

# The Effectiveness of Youth Mentoring Programmes in Aotearoa / New Zealand: From Research to Practice

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# Review Objectives

- ❑ To examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring programmes in New Zealand:
  - To identify the characteristics of successful programmes;
  - To assess the quality of the research on youth mentoring; and
  - To identify gaps in the literature and recommend directions for future research.



# What We Did...

- ❑ Looked for studies on youth mentoring in NZ
  - Database literature searches
  - Internet search
  - Contacted all know programmes in NZ
  - Reference list check
  
- ❑ Anything that looked promising based on the abstract was retained for further evaluation.



# Inclusion Criteria

- ❑ Examine the effectiveness for programme outcomes;
- ❑ Participants were between 6 and 24 years old;
- ❑ Studies were set in New Zealand;
- ❑ Formal mentoring, not informal or natural mentoring; and
- ❑ An indicator of effectiveness, quantitative or qualitative were acceptable

# Coding the Studies



- ❑ Studies coded (twice) on:
  - Report/research characteristics and methodologies,
  - Programme features,
  - Mentee characteristics,
  - Outcome goals and measures
  - Treatment effect:
    - Quantitative and Qualitative
  
- ❑ Bias
  
- ❑ Cultural Context
  - Māori, Pasifika, Overall NZ context
  - Research
    - researcher(s)
    - research procedures and analysis
  - Programme
    - programme implementers
    - programme design

# Status of Youth Mentoring Programmes in Aotearoa/NZ



- 23 active programmes
  
- Most programmes were:
  - School-based (65%)
  - Established (70%)

# Status of Youth Mentoring Programmes in Aotearoa/NZ



- ❑ All but one based on some principals of good practice
  
- ❑ Mentoring typically component of a larger programme (64%; 36% mentoring only)
  - Other key components included
    - Educational (94%)
    - Life skills (67%)

# Status of Youth Mentoring Programmes in Aotearoa/NZ



## □ Mentors

- Adults (72%)
- Volunteers (84%)
- Screened (95%) and Trained (91%)

## □ Mentees

- Low SES youth (44%)
- At-risk (56%) or high-risk youth (20%)
- Minimal or no family contact (71%)

# Status of Youth Mentoring Programmes in Aotearoa/NZ



- Delivery / Relationship
  - One-to-one (73%)
  - Moderate structure (45%)
  - Expected weekly meetings (77%)
  
- All but one had programme goals / most had more than one goal (92%)
  - 96% educational
  - 52% psychological
  - 52% interpersonal
  - 44% behavioural
  - 40% vocational
  - 20% cultural



# Key Findings and Applications

## □ Programme Effectiveness

Farruggia, S., Bullen, P., Davidson, J., Dunphy, A., Solomon, F., & Collins, E. (in press). The effectiveness of youth mentoring programmes in New Zealand.

## □ Cultural Appropriateness

Farruggia, S., Bullen, P., Solomon, F., & Collins, E., & Dunphy, A. (under review). Examining the cultural context of youth mentoring: A systematic review.

## □ Research Quality

Farruggia, S. & Bullen, P. (in preparation). Assessing the quality of research on youth mentoring: Implications for policy and programme delivery.

# Programme Effectiveness



- ❑ 88% showed some level of effectiveness
  
- ❑ Characteristics of effective programmes:
  - Programme-related
    - More established
    - Utilised principals of best practice
    - Mentoring is one component of other interventions
    - More structured
  
  - Mentor-related
    - Utilising peer mentors less effective
  
  - Mentee-related
    - Target low and mixed SES youth
  
  - Delivery / relationship-related
    - Utilise one-to-one or mixed mentoring
    - Greater expectations on length of mentor-mentee relationship
  
  - Goal-related
    - Focused on psychological and interpersonal goals



# Cultural Appropriateness

- ❑ Significant proportion of Māori youth: 14 studies
  - 50% programmes and research appeared to ignore Māori culture
  - 21% of programmes and 29% of research were highly appropriate
  
- ❑ Significant proportion of Pasifika youth: 6 studies
  - 1 programme highly appropriate while 1 appeared to ignore Pasifika culture
  - 3 research highly appropriate
  
- ❑ General NZ Context: 18 studies
  - 94% were highly, 6% (or 1) was moderately appropriate for research and programme

# Cultural Appropriateness and Programme Effectiveness



- ❑ General NZ
  - Not enough variation to examine
  
- ❑ Māori
  - Negative association: programmes that were more culturally appropriate tended to be less effective
  
- ❑ Pasifika
  - No associations found



# Research Quality

- ❑ 35% evaluated effectiveness
  
- ❑ Most had no history of evaluation (70%)
  
- ❑ Methodologies utilised
  - 31% purely quantitative,
  - 31% purely qualitative, and
  - 38% mixed methods



# Research Quality

- ❑ Only 31% utilised a control group
- ❑ Only 31% utilised a pre-test post-test design
- ❑ Very few studies (13%) assessed the effects of mentoring long term (i.e., 6 to 12 months post-intervention)
  - Most (52%) assessed the effects either immediately post or within 2 months of the intervention, and 35% included only a mid-intervention assessment
- ❑ 12% were peer-reviewed
- ❑ Intention to treat bias
  - 56% of quantitative studies
  - 73% of qualitative studies



# Research Quality

- Associations with effectiveness
  - Utilised qualitative methodologies
  - Differentiate researcher from practitioner
  - History of evaluation

# Recommendations for Programmes



- ❑ Evaluate for effectiveness
- ❑ Incorporate principles of best practice
- ❑ Focus on fewer goals and clarity of goals
- ❑ Use external evaluators
- ❑ Focus on youth with greatest need
- ❑ Develop relationships with universities – skilled evaluators are vital
- ❑ Start collecting “quality” data

# Recommendations for Programmes



- ❑ Take into account the cultural context of youth
- ❑ Consider incorporating cultural goals
- ❑ Whanau involvement
- ❑ Culture and best practice important

# Recommendations for Researchers



- ❑ Reduce bias by:
  - Using control groups
  - Include youth who “drop-out”
  - Conduct pre-tests
  - Conduct post-test – ideally 6 months on
  - Publish results – peer reviewed publications
  
- ❑ Address *all* programme goals
  
- ❑ Provide detailed reports that include:
  - Framework, methods, analyses and results
  - Programme delivery
  
- ❑ Incorporate appropriate cultural framework
  
- ❑ Programmes should not be developed for “research purposes”

# Recommendations for Policy Makers



- ❑ Provided financial support for evaluations
- ❑ Don't penalise programmes for taking the risk to evaluate