



MANAAKITIA A TATOOU TAMARIKI
**CHILDREN'S
COMMISSIONER**

***'We all need TLC
– tender loving care'***

Collective Youth Voices

Submission on the Green Paper for Vulnerable Children from the collective voices of five youth groups from throughout New Zealand as told to staff at the Office of the Children's Commissioner during December 2011 and February 2012.

Key messages

The Green Paper For Vulnerable Children: Every child thrives, belongs and achieves (the Green Paper) provided the Office of the Children's Commissioner (the Office) an opportunity to gather the views of young people to share with decision makers. Youth groups were obvious partners for us in the submission process. The young people in these groups were aged between 12 and 18 years old.

The key messages to come from this consultation were that young people want to be respected and included in decision-making at all levels of society – family/whanau, community, in their schools, those that work with them and by the government. They want opportunities to develop responsibility and need new safe experiences to grow and develop. They have lots to offer, and need everyone's support to be the best they can be.

We believe this submission offers valuable insights from young people. We thank them for taking the time to contribute. Your consideration of their opinions and perspectives is appreciated.

Introduction

Article 12 of UNCROC directs adults to respect children's views, or at the very least, consider them respectfully. However, this is not always easy or straightforward and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child¹ (CRC) noted with regret:

... that the views of children are not adequately represented within the family, in schools and in the community. The Committee also regrets that there are no means by which children can express their views in the public domain, that the State party does not systematically take into consideration children's views when formulating laws and policies that may affect them ... (CRC, 2011, p. 5).

The Office has a statutory obligation as the primary advocate for children who has regard for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). The Children's Commissioner Act 2003 specifies 'the principle that the Commissioner should give serious consideration to the views of children and take those views into account' (Children's Commissioner Act, 2003, S11(b)).

To comply with the above principle, the Office undertook to consult with a wide range of young people throughout New Zealand/Aotearoa. The Office also supported efforts to include children's voices in the Green Paper. This submission provides young people's perspectives about what matters to them in childhood, on their views of

¹ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2011) *Fifty-sixth session CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION. Concluding observations: New Zealand.*

family, community and the workforce, including the role and responsibility of government. Five different youth groups contributed to this submission. The views expressed in this report are those of the young people who took part in the consultation.

These views have been summarised by Rebecca Blaikie, Advisor at the Office who, with other staff, recorded the consultation. Direct quotes are written in italics and quotation marks. A full copy of the feedback gathered during the process is available on request from the Office.

The main intention of this consultation was to provide a space for young people's views about the issues raised in the Green Paper to be heard. The Office advisors devised key questions using the Green Paper. The Office restricted the number of sites to five and identified potential youth groups where a pre-existing relationship existed. Our intention was to capture as much diversity, and as many different perspectives as possible.

The groups were:

- a mixed group of young people from throughout New Zealand
- a multi ethnic youth group
- an isolated rural Maori youth group
- a rural Southland youth group and
- a Queer group of urban young people.

Group size varied from seven young people up to 35 participants. Young people were invited to take part in one or all of the following activities:

- Participate in a group discussion facilitated by advisors from the Office;
- Participate in small focus group discussions facilitated by advisors from the Office;
- Fill in an on-line questionnaire; and,
- Fill out a handout questionnaire;

Ethical consent for consulting with the young people was sought. At the beginning of each session, all groups were informed about the process for the consultation and given a choice about whether or not to participate. The advisors explained that the young people's responses would be anonymous.

Depending on the time frame and the space allocated to the advisors, questionnaires were distributed for young people to fill in individually. These were either the questions about Schools or about Parents and Families. For most sites small focus groups were used to consider questions about Community, Workforce and Government. In some situations, the Workforce and Government questions were done as a large group. A small number of voice recordings were also collected.

Given the time frame, there were limitations to this exercise. First, the consultation was conducted in the latter half of the school year, a time when many young people are involved in NCEA exams and schools are winding down. Many youth groups were pressed to find suitable blocks of time to participate in this process. Collaboration by organisation and specifically youth group convenors ensured that times were found for

all five groups of young people. Timeframes varied from group to group as these were guided by the young people and their ability to participate.

As part of our obligations to ensure the on-going safety of each participant, young people were given information about who they could contact if they were feeling uncomfortable about either the consultation process or the issues raised during the consultation process.

The evaluations indicated overwhelmingly that young people found the consultation respectful, inclusive and enjoyed being involved in this process. They viewed it as an opportunity to be heard and felt youth consultation should occur more both locally and nationally.

General questions

Large group facilitation was used to generate discussion of the general questions with all participants at each consultation session. This helped to stimulate the deeper discussions that followed.

What makes a good childhood?

“Feeling important – wanted, needed, trusted, respected”

All groups mentioned that a family that provided love, guidance, affection, attention and unconditional support were essential for a good childhood. Many young people spoke of the importance of knowing their identity, culture and religion. Young people talked about the need for trust, independence and the need to become their own person. Young people were aware of the need for boundaries, and wanted this balanced with freedom and independence. The young people spoke of the need to be included in family decision-making.

- *“Parents that care, engaged with learning and wellbeing”*
- *“Enough freedom with boundaries, limitations, with lines”*
- *“Heard – need to be listened too”*
- *“Communication - able to talk to parents”*
- *“Parents always there to support you”*
- *“Loving parents”*
- *“Identity – knowing who you are”*
- *“Culture”*
- *“Own opinions”*
- *“Family history – basics, values”*
- *“Independence – connected to world”*
- *“Freedom at certain ages/stages, choice”*
- *“Opportunities”*
- *“Figuring out what is right and wrong”*
- *“Learning to make own decisions – being empowered”*
- *“A good environment – friends, people you know”*
- *“Laughter”*
- *“Loving parents and family”*
- *“Good judgement”*

- *“Success – define yourself”*

They talked about the need for people to stand up for them and to be accepted by their families, their schools and their communities. Good friends, places to play and grow were noted as being important.

- *“Good friends”*
- *“Family –supportive family”*
- *“Representation – from their parents to stand up to them, from a third party”*
- *“You always need good friends to have a good childhood”*
- *“Social life”*
- *“Acceptance – in family, in school, in community”*

All groups emphasised the importance of new experiences, that didn't come from the television or other media sources. Many spoke of opportunities to learn and have responsibility.

- *“Activities, being exposed to new experiences – not just through tv, media”*
- *“Freedom, expression and responsibility”*
- *“Opportunities/good experiences”*
- *“Special experiences like if you go to the beach with your family”*
- *“Feeling secure”*

They covered all the basics such as feeling safe and secure, food, a healthy home, clothing, hygiene, access to good education and health care. They discussed the importance of growing up in safe environments.

- *“A healthy home - physically dry and warm and mentally healthy”*
- *“Peace in the family and surrounding environment”*
- *“Safety and security”*
- *“Community – safe, not intimidated”*
- *“Safe environment – no bullying, no intimidation, no abuse”*

Money was mentioned and viewed as essential for having a good childhood.

- *“Not limited by lack of money, shouldn't have bad childhood because parents don't have money”*

Some young people mentioned the importance of having a childhood and being able to be innocent. Being protected from too much responsibility or expectations was shared.

- *“Security*
- *Talk to family*
- *“Being allowed to be young, innocence – influenced by media/ technology – confuses right from wrong”*
- *“Reassurance support from other when they are lonely or confused”*
- *“Don't make them worry about stuff they shouldn't have to worry about”*

- *‘Freedom to make mistakes’*
- *“Responsibility to learn from”*
- *“Not too much expectations as child/young person”*
- *“Play and imagination”*
- *“Learning”*

Young people mentioned time and time again that role models had a significant place in their lives. They wanted to be inspired and have their aspirations supported.

- *“Good role models”*
- *“Someone to believe in them”*
- *“Aspirations”*
- *“Inspirations”*

What does being fair to young mean to you?

“Equal rights – regardless of race, religion, age, socio economic status”

Many of the young people had a clear understanding of fairness; they viewed this as equality, inclusiveness, acceptance of diversity, and being seen as an equal in society. The young people we spoke to have an acute awareness that people should have equal rights regardless of race, religion, disability, age, gender or economic status. They need equal opportunities to thrive, belong and achieve. Many of the young people spoke of acceptance of the individual and not being judged or judging.

- *“Equal treatment”*
- *“Diversity helps fairness, opportunities to mix – breakdown walls”*
- *“No segregation - inclusive of everybody”*
- *“Being treated right for your age”*
- *“Understanding where they come from”*
- *“Being able to take place in one’s community as an equal”*
- *“No discrimination”*
- *“Giving them freedom”*
- *“Not being judged or judging”*

They were clear that access to resources and services created fairness.

- *“Based on need access to*
 - *Health care*
 - *Education - same opportunities e.g. school trips*
 - *Wealth shouldn’t influence access - equal health waiting lists, shouldn’t be able to jump”*
- *“Decisions not being made politically: decisions being made fairly for those who need help”*

They talked about the importance of being respected and having a say. Participants shared that, time and patience to understand young people facilitated fairness.

- *“Letting them have their say”*
- *“Giving them their rights”*
- *“Seeing us as equal”*
- *“Express themselves”*
- *“Accepting different opinions”*
- *“Having our perspective on things”*
- *“Respecting their choices”*
- *“Freedom of choice/expression”*

Rural young people talked about the necessity to be able to access services and opportunities the same as other young people in urban areas.

- *“Access to services in rural communities”*
- *“Treated like everyone else”*

There were several comments on how resources were made available to those who were deemed at risk or high achievers and often those in the ‘middle’ missed out.

- *“Looked after in different ways, but still have same outcomes”*
- *“Balance between needs, middle people often miss out”*

How can we make sure that *all* young people get what they need?

“Reduce discrimination”

Young people spoke of the need for their rights to be known and met.

- *“Knowledge of rights”*
- *“Giving people what they need and making it equal”*
- *“Knowing where to get help”*
- *“Relevant to what we are facing”*
- *“Tools to survive not just no’s, and don’t - No discrimination”*

They talked about the importance of easily accessible services and help support them.

- *“Free health care under 18 - especially for disability – equality”*
- *“Mobile health care - dentists at schools”*
- *“Depression support”*
- *“Schools - education mental health, a lot more sexual health”*
- *“Schools are great hubs! Inclusive of everybody’s disability”*

Government

Most participants answered the below questions in this section. Some of the young people found it hard to see how they could influence government or make suggestions that would be listened to. These questions were asked in an open discussion or in smaller groups.

How should the government help young people do well (Thrive, belong and achieve)?

“New Zealand needs to own issues, not just blame young people especially males”

Young people described an environment in which they could thrive, belong and achieve.

- *“More opportunities for everyone”*
- *“More job opportunities/experience for young people. Need work experience to get a job, that is why we need experience”*
- *“Promote and project services better to young people”*
- *“Create good jobs”*
- *“Apprenticeships”*
- *“Make an incentive for businesses to hire young people”*
 - *The Government could pay a percentage of their wage*
 - *Offer tax incentive”*

There was a clear sense from the young people that they were negatively stereotyped and there weren't enough opportunities for young people. Young people stressed the need to see positive images about themselves and that a diverse range of success needed to be promoted.

- *“More encouragement”*
- *“Celebrate success/diversity/disability achievements”*
- *“Send positive image about young people”*

They wanted the government to be transparent and fair in its distribution of resources.

- *“Same rights”*
- *“Direct school funding, fair/equally/reflect need of subject”*
- *“Students should know where money is going”*

If things are not fair, what should the government do?

“Increase the average standard of living”

'Make it fair' was the first statement most of the young people responded with when this question was posed.

- *“Putting money where it is most needed : health, education”*
- *“Notice that it is unfair”*

Most viewed it as the government's responsibility to ensure that all people had the same opportunities and access to services.

- *“Access to services – rural needs”*
- *“Means testing - Where the needs are, look at results target those that need it”*

- *“Everyone needs basics, some need add ons”*
- *“Rural schools having same opportunities as urban”*

Some young people took this question as an opportunity to focus on an issue and solution they wanted government to hear.

- *“Big classes do not work*
 - *Limit class numbers to 25*
 - *Teachers equipped to teach right stuff*
 - *Training of teachers – need standards and training*
 - *Need qualified teacher aids*
 - *Ongoing professional development*
 - *Rural advantages to being a teacher”*
- *“Those requesting the unemployment benefit should proceed and complete a 6 week intensive program so that it helps them build employment skills e.g. CV – people are going too dependent and we want to bring unemployment rates levels down”*
- *“Just because they’re hapu, life ain’t over! Teen mums should have the opportunity to stay in school and not be pushed out of school. Reason why this is unfair, this effects the teen mums education and having the opportunity to succeed in life and not be tied into being a beneficiary”*
- *“Teen pregnancy programs should continue to be exploited with certain job opportunities being the focus in their groups – no negligence”*

If the government was being fair to all young people, what does that mean?

“Government needs to tell young people how our government works

- *Democratic processes*
- *Provide more opportunities to have a say around laws being made*
- *Need to know how to make submissions”*

They are aware that they need support and help, and that the government plays a role in this. They see that the government can influence fairness.

- *“Finance education for poor and homeless”*
- *“Youth housing – not Child Youth and Family Services”*
- *“Make free sport coaching/competitions”*
- *“Free youth transport”*
- *“Systems that work for young people – education, life skills, defensive driving course”*
- *“Youth got free or more free health care through schools”*
- *“Give the same opportunities that cities get to rural areas e.g. health centres, sports centres, library”*
- *“Kiwisaver is good to start at an early age – start building them into more financially stable families”*

Young people want to be part of civic society. They see lots of opportunity in themselves and don't want to waste it.

- *“Go to young people where they are”*
- *“Measuring people about what they can do, not what they can't do - more realistic”*
- *“Young people's timeframes”*

A good education was viewed by many of the young people as critical to their success; this was not limited to academic success alone but within a wider context of being able to be part of society.

- *“Systems that work for young people – education, life skills, defensive driving course”*
- *“Youth got free or more free health care through schools”*
- *“More education about mental health/sexual health*
- *“Give all students the same opportunities”*
- *“Everyone should have a good education i.e that they are actually learning”*
- *“Offering career opportunities (like start building career paths) earlier so young people may have” a better idea about what they would like to do before they leave school”*
- *“All secondary schools should be treated equally i.e city schools should have the same” resources/materials as opposed to isolated areas”*
- *“All schools should have the same curriculum”*
- *“Just because we are isolated we should still get qualified teachers”*
- *“Providing them with better opportunities for education”*
- *“All schools should get the same amount of funding per person”*
- *“Make sure we have a career or something like a job just before leaving Kura.. so we're not even thinking of the benefit!!!”*
- *“Children should experience how to work in a working environment”*
- *“Not changing NCEA system all the time”*
- *“High school students from year 9-13 should be able to have student loans”*

How do you think the government should help young people and their families/whanau?

“Government should know what's best for kids of different ages, like what age they should start kindy - and fund things properly”

Many of the young people spoke about the importance of government providing leadership around their needs.

- *“Home visits by social workers”*
- *“Free education”*
- *“Fund services like Plunket and early child care”*
- *“Longer paid maternity leave”*
- *“Restrict some of the unhealthy food available for young people”*
- *“Look at ways to reduce the secondary effects of alcohol”*

There were many comments around health services and those young people from rural areas believed that mobile health services would be good for reaching people in isolated areas.

- *“One Stop Shops for young people”*
- *“Free healthcare/density”*

They viewed it as the government’s responsibility to ensure that services for children and young people were funded adequately.

- *“Make sure there is funding for libraries in school and in the community – support reading programmes in schools”*
- *“Provide funding for textbooks/NCEA exams/food in school”*

Parents and Family

How do you think parents and families should help people thrive, belong and achieve?

“Be an inspiration, not an instructor”

Young people clearly view a healthy family as important. They want their parents to talk to them – not at them, and include them in decision-making. Young people want their parents to be interested in their education and spoke of the need for their unconditional love and support to achieve.

- *“Be interested in what they do and love”*
- *“Take a genuine, active interest in children’s learning”*
- *“Attend school functions and sporting events”*
- *Support them in their choices”*
- *“Make sure they complete homework”*
- *“They need to accept their kids no matter what.” “They have to consult kids when making decisions”*
- *“Encourage participation in sport, school etc”*
- *“Express love, and be open to talk to be supportive”*
- *“Assist in developing opinions”*
- *“Support, health, well being access to play”*
- *“Make them feel important – belong”*
- *“Want them and encourage them to do well in life, no matter what they want to do”.*
- *“Support (continuous)”*
- *“Unconditional love and support”*
- *“Be there to talk to”*
- *“They should support their child helping them to be anybody they want to be”*
- *“Strong motivation to build confidence to achieve and grow as an individual”*
- *“They should provide opportunities for healthy emotional growth”*
- *“Young people should be given equal opportunities and freedom of expression”*

- *“With support and letting the child know that the parents are there for them to talk about anything”*
- *“Encourage young people to be more active in the community”*
- *“Interest is shown towards young person goals and aspirations”*
- *“It is the responsibility of parents and families to ensure young people thrive, belong and achieve. They need to make sure they are getting the support and encouragement they need.”*
- *“Develop close relationships where they can support each other”*
- *“By embracing their children to strive to be their best what ever that is”*
- *“By teaching children to be strong and stand up for what they believe in”*

They want families to be places where diversity is accepted and included in all family life.

- *“Encourage individuality”*
- *“Parents can be quite forceful with their values and opinions shaping their children into their miniatures not their own person”*
- *“By having respect towards younger people and not discriminate on age”*
- *“Being open minded and open to new points of view”*
- *“By being impartial, neutral and not instilling bigotry”*

Parents are significant role models and they want them to be responsible. They asked for things such as freedom and responsibility to build responsibly and understood the need for boundaries.

- *“Give responsibilities, but freedom at the same time”*
- *“Give children best environment to grow up in, one which is safe, with responsible adults role models”.*
- *“Role modelling”*
- *“Help when it is required”*
- *“Proper boundaries”*
- *“Be supportive in decisions; give them a certain amount of trust and independence”*
- *“Not to be too controlling, sheltering”*

Young people made it clear they need a safe and secure environment with no physical, emotional or sexual abuse. They made comments that it was important that there was support from wider family members and others if their primary family wasn't working.

- *“Make it safe”*
- *“Providing a loving, safe, secure environment”*
- *“Give them the right necessities i.e. food, shelter, water, etc”*
- *“By providing them with a supportive, nurturing environment free from violence or emotional guilt”*
- *“Alternative family members, or alternative accommodation with family for friends if the primary accommodation isn't working”*
- *“Make sure the children know that there are various support networks available for them so they don't feel neglected”*
- *“They need to make sure they have a happy, loving home and are involved in the community.”*

They understand that parents and families sacrifice things for their children and they are thankful for this.

- *“Gave up a lot to bring me up – lots of sacrifice”*

What happens now that works?

“Support me in my decision, but not make them for me”

The young people said they want to know they are loved by their parents and wider family. They talked about the need for trust and support to reach their goals.

- *“Children feel more loved, secure, ambitious, and confident”*
- *“Encouragement, respect, freedom”*
- *“Many children are shown lots of love from parents – lots”*
- *“Encourage and help them and continue to care”*
- *“Checking by third parties to ensure children are cared for”*
- *“Be their ‘rock’ sometimes we don’t have the will or strength to go on so pick them up”*
- *“Being open to answering questions, being trusted a lot”*
- *“Families support the child no matter what. If they fail they’ll still be there to support the child through the roughest times”*
- *“Help manage their stress”*
- *“NOT make them feel insignificant”*
- *“Young rangatahi will be seeing many good role models and be inspired by the people who have achieved their goals because of whanau and parents support”*
- *“Children will feel much confidence to take their goal to the next level, to be achieved because of family support”*

They noted the importance of acceptance in their families, the need for new experiences and opportunities to grow and develop responsibility.

- *“Lots of experiences/opportunities”*
- *“Children will feel more able to express themselves”*
- *“I do get a lot of freedom that ask for but on conditions”*
- *“Offer them opportunities”*
- *“Listen to young people when making decisions”*
- *“Family time – games, dinners”*

Being involved in decision-making and parents being connected to their community and school were viewed as important.

- *“School provides good community, lots of active involvement with sports, both in and out of school”*
- *“Family events in the community”*
- *“Children tend to do well at school when their parents encourage them”*

What could parents/families do differently to make it better for young people?

“Make it easier for their kids to share problems with them by developing better comfortable relationships with them”

They know that safe environments are good for children and young people and want parents to be able to access support and help to be positive parents. How parents act was seen as important.

- *“Parenting courses, especially if violent”*
- *“Become the people they want their kids to be”*
- *“Their lifestyle will wear off onto their kids”*
- *“Provide them with opportunities”*
- *“Be better role models in the way they act in and around the community and not let the young people see them when they are drunk cause then the young people think it is cool to drink”*
- *“Zero tolerance for neglect”*

Many young people spoke of the need for fair, close and more communicative relationships with their parents. Parents need to listen and include young people more in decision-making.

- *“Listen to what we have to say”*
- *“Involve them in decision making”*
- *“Be more available and interested in young people’s lives”*
- *“Parents needs to listen to their children to know what they are supporting and helping them achieve : children need voices”*
- *“Take more consideration in their child’s choices rather than dictating completely”*
- *“Make it easier for their kids to share problems with them by developing better comfortable relationships with them”*
- *“Give them space sometimes, let them know you are loved let the child know they can tell their parents anything”*
- *“Be there so we don’t get ourselves into trouble”*
- *“More family time/events”*
- *“They should stop being so sexist, they should give the same amount of trust and love to all of their kids”*

They spoke of the need for parents/caregivers to check in about school and other activities as being critical. The young people talked about being supported, so they know that parents care and know they want their children to succeed.

- *“Making sure that school is good”*
- *“Push for them to do better”*
- *“Offer to help with school projects”*
- *“Check everything is ok in our lives, if not. Help us sort it out”*
- *“They could ask the child what they want to do? What they need to make it happen? And then they could help show the child how to get there or help them get there”*
- *“Not making young people feel like failures”*

Young people spoke about the need for parents and families to provide unconditional love, be open-minded, non-judgemental and trusting of younger generations. Parents and families need to understand the world young people live in.

- *“Love them no matter what”*
- *“Families need to be more accepting of difference within families”*
- *“Be better listeners and don’t overreact”*
- *“Young people can be scared to approach parents because of their response so parent should chill out”*
- *“Treat young people with equal rights, often parents assume we know nothing because we are young”*
- *“More open minded with religious beliefs not beat them”*
- *“Understand how young people’s physiological side works throughout development”*
- *“Not put so many restrictions on their children but instead support them to make good decisions”*
- *“Have trust towards the younger generation”*
- *“There is an intergenerational conflict between the young generation and old generation with the migrant community. That is why parents need to understand the world their children live in”*
- *“Let them be more independent”*
- *“Give them money”*
- *“Open minded to cultures, values, religions”*
- *“Understand that we live in a different time, generations”*

Schools

How do you think schools help young people to learn to be good people?

“Providing extra curricular activities and encouraging everyone to get involved –helps to develop good communication, people skills”

Young people spend lots of time at school, which provides opportunities for developing life skills. The young people spoke about schools being guided by values that young people learn and take with them when they leave school.

- *“Support for struggling students”*
- *“Education about different kinds of people e.g. people from different cultures”*
- *“Education of the acceptable rule in society and a learning of what is acceptable”*
- *“By teaching us to live in a society and group”*
- *“They can learn to interact with others and what behaviours is okay and what isn’t”*
- *“To encourage and tell students that they can do anything they want if they try”*
- *“They don’t judge students based on what they mark”*
- *“It helps by telling kids what’s right and what’s wrong”*
- *“Acceptance values”*

Some young people spoke about schools being a place where inspiration, role modelling and boundaries develop good behaviours.

- *“By providing inspirational leaders”*
- *“I would say it isn’t the school as such, more so the students. Some teachers teach us to be good people in the way they approach their jobs”*
- *“Making them know simple things – right from wrong, respect, manners”*
- *“By helping them be their best”*
- *“Listen to their thoughts and respect them”*
- *“By using teachers as role models to give young people someone to look up to”*
- *“They teach us compassion, respect and promise to our future towards other people and ourselves. They respect us get to know us and show interest and show us the right path”*
- *“Our teachers were very good role models”*

It provides a space where people can learn about themselves, and others, and how to socialise with different groups in society.

- *“Counselling, Peer support, transition – life skills”*
- *“They learn how to connect with other people their age and find out the values that are important to them. Schools play a big part in shaping young people’s identities so if they are at a school which has good values and encourages respect. Those are the things they will take with them when they leave school. The people young people hang out with at school also affects whether they are good people”*
- *“We are at school 5-6 hours a day, 5 days a week for about 35-40 weeks a year. Spending that much time at one place with one set of people leads to a huge impact on that young person. By having good teachers (which schools should have) and therefore good role models, structure and rules it can teach good behaviour and morals to young people that the school enforces. Also if in a good friend group that same role model idea shapes people’s lives because of the sheer time spent at the place”*

They wanted schools encourage to young people to be leaders, work in teams, be motivated and involved.

- *“Providing extra curricular activities and encouraging everyone to get involved –helps to develop good communication, people skills”*
- *“Occasional workshops on relationships, team work”*
- *“Teambuilding days”*
- *“Leadership opportunities”*
- *“They teach people to work with others and to timelines; build all rounded skills so young people can contribute to their community. They encourage students to set goals and measure achievement”*
- *“Schools help by putting students in situations where they need to be a part of a team but also they have to learn to take the lead in a situation where they would be good at it therefore helping others and themselves”*
- *“Skills are taught such as discipline, time management and communication skills which develop young people to become inspired and motivated when able to use these skills in the ‘world’. This determines (helps to) young people to be good”*

- *“They encourage you to take part in activities therefore you will become more involved, confidence will increase e.g. speeches, motivation”*
- *“Encourage you to be involved”*
- *“Try to motivate you to build up skills and knowledge for the future”*

Some young people felt their school did not do these things and a small number felt it was not the school's place to do so.

- *“They don't”*

What do they do well?

“They understand the different situations which the students face at their homes”

The young people identified schools as a place where they can access support and they liked this. The young people commented it was important to have good relationships with teachers.

- *“Identify at risk students and work towards helping them*
- *e.g. our school has a mentoring group for young at risk student wo are paired with ex-rebellious year 13's who support and work with them doing homework, just talking or reading etc. The only let down is that it is only aimed at male students. Our school also has a strong counselling team who continually follow up on students if they have come to their attention. They make a genuine effort to acknowledge and support students in a wide variety of situations “*
- *“keeping kids out of trouble”*
- *“dealing with out of school family situations”*
- *“Give a lot of attention to people that are struggling”*
- *“**Some** teachers are happy to help/talk to students”*
- *“Step in when students disrespect school rules and attempt to set them right again”*
- *Cater for most students*
- *“Recognise high achievers”*
- *“ Teach us stuff”*
- *“They tell us good advice and ways we can live our lives”*
- *“Availability to different subjects”*
- *“Caring, respecting, trusting, encouraging, responsible”*
- *“They care about your learning and make sure you they can adapt and teach the way that students can understand”*
- *“Private chats”*
- *“Motivation”*
- *“Encouragement”*
- *“Be patience, Be knowledgeable, Be approachable”*
- *“Respect you”*
- *“Not embarrassing you in front of whole class”*
- *“Have fun while learning”*
- *“A lot of patience”*
- *“Support”*
- *“Belief”*
- *“Most teachers are respectful”*

- *“Camps which nurture young people and encourage participation and teamwork”*
- *“Creating a school/year group community so everyone feels as if they belong and therefore thrive in that environment”*

The young people expressed that schools that worked were places where they felt safe, included and respected. Schools that provided them with opportunities and challenged to grow were key to a good education.

- *“Offer leadership opportunities i.e. prefect/peer support”*
- *“Encourage participation, provide a safe learning environment”*
- *“Gives everyone an opportunity to be involved in task outside of their comfort zone”*
- *“Have opportunities for students to go out of their comfort zones”*
- *“Schools bring together different people who wouldn’t usually meet”*
- *“Providing opportunity for everybody – head boy, head girl etc”*
- *“They provide essential services for us students”*
- *“Teach pupils to be themselves”*
- *“Giving leadership opportunities – alot”*
- *“Opportunities to give (help) back to the community”*
- *“Practical learning/experiences”*
- *“They ensure that we receive the top quality education in which the students are entitled to”*
- *“Humour - Altruism – Reflection - Community spirit”*

Schools that provided inclusive, respectful and diverse environments that acknowledge difference were liked by students.

- *“Appear to not to be racist or homophobic”*
- *“Just generally accepting”*
- *“It depends on the school. I think most schools have a sense of community. Ideally you would want schools to be safe and secure and other than provide a good education (this comes from good teachers who are passionate and know their subject and students well). Good access to extra curricular activities is really good culturally you can see that through national competition, eg barbershop or the Big Sing (chorale competition). In all of the regional competitions all sorts of schools rich and poor, private and public, enter which ever cultural opportunity, same concept in sporting events. I think that is important and in lots of case so good. Also seen this through Kapa Hakas etc”*
- *“Our school has many different cultures; they lets us students have cultural groups”*
- *“Kapa Haka”*
- *“Art”*

What do you think they could do differently?

“Never give up on students who fail to show good prospects, should a student be expelled, then they should refer them to somebody who can help them further once out of the schools responsibility”

Young people talked about how schools need to ensure that all students have a place, and that they all need support in different ways and that these are wider than just their educational needs.

- *“They could listen more often to what the students are saying other than act like they were listening especially when something we say is actually really important”*
- *“Acknowledge students as individuals and adapt their education to suit them”*
- *“Have programmes for younger students, older students motivate younger ones”*
- *“Recognise everybody. Often over achievers and under achievers are recognised or pushed, but there is a huge group of successful individuals who go unnoticed”*
- *“They could support us in a few different ways, they could teach us while having a little fun too and have a lot of patience”*
- *“Dealing with depression etc and sexual health better – more availability of health nurses both mental and sexual health experts”*
- *“Better school counsellors”*
- *“Focus on sport, culture and education”*
- *“Be more positive when dealing to issues such as bullying. Lecturing is NOT the solution”*

Schools and teachers need to be respectful of students, listen to their opinions and include them in decision making. They want students to be pushed to succeed and think it is important never to give up on a student. Schools need to provide different opportunities to all students.

- *“Ensure that the rights of children are kept”*
- *“Encourage more achievement; don’t make them in a mould”*
- *“Never hit students – special needs teachers”*
- *“Respect you, your physical space and your decisions”*
- *“Offer more opportunities into their communities and not just those who get elected onto student council”*
- *“Spend a bit more money on youth, so they can learn more outside of class e.g. learning about different countries, farming, day trips to places/ new experiences”*
- *“High expectations for everyone”*
- *“More activities to involve everyone”*
- *“Have support groups”*
- *“More focus on individuals – student/teacher time to ensure they are ok and learning well”*
- *“Inspiring teachers that make learning enjoyable”*

The young people wanted all teachers to be able to have professional development so they can continue to be inspiring teachers. They asked for fair learning environments.

- *“Teachers need to be trained adequately and this needs to be ongoing”*
- *“More training professional development for new teachers”*
- *“Some teachers don’t have respect for some of their students so they show them that it is ok to treat certain people differently because of the way they behave. This needs to stop”*

- *“All schools need to be equal. All teachers need to be effective and successfully teach young people what we need to know”*
- *“Treat students all the same”*
- *“Fairness in disciplinary process – neutral people making decisions”*
- *“Be more kinder, perseverance to motivate children”*
- *“Changes made to the ways schools function to fit and work with the society of today”*
- *“More male role models (especially for primary schools)”*

Young people spoke about school being a place where their identity is respected and diversity is celebrated.

- *“Treat me how I need to be treated – intelligent, that I have opinions”*
- *“Culture – we need more in our schools, inclusive of all cultures but especially Maori culture, we need to show more pride in our culture”*
- *“Be less racist”*
- *“Through being supportive to express their self in a way they fell is right. Teach people to express themselves which in turn allows others to be more understanding of the way others express themselves”.*

What makes a good teacher?

“Someone who is encouraging. Someone who doesn’t teach at a certain level, who adapts to each students level and helps everyone in class whether they need it or not. Someone who includes everyone and communicates around school, not just in class”

Young people talked about good teachers being accepting, inspiring, honest, respectful, and organised. Teachers that responded to the individual needs of a student were commented on.

- *“Acceptance of students and including them all”*
- *“Trustworthy”*
- *“Encouraging – success, individuality”*
- *“Someone who understands their each and every student. A person who you can talk to and not just about school. Can teach in different styles”*
- *“Someone who is supportive and wants to get the best out of their students. Is willing to put in extra effort to do lunch time tutorials, have test marked on time, constructive feedback. Treats their students as they would adults. there’s nothing worst that a teacher that looks down on you and treats you like a two year old”*
- *“Helpful criticism”*
- *“Organised”*
- *“Modern and varying teaching methods e.g. 1 day a slide show, next day a class on computers”*

They appreciate teachers who are passionate and knowledgeable about their subject and know their boundaries. They talked about the respect they had for teachers who were role models.

- *“Have the ability to tell you when you are doing something wrong, not just praise good work”*

- *“One who can portray their ideas clearly and with passion, making students trust what they are taught”*
- *“Good communicators – how they communicate with students”*
- *“Ask you what help you need/want”*
- *“Teachers that don’t take over jump in and do it for you”*
- *“Follows the same rules that are given to students”*
- *“Confident and hardworking”*
- *“Enthusiastic”*
- *“Relatable, fair, dedicated to learning of students”*
- *“They need to know their subject well”*
- *“Inspirational with how they teach e.g. the examples they use”*
- *“Nice, but also strict”*
- *“Intelligent (knows what they are talking about)”*

The young people spoke about good teachers caring about their well-being, believing in them and those that were good communicators. They noted that teachers who treated everyone the same were great in a school environment.

- *“Fair – no favouritism – equal treatment for everybody”*
- *“Concerned for students wellbeing”*
- *“Being guided by students needs/abilities”*
- *“Treating all students the same”*
- *“A teacher that earns students respect”*
- *“Approachable and down to earth”*
- *“Willing to work for the student, beyond the call of duty”*
- *“Positive, upbeat personality”*
- *“Friend/builds relationship”*
- *“Good sense of humour”*
- *“Supportive and approachable”*
- *“Someone that listens to your point of view”*
- *“One that challenges students to do their best”*
- *“A teacher that is not judgemental, is someone to talk to, keep things confidential”*
- *“Wise, intelligent, understanding, patient, able to listen, open minded”*
- *“Care about your learning and make sure students understand”*
- *Patience, kindness, caring, watching you properly, when they are not picky”*
- *“Approachable, friendly, patient, being lenient, having a good relationship with students”*
- *“Good at motivation”*
- *“One who listens to what we have to say and never puts us down even if we answer one question wrong they just tell us nicely the actual answer”*
- *“No question is a dumb one.”*
- *“Cares for the student – wants to see them succeed”*
- *“Fair to all - doesn’t discriminate”*
- *“Connects with each student, not just the whole class”*
- *“Gives second chances”*
- *“Gives responsibility and freedom to students to learn”*
- *“Can stand up for students”*
- *“Want to get to know the students. Take time and actually care about them”*
- *“Someone who cares about learning and does everything they can to help you succeed”*

What do you think teachers and principals should do if they are worried about a young person?

“In a trusting supportive environment confront the situation e.g. conference between trusted teacher and young person in question and a support person”

Young people are very clear that they want to be spoken to about any concern that adults have about them. They feel it is ok to act and approach students if they are worried. They want to be part of the solutions, problem-solving and guide how they need help/support.

- *“Talk to the person informally and with little fuss”*
- *“Talk to students, say why they are worried about them, ask them how they can/could/should help”*
- *“Talk to the young person FIRST they might actually be ok. Talk to their friends just in case”*
- *“If needed, get them help”*
- *“Provide help within school – counsellors etc”*
- *“Try to help person, positive attitude etc”*
- *“Advise them to find solutions in solving problems”*
- *“They should talk to the young person privately and be gentle”*
- *“Talk to the other teachers to see if they see the same issues. If so, talk to the student and provide help to support the children”*
- *“Approach the young person in a caring way”*
- *“Allow the young person to communicate any issues with them (in a safe and confidential place)”*
- *“Try to understand – not force seemingly correct solutions to problems”*
- *“Give the young person some space (also time)”*
- *“Once they know the problem, ask how they can support or help”*
- *“Be understanding of their situation”*

Many young people wanted parents and friends to be included, but only after they had given permission for this to happen.

- *“Consult counsellor, bring in the parents and they can all work together with student to decide the best action”*
- *“Not just send to a counsellor can be off-putting”*
- *“Talk to the student before they ring the parents because the problem might have something to do with the parents”*

The young people were clear it is important to know that if it is really serious e.g. violence, suicide that schools should do something to support the young person and sometimes they would be unable to talk to the young person involved.

- *“Perhaps talk to their parents, depending of the seriousness”*
- *“Don’t involve parents unless the young person agrees or if they are in danger”*
- *“Do something about it – depends on situation – harm to themselves, critical if abuse”*
- *“Let them know they can talk in confidence”*

- *“DON’T INVOLVE PARENTS RIGHT AWAY (if they didn’t tell their parents, they probably have a reason)”*
- *“If really worried, talk to family”*

Do you think it is ok for them to talk to someone who can help?

“Yes because it is the school’s responsibility to help its students. The school is a community. Not talking to someone who could help may lead to worse things that could have been stopped. These issues would also affect how well the child is learning so the school has to talk to someone who could help so that the child gets the most out of his/her education”

Once again the most important message from the young people is that they want to know what is going on. They want to be respected while they are supported and privacy was important.

- *“Yes if the person is in potential emotional or physical danger”*
- *“After talking to the young person involved, not government agencies”*
- *“Yes, it improves the child because it allows them to chill and releases pain and anger”*
- *“With the kids permission”*
- *“Yes, assuming it is private”*
- *“Yes, it is totally fine as long as they have consent first”*
- *“If they talk to the young person first – has to be really confidential”*
- *“Yes, but just not forcing a solution or person down the kids throat saying that this will help.”*
- *“Yes if it is done confidentially and the young person has someone they trust with them at all times”*
- *“Yes once they have spoken to the young person and friends”*
- *“Depends on the openness of the child about the issue and the severity of the issue. If the child could be in harm then yes”*
- *“Yes I think it is ok because they can tell you something that they can’t tell their parents”*
- *“Yes. If students are at risk or even at a loss beyond where the teacher/parents feel comfortable otherwise the best intentions may go horribly wrong”*

They want schools to support them along the journey, but understand that sometimes teachers/principals don’t have the right skills to help.

“Options for support – encouragement to help them get support”
“Yes because teachers don’t always have the skills needed for helping children”

Schools need to find people that young people can trust to get support from.

- *“I feel being accompanied by that teacher/parent would be acceptable – trust reasons”*
- *“Yes, having someone unrelated to the problem who can provide, ideas, support without becoming actively involved in the situation”*
- *“Yes if it is someone professional and trustworthy like a guidance counsellor or something”*

What would be your ideal school?

“A school which doesn’t discriminate against students; has engaging, fair and caring teachers and works as a community to nurture and care for young people. They should have student’s best interests at the heart of the school and should instil values in children that will stick with them as they grow up”

Young people want schools to be safe, respectful places, with no discrimination (racism, sexism), or bullying, where they are challenged to be the best they can be as a person.

- *“Honest, unbiased, considerate, desegregated, equal, full of equality”*
- *“Somewhere where everyone is equal and included. All decisions affect all students, so everybody should have the opportunity to voice their opinion”*
- *“A school which is proud of what they can offer in all aspects such as academia, sporting and cultural.*
- *“A school the pupils are proud of. School pride”*
- *“One where there is no bullying and students are not taking drugs or alcohol at school”*
- *“One where all students are heard”*
- *“A safe and happy learning environment”*
- *“To be about not just education but a non judgemental non bullying environment”*
- *“Safe environment”*
- *“Kind people”*
- *“Everyone is treated with respect and treats others with respect”*
- *“When everyone gets along and works together as a team”*
- *“A safe place, teachers are committed and treat all students fairly depending on individual needs”*
- *“A place where children can develop skills where and how they want”*
- *“Young people are engaged and want to learn”*
- *“Lots of opportunity – sporting and cultural”*
- *“Having a range of subjects so students can find what they are good at – not everyone is an academic”*

They want school to be inclusive, celebrate diversity and connect them to their communities. Schools need to provide opportunities and experience to all students. They want schools to be a place that acknowledges their culture and religion.

- *“Where I have opportunities to succeed”*
- *“Equal educational encouragement”*
- *“Schools that want to teach you – inclusive”*
- *“Wheelchair access everywhere”*
- *“All exits need ramps”*
- *“Place where everyone, no matter what their level of intelligence is, everyone is pushed in their own way to do better”*

- *“An all inclusive schools with no cliques or discrimination between top band, mid and low band classes. The educational system has a tendency to be segregated”*
- *“Have diversity groups”*
- *“Culturally aware teacher”*
- *“Same expectations for everyone, religion, race and ethnicity”*
- *“Letting everyone have their say”*
- *“Balance between extra-curricular activities and education”*

They want their schools to be fair and where teachers are engaged, want to be there and care about them and their whole well being.

- *“A supportive environment where all students get equal rights. Teachers value students and show them the same respect that they would expect”*
- *“A school which cares about me, wants me to do well, and will care about my lifestyle outside of school and once I have finished”*
- *“A place where teachers are there to help students no matter what”*
- *“Friendly teachers who interact positively with class”*
- *“Discipline is good, classes are controlled”*

They want to be in a school environment where teachers, deans and principals have high expectations.

- *“Opportunities for leadership aren’t just based on who’s popular but who needs, wants it and worked hard for it”*
- *“All students are engaged; they aren’t just wasting teacher’s time and taking the focus off students who are genuine about a subject”*
- *“A place where all teachers are engaged in all their students and all students get equal opportunities and attention and get encouraged”*

Good friends are an important part of school life for young people.

- *“Where I have good friends”*
- *“More trust in senior students – helps us be responsible”*
- *“Students are friendly”*

Community

What would your ideal community look like?

“Everyone works together – no segregation”

Young people spoke about a community that they had a place in, where they were supported and mentored to succeed. They want to contribute to decision-making.

- *“Everyone being accepted – no discrimination”*
- *“Everyone to have their say on decisions”*
- *“Population which supports youth”*
- *“Mentoring – especially when leaving school younger”*
- *“Better youth employment”*
- *“Mutual understanding”*

They want to live in communities that are respectful, caring and celebrate success. They want positive activities to participate in and places and spaces where they can hang out in.

- *“Celebrating success”*
- *“Respecting each other”*
- *“Music gigs FREE”*
- *“Activities to suit everyone – good range”*
- *“Places to hang”*

It is important to them that their communities are safe and free from violence.

- *“Caring community”*
- *“No violence”*
- *“Happy, safe, drug free a place of honour and altruism and play”*
- *“Everybody would have a house”*
- *“Being aware of what happens”*

What do you think adults in the community should know about what young people need to thrive, achieve and belong?

“Provide compassion and understanding instead of fear and judgement”

Young people want communities to support them to succeed. They know they make mistakes and that this is part of learning. They want their opinions to be sought and listened to.

- *“Treat young people right for their age”*
- *“More mentoring in the workplace”*
- *“Treat people as individuals as opposed to judging on age”*
- *“Respecting the views and opinions/perspectives of youth”*
- *“Don’t punish everybody for one person’s mistakes”*
- *“All make mistakes no matter what ages – support”*
- *“Help them fulfil their dreams”*

Young people know communities can play an important role in their health and well being.

- *“Allow advertisement that target youth regarding health and well being”*
- *“More assistance e.g. Lions provide scholarships”*

They commented that they need space and time to spend with friends and it is not all about drugs, sex, and alcohol.

- *“Parties are not just about sex/drugs/hip hop they are about socialising as well”*

What do you do in your community?

“Spend time at home. Go to school. Shop. Movies. Church. Beaches. Sports. Walk around. Swim. Music. Work. River”

Young people identified activities and places in their communities where they could connect with each other and services, youth centres, mall, shops, and parks.

- *“Youth groups, sports, parks, schools, swimming pools”*
- *“Youth venues – Zeal – Vibe”*
- *“Youth Centre [BASE]”*
- *“Nothing”*
- *“Great buses – on time”.*
- *“Marae”*

They spoke about spending time with friends, playing sports, and volunteering. They commented that young people spend a lot of time at home and school.

- *“Volunteering e.g. youth council”*
- *“Roaming”*
- *“Work with disable children”*
- *“Volunteer facilitator of youth group”*
- *“St Johns”*
- *“Part time jobs”*
- *“Go out with friends and family”*
- *“Go to school. Play sports. Shop, movies, socialise. Use beaches, play on parks.*
- *Skate. Surf. School. Sports. Time at home. Shop”*
- *“Youth council”*
- *“Work”*
- *“Socialising”*
- *“Community events”*
- *“Event centre cultural events”*
- *“Sleep”*

They acknowledge that some young people participate in underage drinking, smoking and sex.

- *“Underage drinking”*
- *“Smoking/drugs”*
- *“Underage, unsafe sex”*
- *“Grass (cannabis)”*

Those young people who lived in rural areas spoke about spending time in their natural environment.

- *“Activities, places - lakes, Mt Hutt”*
- *“Hunting, Horses”*

How do you think adults in the community should help young people?

“Have the general community not be anti-youth – ‘the whole youth of today are irresponsible’ mentality – stare when young people are in public places e.g. parks”

Young people want adults to respect them and support them. Young people want to be included in shaping and contributing to their community.

- *“Respect everybody and their differences”*
- *“Youth support, more accessible”*
- *“Engage young people to be involved when deciding what will effect them. Make young people feel involved”*
- *“More opportunities for young people to contribute to the communities – listening to their views through forums or surveys – especially the leaders of the communities.”*
- *“Let them have their say about their community to local government in an easy way”*
- *“Youth workers should bring kids together”*
- *“We do like to be heard to and given supported opportunities”*
- *“Like to be involved in the community”*
- *“Young people don’t want to be treated as babies – play a part in decisions. They like to be listened to and respected”*
- *“When given responsibilities give us support”*

They want adults to provide them with new, diverse experiences and opportunities to learn.

- *“Offer practical activities that groups of kids can attend”*
- *“Advertise the youth council more and make it more useful – getting out there in the community”*
- *“Treat us our age. Like to be treated like young people not like adults”*
- *“Younger kids have much different interests and needs to older kids”*
- *“Not everyone wants to do or enjoys sports”*
- *“Learn and understand children/teens lives”*

They want the adults in their communities to be good role models, celebrating a diverse range of stories about young people; and inspire other young people to succeed.

- *“Don’t sell to underage’s”*
- *“More mentoring situations – not only apprenticeships – work experience”*
- *“Drink less beer, smoke less pot”*
- *“Be better role models”*
- *“Let youth express themselves rather than put them down!!!”*
- *“Try to employ young people with no experience”*
- *“Promote kids with talents in local newspapers e.g. ‘young achievers’ – this will encourage them and others”*
- *“Be good role models so kids have someone to look up to i.e. someone who has good morals and values, who is successful.”*
- *“Parenting help books”*

What do you think should be out there in communities for young people?

“Hangout places for youth. More places for teens to hangout. Safe hangout areas with lots of activities”

Young people want more opportunities in their communities, they need safe places to go and develop responsibility. Many young people spoke about the need for more community events that were alcohol free where they could go and be safe. Some young people spoke about the need for safe houses/accommodation they could access.

- *“Rec center”*
- *“Safe place indoors to go and hang out for free”*
- *“Community housing – safe houses”*
- *“Gardens, play ground, libraries, public facilities, water fountain”*
- *“Safe houses”*
- *“Dial a driver (sober)”*
- *“More recreational/wider range of recreational places for youth to go”*
- *“Free activities to do e.g. bikes, fun/interactive walks around town eg treasure hunt”*
- *“More jobs – low qualification jobs for young people”*
- *“More free events e.g. concerts or parades (alcohol free)”*
- *“Money into community things”*
- *“Safe places for teen to ‘party’ controlled alcohol”*

Free health care, including sexual health is important to young people and they want access to services, those in rural areas talked about the need for mobile services.

- *“Dental care – available for everyone in rural communities – more facilities”*
- *“Transport. Safe transport – not dangerous places near transport stops. Youth transport, safe streets, youth activities”*
- *“Youth One Stop Shops providing a safe independent free health service”*
- *“More accessible health services”*

Workforce

What do you think adults who work with young people need to know?

“That young people have a voice that is worth listening too. Age doesn’t necessarily determine morality, dignity and maturity. No matter what the young person is like, taking the time to talk and listen to them could be beneficial to all”

The young people wanted adults to know they make mistakes and this is normal. Young people have heaps to offer, are willing to learn, are intelligent and need opportunities.

- *“That young people are willing to learn”*
- *“Young people have initiative but not experience – YET”*

- *“That we make mistakes and that this is normal”*
- *“We are inexperienced so we need to be taught thoroughly, but after we are taught we will be fine”*
- *“Need to be patient”*
- *“Most do not respond to being talked at, involve us and talk TO us”*
- *“We make mistakes but with your help we can develop learning from mistakes”*
- *“They are capable of doing work”*

They want people to be professional, patient, open minded and non judgemental. The young people needed professionals to get to know them as individuals, so they can understand their real needs.

- *“Everyone is different”*
- *“Don’t judge a book by its cover”*
- *“They need to challenge the stereotypes that young people have”*
- *“They need to know about social impacts – who is around the young people, what influences are young people exposed to”*
- *“They need to take responsibility for raising us in the environment we live in”*
- *“They need to know we have lots of stuff to offer”*
- *“Practical advice not airy fairy quotes”*
- *“Just because it relates to adults doesn’t mean it relates to the young person”*
- *“Resilience so they can help others”*
- *“To understand youth issues. And that even those that might seem stupid to the adult could mean a lot to the teenagers”*
- *“That young people are human beings”*
- *“That they make mistakes and learn from their mistakes”*
- *“That you need to be open minded, patient”*
- *“Understanding young people”*
- *“Open minded”*
- *“They should know about the way you learn and how you learn”*
- *“Catering to our different learning styles, we may need lots of practice until we understand something”*
- *“Being colourful makes things more exciting so we can stay interested”*
- *“Don’t assume things about what we’re like, how we look may be who we are/feeling e.g. family stats, things happening to us that are directly relevant to us”*

Young people want to be respected, with good boundaries and need good role models. Young people spoke of needing to be challenged, provided with good information and supported to make good decisions.

- *“To be careful since young people are a lot more sensitive”*
- *“Keep their personal and work separate”*
- *“Don’t teach naughty habits”*
- *“Do as I say not as I do – doesn’t work”*
- *“More one on one time”*
- *“Learn names of young people”*
- *“Non judgemental”*
- *“Boundaries, know their limits (work is work keep it professional)”*

- *“Not assume we know abbreviations e.g. OECD introduce meanings then abbreviations”*
- *“Young people have short attention spans, long presentations are not effective”*

How should adults talk to young people? What skills do they need to work effectively?

“It’s the balance between patronising and too-jargonish, and giving too much responsibility to too little responsibility. We want to be respected and talked to with dignity – we maybe understand more than people think we do – it’s really good and empowering to be wanted, to be asked and to be talked to.”

Young people want to be respected, accepted, and included. They expect adults to be honest and upfront and care about them.

- *“As they would talk to adults. Respectively, maturely, and not in a completely dumbed down way. This can be empowering and a way of gaining the young persons respect”*
- *“Be prepared to take opinions”*
- *“Open minded”*
- *“Non patronising like you have a brain”*
- *“Understanding, give space, respectful, helpful, open minded, personal life then work” life distance”*
- *“In a nice manner, they should not assume that young people are rebellious”*
- *“To care about what they’re talking about”*
- *“By being straight up about what’s happening”*
- *“Be honest whether good or not so good. Feedback after completing a task”*
- *“Being encouraging, but not just giving out answers”*
- *“Loose the ‘in my day’ attitude”*
- *“Not yell, over react”*
- *“Appreciate that we will be leaders and are going to look after them”*
- *“More acceptance”*
- *“Give young people a chance how can young people get experience if no one will give us a shot”*

Adults need to build a trusting relationship and get to know the young person first before they can support them, they need to be professional and have good boundaries.

- *“Care about you, friendly, be able to relate – boundaries, being able to relate but not your mate”*
- *“By listening”*
- *“Age appropriate”*
- *“Tone changes over time”*
- *“Communicate to us in a calm, encouraging and supportive way”*
- *“Tell us ALL information”*
- *“Ask and answer questions”*
- *“Treating us not like adults but not like babies. We are neither”*

- *“Having a sense of humour, within reason”*
- *“Being our friends but also maintaining a ‘work’ relationship. Finding the boundary”*
- *“Not acting like they are better/on a completely higher level than kids”*

They want adults to be creative in how they work with them.

- *“There can be alternative forms of communication between adults and youth – drawing, singing. Also by doing a lot of activities together”*
- *“Speaking in a language that is child-friendly so no really long formal words”*

If adults are worried about young people, what do you think they should do?

Not think that they know best and push what they think is right on them – it is more about talking, understanding, listen and helping = communication

Young people spoke of the need to be supported to find positive solutions. They reflected on the complexity of situations and talked about how different situations would require different approaches.

- *“Seriousness of the situation matters”*
- *“Options to make it better – offer tools to cope*
- *“Adults have power to sort out”*
- *“Set goals together to get better”*
- *“Confront us, ask questions, and answer our questions”*
- *“It depends on the problem. Sometimes this could be a good link, but it could also be to forward and obtrusive”*

Young people indicated it was very important to talk with them and listen to what they had to say. They want adults to help out in a respectful way and be guided by the young person as to what they need.

- *“Be understanding when talking to us”*
- *“Help us if we have concerns or problems”*
- *“Talk to them unobtrusively, without the whole ‘just do this, go now’. Taking the time to listen and try and understand before judging”*
- *“They should just ask the child if they’re ok or consult another adult for a second opinion”*
- *“Important to talk to young people first”*
- *“Talk to them – offer support”*
- *“Don’t tell them what’s wrong with them”*
- *“Don’t assume you know what’s wrong”*
- *“Listen to what they say”*
- *“Refer to youth services that could help them better and understand them better”*

They spoke about adults needing to be mindful not to betray the trust of young people. They needed to be patient and walk alongside the young person until they are better.

- *“Widen young persons support networks”*
- *“Don’t presume we are ok, follow us up until we are better again”*
- *“Not pushing too hard to know what’s wrong it could make it worse”*
- *“Give them space, so that the young person can open up”*

What do you think about adults who work with young people sharing wide ranging personal information with other professionals about a young person or their family/whanau?

“I would feel alright about it, but I would want the adult to ask me first”

The young people had diverse views on this. If it was around a young person’s safety they were more comfortable with information being shared. It was important to the young people they were asked.

- *“If they need to – yes – young persons safety”*
- *“It would feel nice that someone cares”*
- *“Can be expressed at the discretion of the ‘young person’”*
- *“Permission from person around what information is about*
- *If it is for the best then this needs to be explained to the young person so they feel comfortable”*
- *“If anonymous, fine, but still permission needed, if not it is not acceptable unless before discussion and clear and outlined that could be the consequence of the discussion”*

It always has to be done respectfully, in a confidential manner and they stated they would like to know why and who it is being shared with.

- *“Need to trust professionals – positive working relationship”*
- *“Make sure it is facts/not rumours or assumptions”*
- *“I would feel overwhelmed”*
- *“I would gladly take their help if they were trust worthy”*
- *“It would kinda feel like they were ‘butting’ in to my business”*
- *“Kept confidential unless the child is harm”*
- *“Kind of like a patient/doctor relationship”*
- *“It should be kept confidential”*

Who should share information and in what circumstances? How should this information be shared? Should young people know what is being shared? What kind of information is ok to share?

If it will help to improve the situation should be shared, to the best interest of the person

Young people were adamant about the need for information to be treated with respect and confidentiality. They felt that if the sharing of information was beneficial then it would be ok.

- *“Treated with respect, not left around, stored properly”*
- *“Code names – ID”*
- *“They need to know who it is going to and why”*
- *“Confidentially”*
- *“Someone that they told the info to make sure it is respected”*

Young people need to know it is being shared, why and with whom. They acknowledged at times this may not be possible if the young person is not in a safe place to provide this permission.

- *“Friends able to share if information is very serious”*
- *“Depends on situation/degree if it needs referred”*
- *“If the person is at risk or in danger”*
- *“Yes, if about them they need to know”*
- *“Unless so serious time doesn’t allow or mental space/capacity/wellness”*

The information should only be provided to those who are working along side the child and expressed that having good information can assist the young person accessing the support they need.

- *“Has to be kept confidential among professionals – that’s being professional”*
- *“Organisational co-operation – between health care professionals and police as issues may be interrelated”*
- *“Records should follow child/young person (one system with all information on it under 18), so they don’t have to keep explaining, but they (professionals) should still check in”*
- *“Just those relevant to the issues – who are connected to child/young person”*
- *“Doctors share with other doctors/councillors – if it is for benefit for child/young persons well being then yes”*
- *“Professionals directly involved, formal, transparent if professionals change – child and young person needs to be informed of this”*
- *“Shared within professions”*
- *“Health records”*
- *“Background information”*
- *“Information which needs to be shared in order to help/benefit young person”*
- *“Only those who are providing help”*

How would you like to get support from adults? Who should help?

“Every adult that cares and worries, because every child is vulnerable”

Parents and family are young people’s natural support networks, they ask for respect so they can learn how to be respectful. Young people expressed they needed non judgemental help and support.

- *“Parents, other adults in the family - people who care about us – listen to us, advise us, help us, and give us support”*
- *“Non judgemental, don’t judge on past behaviour etc”*

- *“Respect can be lost and earned – process, opportunity”*
- *“Advice if I ask for it, or if is given to me in a sincere, unobtrusive way. I generally like talking to adults and feeling like they are talking to me as they would talk to their friends”*
- *“Parents, other adults who care about me e.g. aunts, uncles teachers, mentors”*
- *“Teachers, they are close to young, see you most days so they observe your behaviour”*
- *“By the adult showing me that I have rights, legal rights, and personal rights”*
- *“For adults to empower me”*

They want to guide the process and be provided with second chances; mistakes are acceptable and help them learn. Having wide support networks is important. The young people spoke about them guiding processes to work out problems.

- *“Second chances important and mistakes are ok”*
- *“Provide us with opportunities to learn and grow”*
- *“Offer and then wait for youth to accept offer”*
- *“Not force it on us”*
- *“Community parenting, relieve parents and children of the burden of each others company”*
- *“Having someone to talk to”*
- *“In our own safe place e.g. home or at work”*
- *“Person to person communication”*

Access to professionals and services is essential.

- *“Through telephone or email because it is less personal”*
- *“Parents, relatives, friends, youth services”*
- *“They should be youth workers, counsellors and generally anyone who could relate to me by culture, religion and socio economic status”*
- *“If it becomes a real concern that is out of the teachers control/ability to handle they (teacher) should approach an appropriate professional e.g. social worker”*
- *“Anybody we work with that we trust”*
- *“Trusted people such as Youth workers, doctors, lawyers, psychiatrist etc”*

Children’s Commissioner, Dr Russell Wills would like to acknowledge all the young people for their contributions to this consultation. He would also like to thank the youth group convenors and parents for assisting this participation, helping children and young people in New Zealand have their say about how they can thrive, belong and achieve.