nikki who have contributed to the kōrero so far in their insightful and thought provoking blog posts.

I want to start with a scenario, and consider it pre-COVID-19. At the end we will return to the same scenario, but considering it through the lens of the rāhui. For the purpose of the article I have made-up a scenario, but it is a situation many of us will know all too well.

Scenario

A young person named Jordan has told us they are visiting the doctor and feeling anxious about going. We offer to go with them and they agree. Once we are at the doctors clinic, we are handed a form for Jordan. We start to fill it out. "What's your DOB again Jordan?". When we go in with the doctor they ask who we are. We explain that we are a youth worker working with this young person. The doctor then continues to direct the conversation to us, rather than the young person. "What do you think is the best thing for Jordan?" They ask us.

Many of us would know the story of the starfish washed up on the beach. As two people are walking along one keeps picking up starfish and throwing them back into the sea. The other person says, there are starfish everywhere, you can't make a difference for all of them. They respond, while holding a single starfish they are about to throw into the sea, **no, but I can make a difference for this one.**

As cheesy and overtold that story is, there is still so much gold in it. As we navigate through a messy and broken

world, the starfish analogy can help us frame why we do what we do. The scale of need is so huge, but we can rest easy knowing we are doing what we can with a group of young people.

I am a major fan of a good analogy, however, they do have their limitations.

Analogies provide clarity through demonstrating similarities between one thing and another. In this case, starfish and young people. What this story doesn't take into consideration is this: **humans are slightly more complex than starfish.** The starfish simply needs to be thrown back into the sea; a young person, however, has personal agency and a right to self-determination.

My hope was that the time in the COVID-19 rāhui would give us a space to reflect and grow as we navigate ethical tensions in a new way. A tension being where there are competing ideas to hold at once.

In this case, I'd like to explore the tension between going above-and-beyond to help young people on the one hand, while on the other, holding empowerment and self-determination of young people, which requires space for them to act on their own accord.

It was years into my youth work career that the penny really dropped for me that sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes, my drive to make the world a better place led me to do things for young people, that in fact disempowered them. I felt like I had done something good! ... but on the other end was a young person who could have been coached to do something for themselves that had that opportunity taken from them.

Let me share the moment this really hit home for me. A few years back now I was a youth worker with asylum seeker and refugee youth in Nauru. They had come to Australia seeking protection from war and persecution back home, but due to what I would personally call moral failure, had instead been put in detention in the small island nation of Nauru. These young people lived behind an eight-foot high fence. They all had the same detention centre issued clothes. They ate when food was served. They made phone calls at designated times. **They had very little autonomy over their own life.**

One thing they did have were 'Request Forms' that could be submitted in either English or their mother tongue. They would use these to ask for any items they needed, to lodge a complaint or ask about their refugee status determination.

Being a youth worker in that environment, I wanted to go above-and-beyond and do all I could for those precious young people. What that meant though was quite often I would fill in a Request Form for young people. Until one day. I was about to start filling one out for one of the young guys when he told me,

'No, the Request Form is one of the few things I can do for myself. Let me do it'.

In that moment I realised that my primary driver to help young people, to make the world a better place, to throw the starfish back, had got in the way of empowering some of the very young people I sought to serve. Young people are limited in what they can do, so for the things they can do our default should be to support and coach them through it, rather doing it for them.

Now that is an extreme example. In that situation, it was a lot clearer. Those young people really did have very little they could do for themselves. But it does bring to mind clauses within the Code of Ethics pertaining to *Hiringa* (personal-determination) and *Hakamanatia* (Empowerment). These clauses can help guide us to make better decisions as we navigate this tension of helping young people, while empowering them and enhancing their mana to act for themselves.

Particular clauses that stand out are:

20.2 Youth workers, with the involvement of appropriate others in the young person's community, will encourage and enable young people to identify their own strategies to deal with challenges and the direction of their lives.

21.3 Youth workers encourage young people to exercise genuine power to consider risk, make decisions, follow them through and to take responsibility for their consequences.

Let's jump back to the scenario with Jordan: First off, we were handed the form, not Jordan, and following our innate desire to help started filling it out for them. Then, when in with the doctor the conversation was directed towards us.

Now let's consider the same situation in this rāhui:

Scenario

Jordan is wanting to go to the doctor and has booked a phone consultation. We have a call with Jordan beforehand. We ask them what they want by the end of the consultation and how they will say that to the doctor. They explain it to us, and we ask some clarifying questions. We encourage them that although they are feeling anxious about the consultation that they have the words, and the kaha they need to do this on their own.

Physical distancing during the rāhui meant that young people were having to make more decisions, and do more things for themselves. There are youth who without lockdown I would have gone out of my way to be physically present with in hui with other adults. Physical distancing prevented that.

Being present as a youth worker in those spaces with young people can be extremely important, particularly for advocacy. However, here is the opportunity that I believe COVID-19 presented eager helpers like myself; in our physical absence, young people had more space to make decisions and act for themselves.

My hope is that this rāhui was a time of training for ourselves that helps form our posture. That as we pivot into more digital youth work, and our conversations move to and may stay on Zoom or Facetime, we are reminded of our role to coach, support and guide. Not to decide or do for. But to discuss, and navigate with.

James Harris is a proud West Aucklander, currently based in a remote indigenous community in Western Australia with his wife Jenna, where they both work as youth workers. James is passionate about journeying alongside young people, and equipping other youth workers to do the same through his work with YouthWork.io.

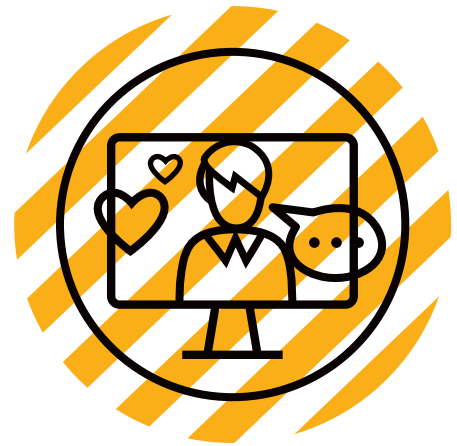
James would like to give a shout to all the champions working in the background that have moved the youth development sector forward over the years, including those who made this resource happen.



Your learning and reflections

Affirming identity and navigating relationships

Ethical considerations for working with rainbow young people during the COVID-19 pandemic



Blog 5 from Moira Clunie, 4 May 2020

This is the fifth blog post in a series about ethical considerations for youth workers during the global COVID-19 pandemic. As Jane wrote about in the first article, and Rod, Nikki and James have explored further, the pandemic we're living through has created a new operating environment for youth workers.

We can't meet with young people *kanohi ki te kanohi*, we're navigating upheavals and change in our own lives, and we're trying to support people to work towards a future within an uncertain world. In this context, many of us are reshaping how we work, and thinking about ethics and ways of relating to each other in new ways.

It's a challenging time for everyone. My work with Te Ngākau Kahukura is about helping those who work with young people to understand how this might look different for rainbow (sex characteristic, sexuality and gender minority, or LGBTI+) young people¹.

At the best of times, rainbow young people face pressures that their peers don't, because of discrimination and exclusion within their *whānau*, communities and wider society². Over the last month of lockdown, and as the country slowly starts to open up again, we've seen some of these challenges increasing, as rainbow young people may face:

- higher rates of family violence, rejection and alienation connected with being isolated in unsupportive or abusive home environments
- isolation from rainbow communities and peer groups due to peer-based services, schools and social environments being closed
- increased anxiety about the COVID-19 virus among those who have compromised immune systems, including some intersex people and people living with HIV

- limited or uncertain access to gender-affirming healthcare as health resources are reprioritised to the COVID-19 response
- unemployment and housing insecurity, which are made worse by discrimination from employers, housing providers, and social service agencies.

As youth workers, we can't address all of these systemic issues ourselves, but we can help the rainbow young people we're working with to navigate through them. We can learn more about what young people might be facing, check our own attitudes and behaviours to make sure we're not adding to the pressure, and offer support.

As the previous posts in this series have done, I want to offer a scenario and a few thoughts about ethical considerations for the youth worker.

Scenario

Blake, a queer youth worker, has been working with a young person called Alex for a couple of years. They both identify as bisexual, and lately they've been talking about how Alex could come out to their parents. Blake remembers how liberating it was to come out to his parents when he was younger, and he wants the same for Alex. Just before lockdown, Alex came out to Blake as having a non-binary gender identity. Alex said they were thinking about talking to their doctor about accessing hormones, but meanwhile they were exploring different clothes and names, and wanted their friends to use 'they' pronouns when talking about them. They're trying out the name Drew, but they're not sure if this will be a permanent change. They were really scared to talk to their parents about this, and looking forward to moving out of home next year so they could live with friends and be free to be themselves, at least at home. Blake didn't really get it, and was finding it hard to switch pronouns and names, but was trying his hardest to be supportive and get Alex to make a plan for coming out. Now Alex is stuck in lockdown with their parents, and Blake is worried about how they're doing.

What are Blake's ethical obligations in this situation? I think they include:

1. Affirming Drew's identity.

One of the simplest ways of supporting a trans or non-binary young person is to use language that affirms their identity – their chosen name, correct pronouns, and other words that reflect their identity. Research has shown that this form of support can have hugely positive impacts on young people's mental health³.

Since Drew is spending most of their time at their parents' home, and might not have as much contact with their friends, it's likely that they're not hearing their identity affirmed in this way very often. Blake can be supportive just by acknowledging who Drew is. Even if he's not sure he'll always get this 100% right, he can genuinely try, apologise for any mistakes, and spend a bit of his own time self-educating and practicing so he's more likely to get it right consistently.

In this action, Blake would be particularly guided by the *Āhua me te Oranga* | Diversity and Cultural Safety section in the Code of Ethics (12), especially clauses 12.1 ("The youth work relationship is one of mutual respect") and 12.6 ("Youth workers will allow young people to express their identity freely and safely with consideration to family, *whānau* and their social environment"). While Drew doesn't feel safe to freely express their identity at home, it is crucial that they can do so within their relationship with their youth worker.

If Blake is finding it difficult to affirm Drew's identity because of his own beliefs or understandings about gender, he could also reflect on clause 12.7 ("Youth workers acknowledge and will challenge the attitudes, beliefs, policies and practices that act as barriers to safe youth work and undermine young people and their culture"). He might need to learn more about they/them pronouns⁴ and non-binary gender⁵, and reflect on his own beliefs and attitudes about gender identity.

He might want to ask Drew some respectful questions about their identity and learn more about what gender means to them. However, he may also need to let go of feeling like he needs to fully understand Drew's identity to be able to support them. As Dr Elizabeth Kerekere advised in her resource *Takatāpui: Part of the Whānau*,

"whānau don't need to get it, they just need to be there"⁶.

2. Supporting Drew to make their own decision about coming out

For some rainbow young people, disclosing their identity to *whānau* and loved ones can be an affirming experience that strengthens their relationships. More often, even if *whānau* is likely to be accepting, it can be scary or overwhelming to think about coming out. Young people might worry about straining relationships, being alienated from people they love, or disappointing people. In the worst cases, when things go badly with coming out, young people can experience violence, emotional abuse and homelessness.

Drew has told Blake in the past that they're scared to come out – these fears may be based on real risk. In this scenario, because of COVID-19 restrictions Drew may not have the choice to safely leave their home if they need to move out. Even if things aren't as challenging as this, it's likely that Drew won't have options to take time out and visit a friend, go to places where they might feel more comfortable, or connect with rainbow peers at support groups.

Blake remembers that coming out was a liberating experience for him. He needs to be careful not to force his views or values on Drew, but to offer what he can to help Drew make the best decision for themselves. In thinking about respecting Drew's self-determination, he could reflect on clauses 20.2 ("Youth workers, with the involvement of appropriate others in the young person's community, will encourage and enable young people to identify their own strategies to deal with challenges and the direction of their lives.") and section 21 *Hakamanatia* | Empowerment, especially 21.3 ("Youth workers encourage young people to exercise genuine power to consider risk, make decisions, follow them through and to take responsibility for their consequences.").

He could also reflect on what he is personally bringing to this situation by thinking about section 19 – *Matatau* | Personal Awareness and section 10 – *Utu Painga* | Personal Agendas. For example, he could work on being careful about using his own experiences and values to determine what is best for Drew, and instead making space to understand their priorities and needs.

3. Supporting Drew to navigate relationships and stay connected

One of the biggest challenges that rainbow young people have faced during this time of *noho rāhui*, the COVID-19 lockdown, is social isolation. With face-to-face contact limited to small bubble groups, some rainbow young people have been in situations where their closest contacts are people who are not affirming of their identities. At the same time, their contact with friends, peer groups, community support systems and chosen *whānau* have been reduced.

Like others, Drew's situation in lockdown with their parents means that they are isolated from their usual supports, and may have strained relationships at home. Because of Blake's own rainbow identity, he might already understand some of these tensions and the importance of rainbow peer connections. One of the ways he can support Drew is by supporting them to stay connected by sharing online support options, or encouraging them to check in with friends.

When Blake is thinking about *Papakāinga* | Ensuring Key Connections (section 13) he should remember to check in with Drew about which rainbow friends and support organisations are important to them (13.1 "Youth workers will endeavour to relate to, create, strengthen and maintain young people's connections to their key social environments.") as well as working with Drew to think about how to smooth out relationships at home (13.3 "Youth workers will recognise the importance of *whānau* and the complex nature of these relationships. Youth workers seek to strengthen the relationship between young people and their *whānau*.").

If he's not sure where to find rainbow peer support during these times, he could check out the list of support available for rainbow young people during COVID-19 on Te Ngākau Kahukura's website⁷.

While Aotearoa has moved out of lockdown, and young people have more opportunities to connect and find support outside of their homes, this scenario brings up relevant considerations for working with rainbow young people at any time. If you're navigating similar scenarios or want to learn more about working with rainbow young people, check out Te Ngākau Kahukura's website for more resources, or to get in touch with Moira and Joey.

Moira Clunie (Te Rarawa) is project lead for Te Ngākau Kahukura, a national partnership initiative between Ara Taiohi and rainbow communities. Te Ngākau Kahukura works towards an Aotearoa where rainbow young people feel safe, valued, and that they belong in the places where they live, learn, and access healthcare and social support.

References:

- 1 See our website. www.tengakaukahukura.nz, for more information about our work, and guidance about how to make youth services safer and more welcoming for rainbow young people.
- 2 Data about these stressors is available from the Youth2000 series: <https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/en/faculty/adolescent-health-research-group/publications-and-reports/publications-by-population.html#e945081bd6747523d63f50921583707a>, and the Counting Ourselves research report: www.countingourselves.nz
- 3 For example, Russell, S. T., Pollitt, A. M., Li, G., & Grossman, A. H. (2018). Chosen name use is linked to reduced depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior among transgender youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 63(4), 503-505.
- 4 One starting place is: Meagley, D. & Youth Radio. (2018). All Your Questions About Gender-Neutral Pronouns Answered. Retrieved from Teen Vogue: <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/they-them-questions-answered>
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- 6 Kerekere, E. (2015). Takatāpui: Part of the whānau. Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand: <https://takatapui.nz/>
- 7 Te Ngākau Kahukura. (2020). COVID-19 Support. Retrieved from Te Ngākau Kahukura: <https://www.tengakaukahukura.nz/covid19>

E korero ana mātou. E whakarongo ana koutou? We are speaking, are you listening?



Blog 6 from Ty Farani-Watene, 11 May 2020

We are always excited to hear of the amazing youth led youth organisations out there, challenging the community with their innovations, passions, energy and strategy.

The Aotearoa Youth Declaration (AYD) is the UN Youth's civic education conference, where participants aged 13-18 from all over Aotearoa gather to write the Youth Declaration. This declaration is a vessel for young people of Aotearoa to set a wero, to offer their perspective and invite those across the country to reflect on their kōrero. This year they have adapted and AYD will be run online.

We think it's fitting to give this space to our friends at UN Youth to express themselves during Youth Week and the COVID-19 period, and for youth workers of all ages to reflect on how ethics apply in this context.

E korero ana mātou. E whakarongo ana koutou? We are speaking, are you listening?

To the leaders.

The law-makers and the deciding votes.

To the elite who sit comfortably at the top of the institutions that determine our futures.

We will no longer allow our voices to be drowned out by the cynical accusations that **we** do not know enough to understand the outcomes of your choices. Now, it is our turn.

The whānau behind Aotearoa Youth Declaration have pivoted around the setbacks that have limited us over the past few weeks. We understand the power that rangatahi have when they are given a platform to protect their futures, and to step-up to become the leaders they are destined to be. As we transferred our entire physical conference to the online web, young people have dedicated time outside of their schooling hours, and other responsibilities to prepare a document that will hold their views and solutions on issues that New Zealanders face everyday.

They are passionate and bold. Bold enough that they will identify where our government can be better. Our rangatahi can see the cracks in the systems that keep this country moving and have ideas that are not self-centred, but forward thinking. These young people are committed to protecting and furthering the economic development, youth/social development, te ao Māori and equity of this country. This time that we are living in has finally given the world a chance to breathe and take a break. There is no need to rush productivity but these rangatahi have no intention of slowing down.

Our participants have set aside 17 days to begin planning what they want their future to look like. While we have exchanged four days of a physical conference for a virtual world, our committee has been determined to ensure that all the important aspects of a physical conference are not missed out on. Our rōpū facilitators have devoted time to meet with their groups to discuss their given industry-focus over zoom calls. We have buzzing social events available throughout the week, so that participants are still given

the chance to meet new people and still be able to make lifelong friends. How good is Kahoot, Online Pictionary and Watch parties! Our Outreach programme has been transferred into zoom calls with industry speakers, allowing participants to interact with our guests in a more welcoming and informal atmosphere. These speakers are backing us in preparing these rangatahi to identify the hard topics our country faces. Our participants are gearing up so that they can become self-sufficient and innovative because this world is constantly changing. And now, they need you to listen.

Your problems are equally our problems. Once your time has come, it will be our turn to step into your shoes and battle the same challenges, but through different lenses. We need you to look at the world through our eyes and see where our inhibitions are coming from. We can help you. But we need a seat at the table.

This year, Youth Week is empowering rangatahi around Aotearoa behind the theme “We are speaking, are you listening?”. Here at AYDO, we share the same kaupapa. We stand with youth organisations in championing our young people to stand up and voice their concerns. There has been a lot of trepidation around what our economy will look like, how our whenua risks destruction, and whether our minority groups are given equitable opportunities, particularly in this season of COVID-19. Young people may fear what their future will look like due to the decisions that are being rushed through parliament now. But if we are heard, and our ideas are taken seriously, then we have eliminated the fear of being left behind in these korero. We have already seen how things can change drastically in a matter of weeks.

Young people are speaking. Will you listen? Will you give us the space to lead, and to protect our futures while we can?

Ty Farani-Watene Aotearoa Youth Declaration 2020
– Relations Officer | Tikanga Working Group -
General Member.

Born and raised in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Ty has been chipping away through attaining her International Relations and Cultural Anthropology degree at Victoria University of Wellington. She is a committed volunteer at UN Youth New Zealand and is one of the founding general members of Te Kawekawe; a Maori-Pasifika advisory group devoted to providing strategies and policies to empower the Maori and Pasifika rangatahi and volunteers within UN Youth NZ. You may also find Ty working with young adults at her local church in navigating their faith. Ty is passionate about youth development and empowering young Māori and Pasifika rangatahi to chase after their calling, while also challenging our government to be present and listen to the needs of our young people in Aotearoa.



Youth Week is a nationwide festival of events and gatherings organised by young New Zealanders to celebrate the talents, passion and success of local young people. This year COVID-19 made this impossible, and Youth Week (like the rest of Aotearoa, and the world) had to adapt.

Each year Youth Week has a different theme designed and voted on by young people across the country. This year the theme chosen was “We’re speaking. Are you Listening? E korero ana mātou. E whakarongo ana koutou?”.

Inspired by the innovative and expressive ways young people digitally celebrated Youth Week, we followed suit by having online interactive daily competitions that engaged young people to share their voices and hold us accountable to listen to them. We paired this with our printed resource – a Youth Week journal and dispatched over 3000 journals across Aotearoa before and during Youth Week.

Find out more about Youth Week:
<https://www.youthweek.org.nz>



Your learning and reflections

Reflecting on, and before, Recovery

Three themes for post-pandemic youth work

Blog 7 from Hannah Dunlop, 18 May 2020



Ethical edges and tensions in a recovery context – this is what I inadvertently put my hand up to write about. But I'm really tired and I don't know if I have the energy to do another 'recovery' after working through the aftermath of the Canterbury Earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 or fires, or floods or mosque attacks.

As someone who is passionate about young people, youth work and social justice it really takes its toll. But then I look at what is happening in our world in this moment and the power of humanity and the strength of young people and think ...yeah maybe we can do this.

While I share my reflections from my experience I want to acknowledge the 'recovery' season is something that many communities have and do face and work through. The West Coast following the Pike River tragedy, the community surrounding Whakaari White Island, rural districts that face drought, and communities that have faced shocks of multiple youth suicides. We live in a world that faces natural, biological and human-made disasters daily. I've learnt and observed some tough lessons through my experience working-in, while living, recovery and youth work.

So what does this have to do with ethical tensions in youth work as we navigate these times? These are some insights that I gained through my experiences working in youth roles in local government, NZ Red Cross and youth work sector collaborations that might be helpful as we chart these waters ahead. I will aim to be raw, real and candid and I can't promise that I didn't cry during the writing of this post.

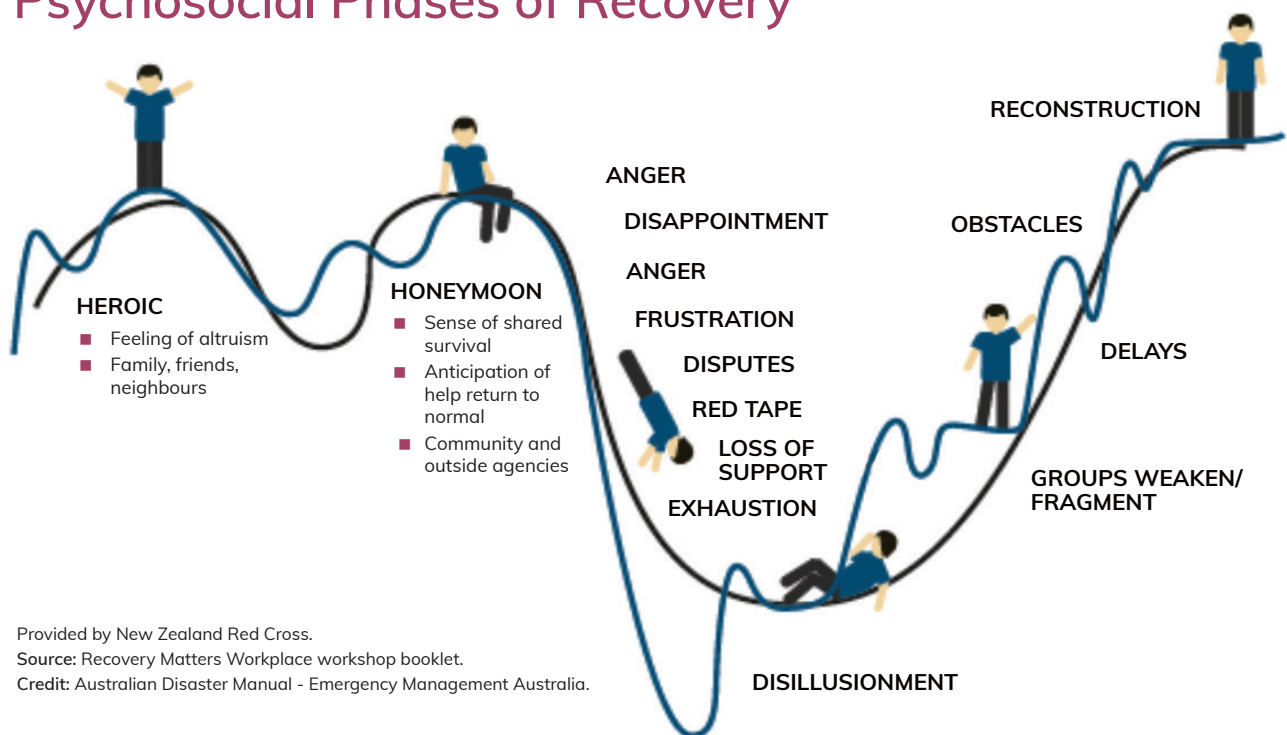
A quick look at the journey of recovery

I can't help but see the tell tale signs of stages of response and recovery following a disaster, and can pick up on where different parts of our society are at. Our media is probably in the disillusionment phase at the moment and the shots and critiques are fired at decision makers, neighbors are turning on each other, and stats about infringements are reported alongside new confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The diagrams that follow graph out the different phases of response to a disaster over time. This has been an incredibly useful way to visualise and understand where our psyche as a society is in general, but also where we can see ourselves individually. Dr Rob Gordon has a good video¹ explaining about this. This can be a helpful tool for checking the pulse of yourself, your team, organisation and community. It's not fully linear and we move through these in different ways. But it's a start to give language and understanding for where we are at any given point of time.

For training and development in this area check out New Zealand Red Cross Psychosocial First Aid website².

Psychosocial Phases of Recovery



Provided by New Zealand Red Cross.
Source: Recovery Matters Workplace workshop booklet.
Credit: Australian Disaster Manual - Emergency Management Australia.



Source: California Department of Mental Health (2012, reproduced by Britt et al 2012, p 33).
<https://www.cph.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/communityinmindbackgrounddocument.pdf>

Three Themes

I've attempted to distill some learning from working and living through recovery into three themes. I hope these will be helpful and provide some points of reflection, words of caution, encouragement, resources and ideas for our mindset and actions in these times.

Theme	Code of Ethics	Mana Taiohi
1. Collaboration	Clause 14	Hononga
2. Advocacy	Clause 24, 20 and 21	Te Ao, Whai Wāhitanga, Mātauranga
3. Self care	Clauses 17, 18 and 19	Manaakitanga (collective wellbeing)

1. Collaboration:

- **We are stronger together.** Especially when we acknowledge and lean into each other's strengths. Competition gets us nowhere in the youth sector and disadvantages young people. Get over yourselves and be generous to each other.

Find common ground and be a strong voice together using each other's strengths to get better outcomes for young people. Share information, find common themes and work together to tackle them.

For example youth voice groups across greater Christchurch were working in isolation. Those of us working with them brought them together and formed Youth Voice Canterbury³ to support each other and become a stronger voice in recovery. For another great example of collaboration in a recovery context check out the Strengthening the Youth Sector Project⁴ under the umbrella of the Canterbury Youth Workers Collective.

- **Accountability for practice.** When there is trust and strong working relationships and collaboration across organisations it is easier to be accountable. Including when you or your organisation are pushing ethical boundaries or are just not playing well.

Be intentional about being accountable because times will get tough, you will need a second, third or fourth set of eyes on something.

Be intentional about building trust and networks of support across youth workers and orgs.

- **Stick to your core personal and organizational values.** Funding will flow in and can distract you and cause you to compromise at the expense of the long term viability of your organisation and wellbeing.

Jumping into things too quickly can set a rod for your back. Stick to who you are. It's ok to say no to funding and opportunities. We saw too many good people and organisations fold because they were distracted or chased the shiny thing at the expense of relationships and the people they aimed to serve.

That's where collaborating with others will help remind you of your purpose, be accountable and keep you focussed.

- **Check your privilege and tone down the savior complex.** Our role is to construct empowering spaces for people to articulate their needs.

In the years following the quakes we saw a lot of people fly in with their 'expertise', glossy presentations and fancy terms like 'design thinking', 'social enterprise' and 'co-design'. A lot of the time under the surface of this was a lack of knowledge about where our communities were actually at, overcomplicated things and reinventing the wheel in order to feed ego thinly veiled as aid.

My perspective is that this is entrenched in our colonial structures and systems of this 'white savior complex'. It's condescending, disempowering and can lead to less than ideal outcomes where communities feel done to and left out of the process and then are supposed to be grateful to the savior organisation or hero leader. This is arrogant and counter productive.

- **Be kind in how you challenge.** If you hear of someone taking on a social challenge or doing youth work (or something else in social services) using a method or working in a way you disagree with, try not speak negatively of them. This is to recognise that we must all own the challenges we face as a society, and that we are all affected by them, and we need to support each other as we seek to address the challenges we face. If you feel motivated (or bothered) by what you've heard or observed about whatever has gone down, go and meet with the person and offer to help, rather than speaking ill of them (acknowledging there are limits, such as if someone is doing something criminal or unethical, etc). This approach helps to create an inclusive and collaborative youth sector that is less competitive and centred on the young person. I'll be the first to admit I struggle with this one but it is important that we enhance each other's mana and not tear it down. I want to acknowledge Kevin Grimwood for his wise words on this.

2. Advocacy

- **Youth workers have always been agents of change engaged in social justice (clause 24).** We acknowledge the societal and political structures that shape our world and our role in advocacy and working with young people to move barriers that hinder their development. Because of our DNA of seeking the best outcomes for young people, advocacy can hurt sometimes, hence why self care is key. If you want to hear me express how I felt about that journey check out the link to the video⁵, I'm at 31 minutes but watch the whole thing. It's a panel about youth and recovery, post earthquake.
- **Having a common language and singing the same waiata.** It's key to good collaboration and makes advocacy a whole lot more cohesive and strong. This goes back to the point about getting over ourselves and avoiding competition but remember we can sing different notes and create rich harmony.
- **We need to make sure we don't sell out those we are advocating for.** I like how Sarah Finlay-Robinson talks about what we have to do sometimes in order to "gain the ear" of decision makers, like the language we might use and the negotiation that occurs that might feel against the grain. In gaining the ear, we may in fact undermine the very voices we are advocating for. Again, this is where we need collaboration, good information and accountability.
- **Youth Workers are subject matter experts.** Ethics, good youth development practice and experience walking alongside young people are all part of the expertise we have to offer in the advocacy space. We can't underestimate the power of that and need to be proactive about being on the front foot of advocacy otherwise we run the risk of being done to or decisions being made for us.
- **Poster kids of recovery.** We need to keep in mind the long term impacts for the young people whose voices get profiled in the positive stories of recovery. It is the responsibility of caring adults to walk alongside young people and unpack what the consequences might be for them. We have a role to protect young people from manipulation and ensure their rights are not being violated (Clause 22).

- **Nothing about us without us.** We need to walk with young people on the journey of advocacy and focus on building self determination and agency when it comes to them sharing their experiences of recovery. This also means being reciprocal and genuine when they share their voice. I was speaking to youth mental health nurse Michelle Cole about some research⁶ she's done with young people in the Hurunui District during lockdown. She said it well, "if you're gonna go there with youth, you better be committed to action". We need to be mindful of good practice with young people and an adherence to rights based frameworks like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. To get into more understanding of this check out an article I co-authored with Sarah Finlay-Robinson and Rod Baxter in the last issue of Kaiparahuarahi.

3. Self Care:

- **Fit your own oxygen mask first.** As you constantly identify the needs of others you first need to do that yourself.
- **There's a time to be reactive.** In the earlier stages being reactive, creative and innovative is part of the season. But reactive stuff means long hours, is tiring, and can lead to compassion fatigue. Remember to stop and plan for the long term response. Look at the long game, this will be a marathon not a sprint.
- **Realise you're not always the answer.** Recognize your boundaries and capability, lean into that collaboration and refer young people on to other agencies, services etc... that cater to their needs – young people will be better off for it.
- **SUPERVISION, SUPERVISION, SUPERVISION – invest the time even if you don't think you need it.** And to you managers - you cannot afford to cut supervision from your budget. If you don't have a supervisor check out the Ara Taiohi Supervision database⁷.
- **Remember your own family and friends are going through it too.** They need you too and you need them. Invest in them and let them love on you.
- **Go rent a holiday home where there's no reception with a couple of youth work mates and drink wine.** It's ok to have a slight blow out, haha. Shout out to my girls Angelina and Stacey, we will always have Gore Bay.

Hope that was helpful! I'd like to acknowledge the feedback, conversations and reflections I had with people in the process of writing this blog. Particularly Angelina Mclean, Michelle Cole and Sarah McKay.

Thank you.

And to finish..... Clichés that are actually true, dammit:

- **it's a marathon not a sprint**
- **stay in your lane**
- **get over yourself**
- **put your own oxygen mask on before helping others**
- **be kind to yourself.**

Hannah Dunlop is based in Ōtautahi Christchurch and is working in the contracting and supervision space. This was one of the last things she wrote while waiting for her first baby to arrive. Hannah has been involved in the youth work sector for 15 years in frontline youth work, research and evaluation, youth wellbeing campaigns, local government youth development and engagement roles, and been involved in youth sector collaborations and governance. Specifically Hannah worked in the Waimakariri, North Canterbury community during the Canterbury Earthquakes and then went on to be the project lead for youth psychosocial recovery at NZ Red Cross and worked with young people to shape the Bounce project.

References:

- 1 Dr Robs six tips for disaster recovery <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlwvDg97XM>
- 2 Red Cross psychological first aid <https://www.redcross.org.nz/first-aid/all-available-courses/psychological-first-aid/>
- 3 Youth Voice Canterbury <http://www.youthvoicecanterbury.org.nz/>
- 4 Strengthening the Youth Sector <http://www.sys.org.nz/>
- 5 2018 Canterbury Earthquakes Symposium - Panel discussion: Youth in disaster recovery https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3822&v=MXHNwjcDG0Q&feature=emb_logo
- 6 Meaningful Health Hurunui, research by youth mental health nurse Michelle Cole in lockdown <https://www.meaningfulhealthhurunui.org/research.html>
- 7 Ara Taiohi supervision data base <https://arataiohi.org.nz/career/supervision/>

The Rewards of Electronic Talanoa

Blog 8 from Zara Maslin, 28 May 2020



The best part of my job is interviewing youth workers. I get to meet and spend time with the most incredible people: hearing what they do, why they do it and the experiences they have along the way.

There are stories, laughter, sometimes tears, and always a sense of movement in my spirit. I leave these interviews feeling inspired and with a full wairua.

Before my time as Korowai Tupu manager, several Pacific youth development experts helped to establish a pathway for Korowai Tupu applications to be completed through talanoa. Although the ancient art and practice of talanoa can't be captured in words on paper, this quote has been a good starting point for me:

“Talanoa is a generic term referring to a conversation, chat, sharing of ideas and talking with someone. It is a term that is shared by Tongans, Samoans, and Fijians. Talanoa can be formal, as between chiefs and his or her people, and it can be informal, as between friends in a kava circle. Talanoa is also used for different purposes; to teach a skill, to share ideas, to preach, to resolve problems, to build and maintain relationships, and to gather information.”

– The Kakala Research Framework, Seu'ula Johansson Fua.

As pālagi, I was nervous partaking in a concept with pasifika origins outside of my own culture.

However I found talanoa to be a natural and familiar experience. Every culture in the world has space for storytelling and shared experiences – and indigenous cultures seem to do it particularly well.

A Korowai Tupu talanoa application sits somewhere between the two scenarios referred to in the quote above. It's semi-formal. We need formality and structure because there is business to be done, multiple applications to receive and an in-depth analysis of the nine core competencies of youth work.

However, the nature of talanoa also brings a sense of casualness and informality too. It's a structured conversation, yet with endless tangents, usually alongside food and laughter, and if there was kava available, probably that too.

When we found ourselves in a national lockdown, talanoa suddenly looked different for Korowai Tupu applicants. We'd never tried it electronically before and needed to adapt quickly as eager youth workers utilised the miraculous opportunity to spend time behind a computer screen. We didn't do anything fancy – it was as simple as sending a video link, a copy of the arc of our intended conversation and reminder to BYO food and drink to “share”.

It sounds like just another of the ten-thousand online meetings during lockdown. But these were different. Something about each of these talanoa was absolutely magical and transformative for all who were involved.

Shared Experiences

Via technology or not, talanoa allows sharing stories together. Giving youth workers the opportunity to share their experiences opened me up to a whole world of stories. Good stories, funny stories, sad stories, mistakes, wins, ideas that worked, ideas that didn't, success stories, young people who were challenging, young people who thrived... the list goes on. Talanoa is about sharing a story for those who are listening as well as for yourself, to articulate your feelings and reflect on the experience you've had. By doing so, the listeners are invited to become part of the story's emotions and therefore the youth worker's unique reality.

This process connects the group together in a way that is genuine and beautiful.

Vulnerability

Something about that connecting process meant that people felt comfortable not just sharing stories, but sharing deeply personal stories. I heard vulnerable, heart-felt anecdotes of how various experiences had shaped someone's youth work practice, how young people had achieved amazing things, and personal struggles and transformational journeys. These were the sorts of moments I'd usually only hear from my closest friends or family. Yet there we were, sharing them through a computer with people who had, until moments ago, just been workmates, acquaintances and even strangers.

Encouragement

We wrap up the talanoa with an opportunity for every person to give a compliment to someone from their group. Off the back of all the sharing and vulnerability, the encouragement given was profound. It was incredible the little things that were noticed about others. Perhaps about the person's character or the perseverance shown in a scenario they described. Everyone left feeling encouraged and proud. Not just as a youth worker, but as a human who is contributing to the betterment of the world.

Spirituality

Even though we weren't in the same room, the shared experience of talanoa was a spiritual one. The voices and words and virtual eye-contact somehow made it possible to connect with each other in a way that was bigger than just relational. The power of vulnerable sharing in a group did something in my spirit that is difficult to put into words. It was a privilege for each of us to share a glimpse of each other's story.

"Through Talanoa I was able to express myself and show emotions in explaining my answers – something I can't do on paper. I know my colleagues enjoyed it too because we were able to share experiences and so it was a good way to know my colleagues on another level, it was also good to know their strengths and what they bring to the game."

– Sio, Applicant

"I felt proud being able to speak my experiences of youth work rather than having it read off of a paper, I felt there was more power to the words being shared in that space. I would definitely recommend the talanoa process as it really does make you stop and reflect on your journey in youth work and being able to share that with others in your team is an amazing experience."

– Tania, Applicant

"The online Talanoa process was a very positive experience from start to finish. It was a privilege to complete the application with my work colleagues, the encouragement was uplifting. I'm thankful to the facilitators for ensuring I understood the content of discussion and for encouraging me throughout the entire time. The facilitation style was both supportive and efficient with collating our answers."

– Tuaolola, Applicant

“I love that moment of transition from nervousness to intent. Where the people involved shrug off the anxiety of feeling “tested” and start to share. I think the role of karakia helps with that shift.”

– Nikki, Membership Committee

“Talanoa is more than sharing stories and talking. It’s also about making time for moments in between which is also talanoa. The quiet moments, the awkward silence, the phat laughs, the moments of mocking, the sharing of food and the ‘ah ha’ moments where you finally realise or remember something. Talanoa is one approach to acknowledge and shift the va between people and places.”

– Simon, Membership Committee

As I look back on this season of rāhui, I'll always remember these electronic talanoa. I'll remember when one person offered a handful of chips through the camera. I'll also remember the youth worker who sat in their car outside a free wifi hotspot just to connect with us! I'll remember the deep conversations, the beautiful words of encouragement, the feeling of a full wairua, and especially the challenge to better myself after learning from others.

The power of talanoa is stronger than distance and stronger than an internet connection. Talanoa is a spiritual and unforgettable experience that not even COVID-19 can put a stop to!

Since being in this role, I've seen first-hand the value of youth workers uniting around the motu. The variety of different youth work happening is incredible and Korowai Tupu provides a space for us to all learn from each other. As we unite and find our collective voice, we are shaping the youth sector nationally: connected we stand strong! And this is just the beginning!

If you're interested in becoming a member of Korowai Tupu, I'd love to hear from you! Talanoa is just one of the pathways someone can apply. To find out more about membership or even just to yarn, email me at youthwork@arataiohi.org.nz

Zara Maslin is a passionate youth worker from Ōtautahi, living in Tamaki Mākaaurau. She's chuffed to have experience working with young people in a wide range of contexts including faith-based, community, mental health, and education settings. With a husband who is also a youth worker, Zara keeps her practice active by volunteering at his mahi. Currently employed by Ara Taiohi as the Korowai Tupu manager, she is privileged to spend her days leading a community of talented Korowai Tupu members who are committed to professionalising the youth sector.

Zara would like to give a huge shout-out to the crew of amazing youth workers who dared to apply for Korowai Tupu during lockdown, especially those who trialled the electronic talanoa process!

Learning From Lockdown

Blog 9 from Jane Zintl, 9 June 2020



This is the final blog in a series of blogs we have titled 'Ethics & Pandemic'.

A number of voices have contributed their reflections on this season, and what this means for our practice. This goes beyond COVID-19, and our learning is transferable into many other contexts.

We have therefore decided to collect these blogs together, and they form the foundation of this edition of Kaiaparahuarahi. We are also inviting many voices to reflect on this season, what we have learnt and what we need to keep hold of as we move forward.

Last Monday was our first day back in our Wellington office since the start of rāhui. Between the rain and the earthquake it felt like mother nature was saying 'STAY HOME!' Every century there are life changing events that affect the course history. Many would say WWII was that for the 20th Century.

COVID-19 will certainly make the top 10 for our current Century! If the world is changing the question for us is what does this mean for young people and the youth sector?

Last year Ara Taiohi's kaumatua James Makowharemahihī gifted us the following whakatauki:

"Ka haere te tangata taiohi i te ao hurihuri, ka noho tonu te whenua Papatuanuku" "While youth of mankind moves on in this ever-changing world, mother earth remains enduring"

There are many themes from this whakatauki, and other similar whakatauki that speak of the role of mankind in relation to mother earth.

The whakatauki speaks of the role of mankind and Youth and their ever changing world, Youth dynamics, intergenerational changes, pursuit of mātauranga advancement of technological world, dynamics of youth energy and spirituality, mahi huarahi Rangatahi, Oranga

taitamariki – Youth wellbeing, Mana Rangatahi Mana Motuhake.

As we stand at an historical crossroads, my reflections on this whakatauki lead me to the question, what do we need to hold on to the essence of (what needs to endure), and what needs to adapt and be responsive, what needs to change?

I am wondering what are we (the 'youth sector') the kaitiaki, or guardians of? As I reflect on a gate, what needs to be strong and secure, and protected? As we open the gate what needs to be embraced and walked into as the seasons shift?

I have always been a staunch advocate for relational youth work, and that the core of this has always been face to face (kanohi ki te kanohi). I have watched the digital world grow, and seen how young people who have only known this world have embraced it. I have dabbled in social media, and joined others expressing concern about the perils of the digital world (cyber bullying, access to porn etc...).

I have acknowledged that our sector needed to move into this space as the digital world is part of a young person's ecosystem, but, to be honest, I have always felt engagement in this space was a distant second to 'real' relationships, which takes place in the physical world.

In a recent hui a participant commented that we have seen 10 years change in 1 year – and I would argue that we have seen 10 years change in 2 months! Our ecosystem has had no choice but to include the digital world. We can now actively engage in online spaces. Some of us were doing so hour after hour all through rāhui! Work kept going. Connection kept going.

For many, online connection was more accessible than physical connection. But not for all.

Access was, at best, inconsistent. A huge push to minimise this inequity made only a slight impression. Some chose to actively seek out opportunities to maintain physical connection (through food delivery and other options) as they were desperate to maintain connection in the physical world.

These ponderings lead me to hypothesise that the essence of youth development that we need to protect is that it is relational, and that it is equitable. Our Code of Ethics supports this.

Our core values outlined in the context section of our Code of Ethics note that we are relationship focused and that we actively confront discrimination. Ara Taiohi's principles are that we are based on both youth development (relational) and Te Tiriti (equitable, particularly noting article 3). Clause 1 of our Code talks about our primary relationship, and clause 12 acknowledges diversity and cultural safety, implicitly implying equity. Finally our new principles of youth development, Mana Taiohi, encapsulate both relationship and equity.

My sense is that these two pillars are what we need to actively protect, as we adapt to the season before us. The challenges currently facing the United States, that reflect another global epidemic of racism, highlight how essential both relationships and equity are for us.

If relationship and equity are what we are holding at our core, the question becomes how do we as a sector pivot? Our Mana Taiohi principles guide us in the 'how' we are to adapt. Here are some of my thoughts:

Resourcing

A soon to be released evidence brief confirms that as we move forward into 'recovery' young people will be disproportionately affected, particularly in the areas of employment and mental wellbeing. Young people and the youth sector need a strong voice and representation to ensure that resources are released to support this need. One of the principles of Mana Taiohi is that:

'with young people we will uphold and extend manaakitanga, nourishing collective wellbeing.'

The principle notes that this creates accountability for those who care for young people, relationally and systemically. For us to manaaki all young people, resources to fulfil this must be released.

Dual expressions

We have pivoted well to the digital space, and many young people have connected in ways that they did not or could not in the physical space. However, many who previously engaged in the physical space did not do so in the digital. Both spaces are relational, and for equity we need to pivot again and look at both physical and digital expressions of our mahi. The additional challenge is that during rāhui we were able to transfer resources from one to the other, and many will struggle to resource both. I note that this is not an either/or, it is a both/and, and it is more of a continuum. Some groups will be strongly down one end or the other, and most will be somewhere between these extremes, with a weighting towards either digital or physical expressions.

Mana Taiohi principles are interconnected and interwoven. Aspects of manaakitanga apply here as well. I also want to emphasise our whanaungatanga principle that:

'With young people we prioritise whanaungatanga, taking time to build and sustain quality relationships.'

This principle specifically notes that this relates to all forms of relationship, including those in the digital space.

Youth Voice

The post-COVID world is unknown and must adapt to meet coming challenges and new ways of being. Research supports what we intuitively know to be true, that the older we get the more difficult it can be to adapt. As we move forward, we need the voice of young people, whose idealism often has less inhibitions and preconceived ideas about what will and won't work.

This is not about older people being the leaders now (and therefore young people are not) and young people being the leaders of the future (and therefore older people are not). This is an individualistic narrow view of leadership. This is about acknowledging the power of the collective and working together. People of all ages are leaders now, and in the future.

Whai wāhitanga acknowledges mana and states that from mana flows:

'Whai wāhitanga, participation. We enable young people to be empowered to participate when we allow young people to navigate and participate in the world, rather than privileging the voice of a few.'

We are experts in whai wāhitanga, youth participation. This includes at the least youth-led advisory groups, and so much more. It is relational and informed by good information. As a sector our expertise is essential, and we must step up to allow for meaningful youth participation.

Self Care

The motivation for most people to engage in youth development is rarely financial.

Most of us who work in our area are motivated by our values and belief in the difference that our mahi can make to the lives of others. Having supervised many youth workers over the decades my experience is that personal wellbeing is often de-prioritised as the need of others increase. Organisationally, when the pressure is financial then essential elements such as support for supervision, training and professional development are among the first things to go, despite the fact they are even more essential than they were in more 'neutral' times.

Sustainable youth work must prioritise self and whānau care in all times.

Ethical Youth Work post COVID-19 challenges us to both protect the relational and equitable nature of youth work. We cannot be pushed by the system into a purely digital space as it is perceived to be more cost effective.

At the same time, now that we have a choice about how we engage, we need to ensure we do not regress back into a space of minimising digital connection. To do so would be both un-relational, and inequitable, and therefore potentially unethical. We must continue to do what we do so well, journey with young people in the spaces that they chose.

Responding to a crisis: Youth workers reflecting on their lockdown response supporting rangatahi

A reflective article from students of the Bachelor of Youth Development at Weltec Institute of Technology.

Chelsea Rawlings, Bevan Sanders, JD Douglas, Alexandra Powell, Tiuka Anderson, Fontaine Snow-Preston



In March this year, the Labour/ NZ First Coalition Government, led by the Honourable Jacinda Arden, called for the country to self-isolate, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Many parts of our economy and society in general either closed up shop, went on-line or had to keep going as they were essential services.

This article describes how some students studying youth development at WelTec were able to support young people during lockdown in Level 4 and beyond. As part of their studies, they are involved in placement in a diverse range of organisations and have varying roles within them.

Kia ora everyone. My name is Chelsea and I'm in my third year of the Bachelor of Youth Development (BYD) which is run through WelTec. This is a unique and one of a kind degree. We are taught theories and practices to assist us in becoming the next generation of positive youth development focussed youth workers. Using an applied approach to our learning, we are given the opportunity to learn alongside some incredible youth workers already out in the field. Through the degree we are presented with learning from some of our own backyard youth workers, as well as the teachings from our international colleagues. I have found myself, through my previous two and a half years of study, amazed by some of the incredible resources available to our sector, but also how ready for growth those resources continue to be. By evolving the development of the next generation of youth workers in Aotearoa, we are giving thanks and credit to those before us, while taking their learning to new levels, adapting these to suit our own rangatahi here in Aotearoa.

Through our studies, we are also encouraged to reflect on our practice as students and as youth workers. Utilizing the theories we learn in our classes and applying these to our places of work, ensures we can identify ways in which we can continue learning as our practice evolves and develops. Thus, providing the highest level of informed up-to-date practice, for our Rangatahi and Tamariki in Aotearoa. During lock down we were both youth workers and students. This gave us an insight into how we could further help our Rangatahi. We were studying a course on sustaining youth participation at the time of lock down, learning how to create avenues of positive participation for our rangatahi. This included creating programmes with and for our young people, to walk alongside our Rangatahi as they take on challenges of a higher scale that are important to them. Instilling our young people had mana and integrity as they grew. We were also able to evaluate our organisation's response to the lock down alongside the theories of youth participation we were learning. Having the ability to critically analyse not only our organisation's role through the COVID-19 pandemic, but also reflect on our own critical practices we applied through this trying time. Here, we have collated some of the diverse experiences and reflections from myself as well as five of my classmates.

Bevan and JD's experience

INTRODUCING BEVAN

I work for central youth services in Wellington. Been doing youth work for 13yrs. My journey started through working as an outdoor instructor for 7yrs, then it moved to central youth services where I have been working for almost 7yrs, facilitating group programmes and one on one mentoring.

INTRODUCING JD

Kia ora, my name is JD I am 20 years old and have recently moved to Wellington in search of new opportunities in the youth work sector. I was born and raised in South Auckland and have a lot of experience working with youth aid officers in my community with youth in care and deliver holistic youth development programmes across a wide age range from 13-18 years old. I have been doing youth work for the past 3 years out of school and am based with the Central Youth Services team at the Salvation Army Petone. My passion lies with hearing stories and journeying alongside young people from a variety of backgrounds

We work for an organisation that has a youth arm, and as the lock down started to take effect, we were hearing that all the young people we were in contact with had needs. As a result of this, we developed a care package initiative. The idea was to implement care packages specifically targeted at meeting the needs of the recipients (e.g. contents included health care products from shampoo, conditioner as well many other essential items).

We consulted with the young people over a couple weeks during COVID-19 lockdown level 3 as to what would make good items for them in the care packs, and from there we went out and purchased items to make up the care packs. We had to make the care packs up unfortunately without the help of the young people due to being in Level 3. This created the opportunity for these care packs to be a surprise for the young people and for us to show them that they are special, and were thought of when we eventually did meet back up face to face.



Young people received their care packages on the first session back after isolation (after comms with schools on when it was safe to resume programme). It was important for us to start off strong and explain in further depth what the care packages represented and the importance of showing our means of tautoko for them and how that then solidifies the group culture being revisited for the coming sessions.

The voice of the young people is not always thought of by government agencies and community organisations when wider issues like COVID-19 take place. Families as a whole are thought of (which is great), but young people can be lumped into that and their concerns not even heard. Our organisation was no different in this situation, youth leaders were not consulted or shown that support was there to help them serve the young people in this time of crisis, we were left to ourselves to figure that one out. We needed to hear directly from the wider organisation that any support there was for us youth workers and leaders, so we were not having to do it alone, and so that we had the resources to help the young people.

The mana of young people can be further enhanced when they are a part of a leading initiative that can have positive outcomes. This is important as young people are gaining a sense of ownership towards something they've worked hard to achieve. Times of crises can bring about change in a young person's -environment (whether that is in a positive or negative impact). Mana could also be potentially diminished if, in a certain cases young people feel isolated or unable to actively participate in the initiative.

"If we sincerely believe young people have "a part to play" in participatory decision-making, we need to assess positions of power before defining the role(s) available; what exactly is the part young people can play?"

– Baxter & Haxton, 2007

What we've learnt from our lockdown experience is young people are more resilient than what we give them credit for. Being told they cannot hangout with their friends, having to stay home in a confined space, changing their way of living overnight is not a simple task. This lock down showed that young people can participate by staying home and following the guidelines, be responsible and have a positive impact on the community if given the chance and trusted to do so.

Written by **Bevan Sanders & JD Douglas**

Chelsea's experience

INTRODUCING CHELSEA

Kia ora. Born and bred in Porirua, I have always leant towards working with our more vulnerable young people. I have a background in Horse riding and Outdoor adventure. After taking a few years off to have my beautiful children, I decided to put my efforts back into learning and joined the BYD. I'm very interested in Trauma infused practice and seeing past behaviours. I love outdoor based activities and animal therapy :)

I work in a residential youth facility and one of the first things we had to do was cancel on-site and off-site visits. This resulted in increased levels of anxiety among our youth, and like most other institutions, massive changes in our day-to-day operations, with new hygiene procedures, social distancing etc. We just couldn't afford to let COVID-19 into our facility.

I found Jans de Backer's triangle of participation (2002) useful to consider here, the three corners of the triangle and how beneficial they are when involving our young people, but also when trying to reinstate a level of autonomy for them. The first corner is challenge; the whole of Aotearoa knew our challenge – Smash COVID-19 out of the park. However, inside of that challenge was surviving the lock down. The impact that the lock down had on our Rangatahi was significant. The disruption to their daily routines left staff underprepared as we entered into an impromptu 2 weeks of school holidays. We involved our young people in creating some relevant programmes, things for them to not only do, but also actively participate in. The next corner of our triangle is Capacity. We created an open and honest discussion surrounding the limitations we faced. Shops were closed and shipping delays were a mile long.

We strived to create a partnership with our young people, building a Connection (our third corner). By utilizing the theory in such a way, we were able to give our young people back their voice and create a partnership of participation.

Another significant challenge was the hygiene and social distancing measures. Separating the young people was isolating, we needed to work together to find ways for us to engage while being 2 metres apart. First, we brought in extra couches, this allowed our young people to sit together and enjoy each other's company while exercising social distancing. Next we introduced daily wipe down procedures, helping our young people to take control over their environment. We also utilized our outdoor spaces; we created a social distancing Donkey game. We spread out around the courtyard making the most of the squares

paved and threw the ball to each other. This created a fun environment that although was following the guidelines set out, allowed our Rangatahi to enjoy their time and forget about the worries of the pandemic.

When lock down was announced, we had a handful of Rangatahi working towards their placements. They were in a state of transition, which was immediately put on hold. For one of our Rangatahi this meant they could no longer leave on their agreed upon date. This level of rejection and deflation added to their already significant level of trauma. We had to band together around our young person and support them through this time. As a team, we wanted to allow our young people an opportunity to understand what was happening in the world around them. Together we sat each day at 1pm and watched the daily press conference. Afterwards we would sit and unpack what it meant and work towards a level of understanding that would ease some of the confusion and fear relating to the lockdown. By creating transparent and honest dialogue, we could in some way ease part of the anxiety our young people held.

With on-sites and off-sites put on hold, we wanted to ensure our Rangatahi were staying connected with their Whanau. We encouraged phone calls to Whanau and friends. We would utilize platforms such as Facetime to provide video calls with the ones they cared about. Being able to provide a face to face option gave them a greater feeling of relief, that their whanau were ok too.

As the rest of the country was, our young people were allowed to go for walks in their neighbourhood. We created a relationship of trust and understanding with our young people to make this happen. We talked through the risks with our young people; social distancing, and absconding. We needed our young people to understand the severity of what was happening, but also provide them with the trust and responsibility they deserved. We made the most of the swing down the street, enjoying the green grass and fresh air provided from the stream. Giving them a sense of normality and encouraging them to enjoy being young people.

Reflecting back on our time in lock down, I feel we did well by our young people, creating a safe and secure environment while allowing our Rangatahi their autonomy. By creating open and trusting relationships, a solid partnership between staff and young people made all the difference. If we were to have to do this all over again, I would only change one thing; adapting to the young people we have at the time. Each young person we care for is extremely different. What works for some, may not work for others. However, if we can continue a strong partnership with all our young people, we can continue practicing in a way that positive youth participation is second nature and not something we need to implement due to the situation evolving around us.

Written by **Chelsea Rawlings**

Alex's experience

INTRODUCING ALEX

Kia ora! I'm Alex, 26, lived in Wellington most of my life. I embedded myself in the youth work scene about six years ago. First starting with an internship at my church, which turned into employment, a school placement with 24-7 Youth Work for a few years and more recently working it out at the Karori Youth Centre. I enjoy getting to know young people one on one, and walking with them through life's ups and downs. I love anything to do with social justice, the environment, op shopping, creativity, community, and a good cup of tea!

I work for a community youth centre in Wellington. When I heard that the country would be going into lockdown, the first thing I did was share a post on Instagram explaining that the centre was closed until further notice, and sent the same message out in a text to young people and the parents that I had a good relationship with.

I made sure to communicate that the team of youth workers were still available to be contacted over the phone or online, if the young people needed support.

However, there were a few last-minute things to do before the lockdown began. A Food Rescue programme, Kaibosh, were contacted for food parcels for families, while I worked on making up activity packs to drop off to the young people. One of these drops offs included a standalone basketball hoop and sports gear. This was for a household of twelve people, of whom seven of the ten young people are connected through the youth centre. This family had expressed concern with me about how they were going to keep their kids occupied during the lockdown. One night while falling asleep, this idea popped into my head. It was not as if the youth centre would be using the hoop anytime soon either. So, the following day the hoop was dismantled, loaded into the back of my car, and taken to the family home. All the kids gathered on the front lawn as the two oldest brothers worked to put the hoop back together again.



The first week of lockdown for me was a chance to catch my breath and start adjusting to what was going to be the new normal. Coming from a small independent organisation the guidelines to navigate digital youth work were quite unclear. While I attempted to brainstorm a plan with my volunteer youth leaders, what proved more effective was watching what other youth organisations were doing, and then following suit.

Overtime, in collaboration with other youth workers, I eventually got used to a new rhythm. Instagram quickly became the main platform of communication for the youth centre, and Friday zoom sessions were quickly established. We tried various forms of digital youth participation including art challenges, trick-shot and skills challenges, wellbeing reminders, and the 25 push ups for 25 days challenge raising awareness around mental health.

There were varying levels of participation from the young people, often more incentivised if they were competing for a prize. The Instagram post that had the largest uptake was a story featuring the Ministry of Youth Development Pulse Check survey. The young people were encouraged to complete the survey and then send a screenshot to me proving they had done so. They were then asked to tell me their favourite block of DairyMilk chocolate, and a home address to drop that off to. Eleven young people rose to the challenge and participated in the survey. I was very pleased with this response.

When looking at how young people engaged online over the lockdown period, I spoke with 15-year old Maddie (Name changed for privacy) who regularly attends their youth drop in centre. Maddie shared some of the different ways that she and her friends participated online. She was involved with a few different youth centres following their daily online content and participating in

some of the challenges that were being set. For example, on International Nurses Day she submitted a photo of her holding a piece of paper penned with words of appreciation. This image along with other participants' images were shared on social media. This young person began tuning into the weekly Wahine Chats that were facilitated by a youth worker from Zeal Wellington. Maddie shared about the Discord server that she established over the lockdown. Maddie set herself this challenge and she had the competencies and connections to succeed. She mentioned that 70 people in total joined, with around 15 people being the most online at any one time. Maddie created different bots programmed to run different spaces. Groups that went by the hashtag name #mumreminders and #ididit were made where different games and challenges were facilitated.

There are clear connections here between her actions and the positive youth development model, the Circle of Courage developed by Martin Brokenleg (2007). Maddie reflects on her inspiration,

“What if I was like that girl at the youth awards who set up the free day-care for her neighbours?”.

She has shown her ability to master a skill, and then practice generosity by using that skill for the benefit of others. As Maddie grows in mastery and generosity it is clear that she is gaining a sense of individualisation and belonging as she finds her place in her community.

Written by **Alexandra Powell**

There were varying levels of participation from the young people, often more incentivised if they were competing for a prize.



Ray's experience

Working in communities up North, Ray's organisation was quick to note that kids were missing out on stable homelife, good kai and routines. Parents were busy, stressed and it was all very unsure times. He and his colleagues quickly put together healthy, simple to eat meals that connected themes of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, participation and connectedness.



I work for an AOD (Alcohol and other Drugs) youth health service in the North. As an essential service we were able to access our young people during level 4. Over the first couple weeks I would talk to them over the phone as I did not feel safe to go to their homes as I was unsure what was safe and was not for my own wellbeing. During this time I would ask them how they would like to continue to engage and what that looked like. The overwhelming response was that they missed cooking the food which plays a big part of our programme so together with the young people we developed the "Feed the Whanau" initiative which was a youth developed cooking class they could do in their homes.

This involved the young people coming up with meal ideas that could feed up to 6 people, was within their skill range and was within our budget, because feeding seven young people is a lot cheaper than feeding seven young people and their Whanau.

Over a week we worked out a bunch of recipes that fit the criteria then we would all vote on which ones to do. So over the following weeks I would put together the meal packs which had the ingredients and instruction written on the bag. We gave them cool names like "Yeah, Nah-Chos" and "Bro-ritos" which was a cool way for them to identify and take ownership of the recipes. Initially I asked them to research the countries the dishes came from and asked a range of general questions like "what's the capital" "How many people live there" and while a couple were able to do I hadn't taken into the consideration that not all have

internet and I had assumed they knew how to research. After realising what was happening, we scrapped that part of it so I believe the renaming worked as a bridge because now every time we talk about these dishes they call them by the names we came up with. The young people and their Whanau not only enjoyed the Kai packs but were deeply appreciative of the time and effort put in by our organisation and their rangatahi. Some unexpected but amazing outcomes was that from one of the young people and his mum she told me how the young person [A] would do the cooking with his little brother and that they would bond over it talking about how mean it was for a few days later.

From a PYD view I was encouraged that [A] was able to pass on the knowledge and experience to his brother in a sense he was the youth worker. As a youth worker these are the outcomes that really show we are having a positive impact on not only the young people we journey with but also their Whanau and the wider community. Thank you for reading this story and I hope there is something for you to take away and will help you and your young people.

Written by **Tiuka Anderson**

Fonnie's experience

As a Youth Worker in Alternative Education, I created an initiative that supported students via online during the period of COVID-19, Level 4 lockdown.

The space I work in supports students in Years 9-12 transition back into mainstream education or further training. Most of our students' have been excluded from mainstream because of truancy and behaviour. Our goal is to support their needs by working closely with the young person and their whanau to support their 4 Dimensions of Hauora (spiritual, physical, mental, and social) encouraging students to take positive steps forward to support and sustain their future wellbeing (Durie, 1994).

My initiative is called "Keeping students connected to their community and resources via online; supporting them in distance learning". The initiative foundations were focused on applying past and present knowledge and protecting Child Rights, Code of Ethics, Positive Youth Development, and New Zealand's founding document Te Tiriti O Waitangi. This area of research helped me to identify needs for my students that were not being met during the lockdown. My obligations as a youth worker are to uphold the mana of students and continue their links to their community, their rights to an education, adequate care, and health services. This allowed me to create a safe and diverse cultural space for staff to connect with students online.

Facebook, Instagram, and group messenger avenues were created for staff, students, whanau, and direct community links to stay connected. All pages were fully monitored by all staff and our school, kawa was adopted and adapted to fit online.



This initiative supported shared power and Tuakana Teina between staff and students while engaging and learning online, supporting whanau with sustaining routines from home. Whanau were supported through Manaakitanga from local Community and Iwi regularly delivering essential kai, health packs and information. This supported the wellbeing of all whanau members.

The outcome from this initiative has been a hit! This space now has stronger community links; this has heightened whanau and student's awareness and has encouraged access to community resources and services. The Facebook page also gave an important opportunity to acknowledge and thank the community groups that supported students and their whanau over this time.

Written by **Fontaine Snow-Preston**

Concluding thoughts

As you can see from our experiences, as the country was thrown into a whirlwind of unknown times, youth workers put on their thinking hats and worked tirelessly to ensure our rangatahi and their whanau were well supported in this unprecedented time. Some key themes that you can see from our diverse experiences relate back to one thing; manaakitanga. From ensuring our rangatahi stayed connected, to providing supplies and aroha, we supported our rangatahi as best we could. We were able to utilize the theories taught to us in the classroom and evolve our practice into new and adaptable approaches. While continuing our growth as students, we were able to reflect in an analytical perspective on our practice. Ensuring rangatahi were able to keep their mana as well as their sanity throughout the COVID-19 lockdown. We hope that by sharing our experiences with everyone, we are able to collectively learn and grow from this trying time.

Further into our third year of the Bachelor of Youth Development, we will be creating our own Models of Practice. I believe the learning that we all can take away from this, will be essential to us in creating an adaptable model that all youth workers, not just at home in Aotearoa, but across the globe can use to help provide the care and level of support our Rangatahi deserve.

Kia Kaha Aotearoa, be kind and most importantly, be safe.

We would like to take this moment to give thanks; To Rachel Tallon and Sarah Finlay-Robinson. For both their hard work and support of us with writing this article, but also for ensuring we were keeping safe and looked after throughout our COVID-19 experiences.

Fontaine & Tiuka are also phenomenal students doing the mahi to get the treat that is the BYD.

All of these students are incredible emerging leaders and we can't wait to see what they explore next.

—

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Bubble2Bubble

An electronic interview with Dr Annabel Prescott

Bubble2Bubble is a service that was set up by Anamata Cafe in Taupō in response to the COVID-19 epidemic. It was a concerted effort to ease distress and support the mental well-being of our young people across the rāhui through a dedicated 0800 number (0800 Bubble).

We were interested to hear Anamata's journey from idea to delivery, how they have found it and if it will continue. Their Chief Executive, past Ara Taiohi Board Member and leader of the project, Dr Annabel Prescott responds below:

You and your team launched a new support service over the lockdown, can you tell us about it? Why did you decide this was needed?

We assessed early on that young people would need some form of virtual support during the rāhui as well as afterwards. So we decided to seek funding via grants to support a virtual counselling service called Bubble2Bubble. We did it because we always are looking for new opportunities to support young people in their health and wellbeing and this was another opportunity to do something new and innovative. We were also aware that we were still providing an essential service and that we were likely to see a range of presentations so we wanted to have something in place to be responsive to the needs of our community.

Was it tough to get this going during the rāhui? What did you learn?

To be honest, one of the gifts of working during the rāhui was people's willingness to action support in a far quicker way with fewer barriers for services who were wanting to provide support. We learnt that there is a need for services, that virtual appointments work really well for young people and their whānau and that asking for support has become increasingly important during this time.

Was this something you had planned anyhow or something new? Why?

For a long time, Anamata had been wanting to provide a counselling service of some description and

for a range of reasons, this was challenging. So we are really glad we got this off the ground when we did. I do think that historically we had relied heavily on a face2face model for counselling which created barriers in a regional community. So COVID-19 created the opportunity to relook at how we do things, the benefits of digital platforms and what they can offer, particularly services in the regions.

In designing the service and offering it to young people, were there any resources that were helpful to you or that you wished you had?

I think we have learnt that digital platforms create an opportunity to provide a service which is not reliant on the counsellor living in the same geographic region as the young person or the service. We had a great response from counsellors and/or registered health professionals from across the country who were able to offer support for this initiative.

How has it been? Has there been a lot of young people reach out in this way? Have they given you any feedback?

Since entering level 1 and seeing students return to school and University we have seen a significant increase in people presenting in high levels of distress. Being able to connect them in and match them with a counsellor has been wonderful.

How has your team found working in this way? Particularly in relation to connection over this medium?

we have seen that it has been effective, young people are receiving the support and ongoing support they need, with linkages or further referral to GPs and/or secondary mental health. We do see the value in a mixed medium approach being able to facilitate support which is both face2face and virtual going forward.

Are there any ethical issues that came up and how did you deal with them?

To date, we haven't been presented with any ethical issues. I think that because the service sat within a YOSS, with wider support available and networks within the community it enabled a wrap-around approach if needed.

Will you keep it running? Why or why not?

At this stage, we plan to keep running it with the support of grants, which we continue to apply for. We are looking at how we can also provide a face2face option where this is appropriate.

Reflective time machine

PAST: If you could give yourself advice in March 2020, what would you say?

LESSONS LEARNT: What have you learned during this season?

FUTURE: What do you want your future self to remember? What are you taking forward into your future youth work?



SHANNAN WONG

Ara Taiohi Operations & Youth Week Director,
Korowai Tupu Accredited Member

Past:

I'd say: stock up on work resources Shan, you're gonna need them at some point lol! Really though I'd say relish those moments of uncertainty, it's the worlds way of inviting you to experience Ma (間) Japanese to mean "the space between two structural parts."

Future:

The inspirational and innovative connections that were displayed throughout this period of restriction and distance. I really appreciated the ability of young people, their communities and those that support them to adapt and connect. That's something I'm gonna lean on in my future youth work.



MORGAN BUTLER

Board Member Ara Taiohi, Korowai Tupu
Accredited Member

Past:

The advice I would give myself is; even though you are going to miss your family and your wider community of support, be patient, you are not alone.

Work hard to find ways to feel and keep connected, when this is all over **don't lose that.**

Future:

What I will be taking forward into my practice as a youth worker is when looking at the bigger picture, making sure I'm thinking as big as I possibly can. Thinking deeper about how wider issues can intersect and impact on a person's life. I want to take the time and energy I had during quarantine to learn new things, continue to ask questions and keep putting it all together like a puzzle. I hope to always remember that youth development, working as a team and making a difference can be done from the comfort of your own bed.



STEVIE JEAN GEAR

Kaiāwhina o ngā Tamariki,
UNICEF NZ



LOCHY SIMPSON

Ara Taiohi Intern and BYD Student, Korowai
Tupu Member

Future:

This season has seen life as we know it, flipped upside down! I went from having opportunities mapped out, to my whole year being cancelled. I was forced to stop. As I updated my wall planner and crossed things out, I realised how busy I had made my life. I never knew how much I thrived off being "busy", until I was made to stop and stay home. Quietness and simplicity had all of a sudden become compulsory! This left me to feel somewhat unaccomplished and unfulfilled. I NEEDED BUSY! But as time went on, I found joy in the little things; trying new recipes, listening to the radio, reading and doing dance videos with my 2 year old. I realised that the external factors that I had once relied upon to bring me joy i.e big events, business trips, 101 meetings around the city, eating out at restaurants... all these things now seem so unnecessary. The lessons I plan to take forward with me is maintaining a more simple life. I hope to be able to inspire rangatahi to do the same, and to identify the small things that bring about happiness for them.

Past:

I think I would remind myself to keep really good regular contact with the people in my life and keep a really good schedule and I would tell myself to buy a whole bunch of computer gear just in case anything crazy were to suddenly force me to suddenly work at home for some reason...

Future:

My family and my friends have really gotten me through these difficult times and it really drives home how important the people in our lives are. Take the chance to widen your circle and catch up with your friends. Let them support you and impose yourself on them when you think they need it, they need just as much looking-after as you do. And finally don't be too hard on yourself, remember that we're only human and that's ok.

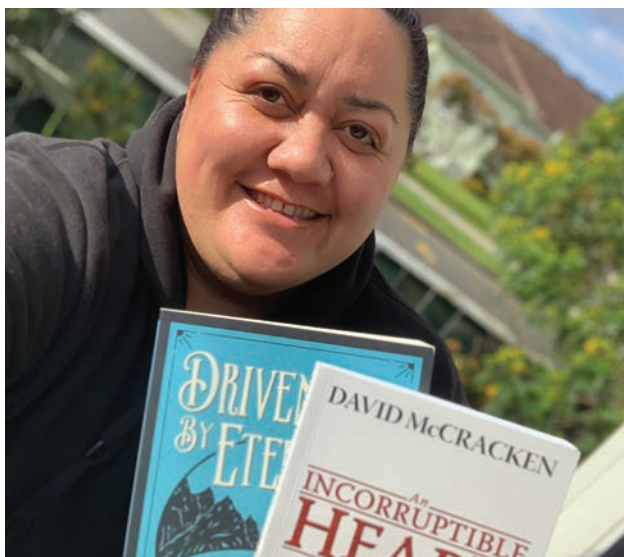
CHILLION SANERIVI

Youth Systems Innovator, The Cause Collective

Future:

I have learned in this season how important it is as a youth practitioner to be innovative and creative and possibly redefine what protective factors look like for young people. In uncertain times, you have to create the 'certain' within the scope of what you can do.





TE ANA FOWELL
Ara Taiohi Intern, BYD Student

Past:

My advice to myself in March would be – you're wasting way too much time on your phone looking at social media, put your phone away and read books. 🙄

Future:

Tee, you have what it takes. Don't doubt yourself read books, have fun and be kind to yourself. Taking forward into my future youth work is the same thing I always carry, a heart and passion for our young people.



ALLIE ZOHOORI-DOSSA
The Ba'hai Community

Future:

During this strange and uncertain time, I've learned a lot about myself, the things I should place more value on and more than anything else, the importance of networks of solidarity for myself and those I support in my efforts to build community in Avondale. If I didn't already know it, during this overwhelming period I've come to realize that I really don't like uncertainty! I'm a planner and organizer by nature and the fast and unexpected pace of the country moving from Alert Level 2 to 4 and the uncertainty around safety for my friends and family in New Zealand and overseas gave me a sense of emotional whiplash in those first few days of lockdown.

This coupled with the emotional burden from seeing COVID-19 sweep across the world and devastate lives and communities, resulted in my empath heart struggling quite a bit. Somewhat out of necessity, I've learned to rely more on close friends and family in this time of distress and to turn inward and towards God to build greater resilience and inner peace. The novelty of the whole world going through the COVID-19 crisis together has made those bonds of love, unity and solidarity through shared experience stronger than ever.

As restrictions progressively relax and New Zealanders reach out to each other to lend a hand in rebuilding aspects of society, I am making a greater effort to strengthen bonds of love and trust between myself and the young people and families I accompany to build a vibrant local community. Thus, regardless of how uncertain or gloomy future prospects may become, we will be a resilient and hopeful community that is tightly woven, interconnected and unbreakable."



TYLER NGATAI

Youth Services Coordinator, CCS Disability Action
Canterbury West Coast



STEVIE HAMIORA

Youth Development Worker

Redefining connections through the virtual space:

CCS Disability Action has grown service delivery to incorporate ongoing virtual services as we have learnt that disabled young people have continued to live in isolation pre-Covid. Disabled young people shared that the normality of the situation during COVID-19, was refreshing to see everyone experience some form of isolation and this is a common theme of their everyday life.

Through virtual youth led activities we have been able to work with disabled young people to feel better connected with peers, enhance everyday life-skills for them and improve self-determination.

Lessons learnt:

It has been a roller coaster filled with extreme highs and lows. I learnt to navigate this notion of being forced to stop. Sometimes in youth work it feels like you're so crazy busy all the time transferring energies in different spaces with workshops, events, and going into schools every day to meet our amazing diverse rangatahi. This stop allowed me to reflect on the amazing things I have learnt about being a youth worker in Aotearoa. I am grateful to have work during this time, I am grateful our country looks after our rangatahi. I look forward to engaging face to face again, but will make sure I look after myself in the long run. Community for me is serving others, and sometimes we can't forget to serve ourselves, fill our cup and make sure it's overflowing so others can receive the overflow.

Past:

I would say Stevie be kind and don't be hard on yourself during this weird and uncertain time and not to compare my productivity to how I operated post covid. I would say to myself go with the flow, breath and focus on what you can do now.

Future:

In this time I have also come to appreciate the fact that Papatuanuku (earth mother) is getting a rest from the traffic of people she is being restored in this time which was important for us as Maori we called this a rahui, we practice this to stop and protect environmental resources and this is the time to invest in restoring ourselves focusing on mental spiritual physical and whanau health. I have learnt to value reflective practice; in the future of my youth work journey I will take a break, listen to my body, my mind and what it needs to keep operating at a higher energy, to support the community.



SAKHR MUNASSAR

Youth Activator - Lower South Island, New Zealand Red Cross | Rīpeka Whero Aotearoa

Past:

The advice I would give myself back in March 2020 is a bit mixed – advice that I haven't myself figured out perfectly yet! One thing I'd tell myself for sure, however, is that although we are all basically faced with the same issue (COVID-19 in this instance) we all have other different battles that we are fighting in our lives that are not the same as everyone else's. I would also remind myself that although it's frustrating that a lot of people are complaining about being asked to stay home, while having a great healthcare system, electricity, water, food and most importantly security, to them this is a huge challenge. I am only able to see both worlds because I have lived in both of them, and all I can do is highlight the issues and advocate for those unheard voices that are thousands of kilometres away, hanging on by a thread.

Future:

I would want future me to remember that people have always been and will always be the most important thing in the world, and that includes me! It's important to put aside more time to eat better, rest more and have a balanced work and personal life, even during the busiest of times. As for the future youth worker in me, today's online world means that I will aim to be inclusive, just and an advocate for young people and every vulnerable person that I encounter to the best of my ability.



LAURA HATWELL

Programme Curriculum and Quality Advisor, YouthTown, Korowai Tupu Accredited Member

Past:

Dear March 2020 Me: you're going to have to work in some very unique circumstances for the next few months. Everyone you work with and for is going to be going through their own version of this strange parallel reality, but none of you are alone. Suddenly, the daily structures that you expect to see around you will be gone, so make sure you swim in that and work out what really matters along the way. A vast distance is going to have to be covered from your little desk, but you've got this and so has everyone else. Expect to see an amazing response from your colleagues and be inspired by them.

Future:

To conclude, Me, I just wanted to focus you on a few things:

- a) be mindful of how long you spend in meetings, as much as you love a yarn
- b) remember that this isn't forever and eventually you'll actually see real people again
- c) if it feels like you're overwhelmed, you probably are, and that's okay
- d) stretch, walk and hydrate!



TALEI BRYANT
Future Leaders Whakatane



JESS VAN ARENDONK
Youth Project Lead, Whanake Youth

Lessons learnt:

Looking back at my experience in lockdown and how our Whakatane Future leaders Roopu took charge in their roles made me so proud. Proud and confident that even when we can't meet up for weeks at a time the team are committed to doing whatever they can to help towards the group projects that ultimately helped so many families in our community.

The leadership that was shown by some of our leaders was wicked, they were able to meet on zoom weekly, discuss ideas, delegate tasks to each other and awahi their mates who were finding isolation hard. Together they completed 2 out of 3 projects we had set for the year and managed to create and pack over 250 whanau kids packs that were distributed out among 8 small towns in the Whakatane District.

Future:

My overall view on lockdown working with youth is that we are resilient, problem solvers and when supported by each other can do amazing things.

Lessons learnt:

Going through this changing time has taught me a lot about both myself and the young people that I work with. I've realised that as I've left my youth behind, I've also left behind my skills to be spontaneous and easily adaptable. Whereas so many of the young people that I've worked alongside have exhibited those skills to me during this time.

It took me a couple of weeks to realize it was okay to be flexible with my work hours and incorporate both family time and work time together in my home. Whereas to start with, I felt like I still needed to do my workload in my typical hours and days. It was actually the young people that I work with that taught me this. They were reaching out at all different times of the day and in fact, days and times of the day really meant nothing to them, they did what they needed and wanted to do when it worked for them and I realized that was how I needed to make things work in my life too. I also realized that social media was one of the only ways we could all stay connected. Zoom chats and FaceTime were awkward for a lot of young people. And although some young people loved connecting through a zoom youth group, many preferred to connect without being seen. So it was really important for me to make sure that I was still reaching out to those young people that only connect by liking your post, but are anxiously waiting every day to see what you have to say.

So this has changed the way that I will work from now on. We are now able to connect again in person with the young people we support. However, there are so many young people that are still silently connecting behind their phones and for that reason I will be continuing to focus on our social media followers, as well as the young people that I meet face to face. And I also think it's important to continue getting young people involved in our social media too. Our audience is predominantly youth and it was obvious during youth week that they preferred that connection and storytelling from other young people that may be experiencing the same things in life as them. Lastly I realised that being at home more makes me bake more and eat more, and that probably had the best and worst impact on my life.



CHARISSA BARHAM
National Youth Development Manager,
Netball New Zealand

Lessons learnt:

The pandemic has provided an authentic experience for youth to connect to, they are living it, feeling it and breathing it. As an organisation that aims to provide quality experiences for youth and providing the platforms for youth to create that experience – they are an expert in their own experience and more than ever in adversity that platform to connect and create their experience is even more important. Actions by Netball New Zealand to not park youth to side in adversity, but to bring them on the journey, listen to how they are feeling, what they are missing, what they would like changed is a commitment to youth and their well-being.

The biggest learning is how to take youth on the journey with you, ride the highs and lows together and allow them to not only voice their ideas, but have input into creating and launching their ideas. Even in the middle of sport's struggles to deliver the game at all levels has arisen "The Game Changers" – a group of young people from Cricket, Rugby and Netball connected and supported by their ambassadors Maia Leiws, Irene Van Dyk and Eroni Clarke to launch an online platform to connect with their role models, ask questions and be heard.

Taking this learning into the future and connecting with more sports and more youth is the dream!



CAITLIN MASON
Ara Taiohi Intern and BYD Student

Lessons learnt:

During this season I have witnessed firsthand how beautifully communities can work together in order to ensure their people are safe and happy. It was incredibly comforting and inspiring to see young people involved and engaged in their communities; working in frontline jobs and leading by example with their health and safety standards.

JAMES HARRIS
YouthWork.io

Lessons learnt:

I have learned that the core of youth work stays the same, even when social distancing. It is about journeying with young people through the ups-and-downs. Over the years, the vehicle we use for youth work may change, but we don't need to stress too much, as the core will always remain the same.

Past:

This too shall pass. Do what you can each day.
Don't sweat the small stuff.

Future:

On some hard days, I just want to lock myself in my house, not hear a peep from a young person and binge Netflix. I hope that this time gives me a deepened sense of ownership over my work. I had the time with Netflix and no youth. It was called lockdown and I didn't like it! I hope that I am more grateful for each moment I get face-to-face with young people.



SHANNAN KING
Youth Worker

Lessons learnt:

Lockdown here in Aotearoa has been quite a beautiful time of learning for us as practitioners. We're living in an age where we have the world telling us that young people are so deeply attached to their devices so we sit in the assumption that technology might be the best way of communicating with them.

A Youth Work friend from Vancouver (Canada) and I were talking recently about the challenges we were facing in our new digital based practice. I was thankful to hear that the challenge of moving from face-to-face practice to the digital world was something he and his team were also wrestling with, thousands of kilometres away. I don't know about you, but I sometimes forget that although we do have our own unique challenges here in Aotearoa, there is an entire world of practitioners out there who are in a waka just like ours, riding the same wave, using the same constellations as us to navigate through to our new and forever changing normal...whatever that is.

Future:

I'm thankful that I have friends locally and around the globe that I can process various practice challenges with. My hope for my future Youth Work is that I'll continue to talanoa with my local and overseas colleagues about what they're doing, and how we can support and enhance each other's practice.



BETHANY WALTERS
INVOLVE Project Lead, Ara Taiohi

Lessons learnt:

Kaiparahua-rāhui 🤔

During Rāhui I have learned the importance of collectivism – the power of the many and our reliance on one another. I have learned more about the potential the youth sector has when we learn to weave online and kanohi ki te kanohi together. We need to be fluent in both spaces, just as our rangatahi are. I've also learned that I personally work well from home!

Future:

From Rāhui I am taking forward a greater understanding of my own capacity and capability; like many, I have had to stretch ourselves or adapt to new circumstances: we are a competent and resilient group of humans! I am taking forward gratitude for my team and our sector. I am also taking forward a reinforced commitment to use the privilege I hold to advocate for our rangatahi, and for those who face oppression and disadvantage across the motu. This time has been hard on many, including so many of our young people, but we can take the lessons and values we have learned and relearned, and use them to craft an Aotearoa that is inclusive and fair, and where all rangatahi thrive.



JOEY MACDONALD (pronouns: they/them)
Training Lead, Te Ngākau Kahukura

Lessons learnt:

Friday 22 May, Tāmaki Makaurau.

Reflecting on the rāhui/lockdown: it was completely destabilising not to have access to my own room, my own safe contained space. I bubbled with two of my loved ones away from my place because my flatmate was an essential worker and not part of our bubble. I didn't have any physical or emotional space for my own-self-time or work-time. I had a really hard time with my mental health despite being in the company of two very caring and supportive family members. I know it was harder for a lot of queer and trans people who were staying with whānau who would be less affirming, less aware, less respectful of their needs or worries or coping strategies. I was constantly worried that someone I knew was going to suffer or die because of COVID-19 and I think this was heightened by knowing that most of the people I love are living with the ill effects of discrimination and marginalisation (including substandard housing and food insecurity, and having compromised immune systems). The material effects of systemic marginalisation are hard to deal with at the best of times, and even harder during a global pandemic.



BRIARLEY BIRCH
Kaiwhakahaere - Te Taitokerau me Tamaki Board
Member, Makaurau Regional Manager – Northland
and Auckland, VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai, Ara Taiohi

Lessons learnt:

I have learned about slowing down and the unwinding of this process and how long it can take. It can't just be a "fully planned Christmas Holiday" where you are trying to fit in rest, reading, food, presents, unwinding, getting-sick, beach, whānau, wrapping, connecting, trees aaaaahh. Instead slowing down is an internal process that starts happening when your spirit, body and mind all start literally slowing down. For me during this season, I had time to do that and I truly felt the benefits of slowing down, taking time to be more present, to hui in the sunshine, to see our pets loving out with my husband, our girl x.

The art of slowing down can't happen in a holiday but a gradual time of alignment of your true essential beautiful self. As a youth worker, that is all a young person wants, for you to be present, to be you and essentially your true self. xx



ZARA MASLIN
Korowai Tupu Manager, Ara Taiohi

Lessons learnt:

8 weeks without make up... *Surprise! My worth has nothing to do with how I look! 8 weeks with nowhere to be but my lounge has meant shaving a whopping 20 minutes from my daily routine by not painting my eyelashes and colouring in my pores. And I'm just as valuable without it! Of course the youth sector has always known this... I've just finally caught up.*

We all know it's much easier to say "do as I say, not as I do" than it is to actually practice what you preach. I've always told young people to "be yourself", "you don't need to look or dress a certain way to be accepted", "if you have to change who you are to fit in, do you really want to fit in?" but I've never really practiced it. Oops.

Young people are forming and discovering their identity. The same way I started wearing make-up in high school and never stopped, many of the ideologies formed in adolescence can follow young people for the rest of their lives. I know make-up is a petty comparison to a young person who is struggling with bullying or unrealistic expectations of body image or confronting gender norms, but the concept is the same: I used to wear makeup every day and it was a rare occurrence to go without; it was a novelty to be myself. During this season of rāhui, the novelty has become the norm, and the norm the novelty. It's nice to recognise my true self, without mascara, for the first time since I was 14.

I hope young people have found the same freedom having spent 8 weeks with their whānau – ideally the most accepting people in their lives. It shouldn't take a global pandemic for young people to become familiar with their true self on the daily, not just as a novelty. Post rāhui, my dream is for young people to know they have mauri and mana and inherent worth without changing a single thing about themselves.

COVID-19 has reminded me of the incredible privilege it is to be a youth worker who can help young people love and accept themselves just as they are.



MIKE CROFT
Ara Taiohi Intern and BYD Student

Lessons learnt:

The more platforms our youth have to express and educate us on their world view the better. The Race Unity Speech Awards was a perfect example of the incredibly powerful words and ideas our future leaders have in regards to making New Zealand's future brighter and more united. The speakers gave great insight into how racism affects their lives and what we can do to help remove it from our society. For example, one suggestion that came from Ondre Hapuku-Lambert was to be more alert at identifying racism in our public spaces and calling those people out and denouncing their actions.

These small things when done by one individual have little impact but when they are done by a large portion of our society we can make a real difference. Ondre shared a powerful Whakatauki by Kingi Tāwhiao to empower his speech. It goes

*"Ki te kotahi te kākaho ka whati
Ki te kāpuia e kore e whati.
When the reeds stand alone they
are vulnerable, but bound together
they are unbreakable."*



JULIET LEEMING

Youth Champion, Ara Poutama, Korowai Tupu
Accredited Member

Lessons learnt:

I have learned in the power of the collective. As a country we were able to do an awesome thing, by joining together, and we were able to do it fast. In terms of my youth work, this has shown me potential in the power we as a collective of youth workers (and humans) can have. This time has also reminded me that the small contributions we make can add to the big picture. I think society has changed, and now it's on us for it to be for the better, and to keep momentum going. The lock-down led to a lot of self-reflection and evaluation for me, and now is the time to keep moving forward, collaborating and putting ideas into action.

MOIRA CLUNIE

Te Ngākau Kahukura

Lessons learnt:

"We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar." UK author Damian Barr tweeted this during our time in level 4, and I've sat with it ever since. For me, this time has highlighted existing inequalities in Aotearoa, and has made me think about how to effectively advocate for and with our most marginalised whānau.

On a personal level, it's been challenging to hear and hold the different experiences of friends, whānau and colleagues through this time - the ways that some people appreciated and enjoyed the time of noho rāhui, grappling with learning new ways of coping with boredom or stillness, while others have struggled to stay housed, employed, healthy or sane. I'm not seeing a binary frame where some people simply thrive while others flounder. Rather, everyone has had their own experiences and challenges, but some have tended to expect others to share their positive feelings, or have not been open to seeing how others' boats are leaking and uncomfortable.

Structurally, it's been a time of one-size-fits-all responses to a challenge that's affected us all differently. It's been amazing to see the collective effort of all New Zealanders to reduce the risk for everyone, and to see the Government step up to support people to stay healthy and in work. On the other side, existing inequalities have been highlighted and sometimes made worse. The two-tier benefit system that financially supports recent workers much more effectively than those who are in long-term unemployment was one of the most stark examples of this. The rainbow communities I work with are already more likely to experience family rejection, violence, homelessness, unemployment and poor mental health, and already less likely to be able to access competent and safe support services. Their invisibility within official responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery mean that these inequalities will only grow over time.

I've always known that equity requires uplifting those who are most disadvantaged, and my work focuses on this. The COVID-19 situation has shown me the need to raise my voice; for constant advocacy with and on behalf of those most marginalised. We're all in the storm, but those of us who are finding a way to float need to speak up for those whose boats aren't seaworthy, for those who could sink. I know that it won't be enough to assume our official systems address these needs - whole-population systems are not designed to be equitable. We need to keep speaking up.



Got something to say?

This is a journal that's a little bit different. We aim to reflect the diverse and developing practice of youth work in Aotearoa New Zealand. That means we welcome contributions in various shapes, sizes and forms. That's right: there's no word limit, no style guide and no money. All contributions are voluntary. The editors might offer you some feedback and do a tiny amount of grammatical polishing, but generally we avoid censorship and promote free and honest voices.

We've named this journal *Kaiparahuarahi* to honour the trailblazers who humbly create paths where there was not a way before.

This kupu was gifted by the late Matua Bruce Stewart in the build up to the first Ara Taiohi wānanga. We will continue to invite specific people to share unique perspectives from the multifaceted youth development sector. We also really like publishing ideas that were previously unpublished, like something someone's talked about often in workshops, or emerging trends in our practice.

It could be published
in a future issue of
Kaiparahuarahi

The existing three issues have presented a wide range of experiences from the field. This journal is a chance to capture the evolution of our mahi in real time.

- **Issue 1** celebrated 20 years of youth work ethics in 2017. Originally conceived as a one-off publication, an irregular journal emerged naturally.
- **Issue 2** explored Mana Taiohi principles in practice, shortly after the launch in 2019.
- **Issue 3** recorded a series of blogs written during the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. You're holding this issue in your hands!

Issue 4 is in the pipeline: gathering definitions of youth work. Would you like to add something to this theme?

Who knows what will emerge after that? Our dream is to publish two issues each year. Or maybe one issue each year. Somewhat like youth work itself, we're really making this up as we go. As we said, there aren't really any rules.

What would you like to read about in future issues?

Send us email: admin@arataiohi.org.nz
Make sure the subject line includes "Kaiparahuarahi".

Kaiparahuarahi: Aotearoa's youth work journal

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Responsive Youth Work in the COVID-19 Pandemic