

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



Fun in Wellington

The beginning of August 2021 was awesome – 900 plus people who work with youth attended the INVOLVE Conference held in Wellington and the Delta variant of Covid-19 had not yet breached our boundary. INVOLVE 2021: Our Waka, New Seas was a spectacular gathering. Finau Vea from Le Va shares his highlights of a fabulous conference.

“A personal highlight I guess you could say, would be those moments where I had to step out, putting aside my shyness and being bold to share thoughts and ideas. Discussing certain topics about suicide, depression, what our youth need in today’s society, especially topics that felt heavy. Being able to speak out in front of all these people was my highlight.”

I believe another highlight was connecting and networking with the various youth groups that I met. I got to speak and learn more about groups that are trying to better our communities, as well as talk with organisations which have expressed their interest in wanting us to come out to Auckland and run their workshops. So yeah, that was awesome.

The thing which I took back from the INVOLVE Conference, was that there isn’t just one way to reach out to kids, students and youth. We all have our very own unique way of reaching out and we possess many different skills to get our message across. Whether it be through the creative side of poetry, rap, dance, art, music, the academic side where one to one tutoring is taking place, or just mentoring where wisdom and guidance is imparted. We all work in different ways to achieve the same goal, which is reaching out to young people in need. After leaving the conference, I was encouraged to work hard and see where my skills lie, and how I can use them to better reach out to the youths in my communities.

Shout out to Action Education! I finished the conference with their workshop and the stories told and spirit within that room was powerful. I’m sure I speak for everyone in the workshop when I say, they inspired and empowered each of our voices to share our own stories.

“I came to Wellington, to learn/soak-up all that the conference had to offer, and that is what happened. Thank you so much. I truly am blessed.” Finau Vea

FROM THE NETWORK

Conference Achievements

NZYMN was delighted to be invited to be part of the organising rōpū, when INVOLVE – formerly focusing on Youth and Health Work was revived in 2018.

As an Auckland-based organisation, we had always run our national conferences in Tāmaki Makarau, while continuing to present workshops and offer training right across the motu.

It has been great to join colleagues in Wellington, sharing our message of the broad reach of effective Youth Mentoring at two actual conferences (2018 and 2021), as well as in last year’s online delivery. We also really appreciated being able to give everyone a copy of our new brochure and run a stall - well-positioned at the top of the escalator, which allowed us to have conversations and share material with so many interested people.

Whai Wāhitanga workshops, as comprehensively advertised at INVOLVE, will swing into full delivery in 2022, as soon as Covid regulations permit.

We have continued to be really active online and take this opportunity to send warmest season’s greetings to all.

Ann Dunphy, NZYMN Chair





Special award for 21 years

NZYMN has reached an impressive milestone of being 21 years young. We wanted to acknowledge the outstanding service of our founder and chairperson, Ann Dunphy, and presented her with a special award.

The taonga is an unpolished pounamu representing young people of Aotearoa and is surrounded by multicoloured harakeke in a close weave to indicate the community that supports and nurtures them (including mentors).



Pounamu enclosed in harakeke, woven by Joy

Board members and friends of the network made the following tributes:

“

Fa'afetai tele lava Ann for your service to NZ young people and for welcoming me into this space with open arms. Alofa atu.

—

A leader of the highest calibre and congruence, Ann lives her values. Each word spoken, inspires; each word emailed, motivates.

—

Ann, your tireless energy and positivity for everything in life and most particularly young people is truly inspirational. You are the heart of the Network.

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Ann, your focus on that most important relational activity, mentoring, is not only beneficial today but inevitably is of benefit for the future.

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Ann, congratulations on all that you have achieved with Youth Mentoring in NZ to date.

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Thanks Ann. Without you, the cause to positively encourage youth would have been much less apparent.

—

The thing I admire about you, Ann, is your long-term, uncompromising pursuit of a vision for youth mentoring.

”

“ *Ann is a true champion of youth mentoring in Aotearoa and all of us who play our part in that community have thanks to pay for her enthusiasm, leadership, and wisdom.* ”

NZYMN: Upcoming events

Looking Ahead

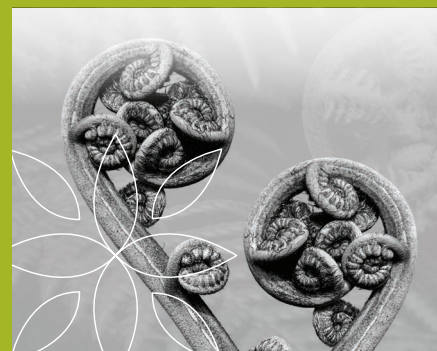
2021 has been a disrupted year and workshops we planned had to be cancelled so NZYMN is looking forward to a new year and a rescheduled training programme.

Whai Wāhitanga: Active Youth Participation

With funding support from The Tindall Foundation and Ministry of Youth Development we are offering a one-day workshop designed, with the help of young people, to improve and strengthen youth voice and youth leadership in the mentoring relationship. The workshop will be offered in the following places:

- **February/March:** Auckland, Whanaganui, Wellington and Christchurch.
- **April to July:** 12 other regional locations.

We are also planning an on-line version for people unable to get to the in-person locations. Please keep an eye on our website for updates.



Mentor Plus: Foundational Skills in Youth Mentoring.

With an easing of lockdown and boundary restrictions we are planning to replace our cancelled November 2021 training with one 22nd/23rd February. This course will be restricted to mentors booked for the cancelled workshop or on the waitlist. We are planning for another training in Auckland in May.

Contact joy@youthmentoring.org.nz to discuss other training options.



In 2020 Aotearoa's first PhD in Youth Mentoring was awarded to Hilary Dutton. In a zoom conversation she told me about her work. You can read her dissertation at <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/50251>

Q What led you to your research questions?

A From my own experience as a mentor I became curious about how mentoring relationships develop. In conversation with mentors I realised that they had a lot of questions about disclosure. How much should they tell their mentees? What personal history and opinions should they share? Was disclosure useful to make better conversations and build quality relationships? As adults self-disclosure is a major tool we use to get close to someone, to let them into our lives, but mentors grapple with the challenges, ethics and complexities of adult/youth disclosure in formal helping relationships. Mentors know that honesty is expected if young people are to trust them.

My questions were: what were mentors disclosing, did disclosure impact relationship quality, and what were the key features of mentor disclosure in youth mentoring relationships?

Q What were your main findings?

A From my research I can say that disclosure is a very common practice, and it occurs across a wide range of topics. From the basic 'getting to know you' conversations right through to the high intimacy topics like substance use (including alcohol and tobacco), sex and sexuality.

I observed that disclosure did make a difference to the mentee's experience of the relationship. For mentors who disclosed more, their mentees were more likely to rate the relationship highly.

I can also say that most mentors use disclosure purposefully in ways that are mentee-orientated. They often respond with self-disclosure after the mentee raised a topic or would, at times, offer a topic they believed relevant to young people in general and were interested to see if their mentee would pick it up. This indicates to me that there could be mentor training to support purposeful disclosure.

I did, however, see some examples where the mentor didn't respond to a mentee's question or were fixed on talking about their experiences whether the mentee was interested or not. They were missing the mentee cues.

Q What does your research mean for mentoring in Aotearoa?

A It is really useful to have relevant resources that speak to our cultural context. Mentoring in Aotearoa often occurs in cross-cultural relationships, and it is important to understand how these interactions happen. It might not

necessarily be the same as relationships that are described in international literature. For example, there might be differences between New Zealand and other regions in the world, when it comes to what we're comfortable disclosing about. For example, in the NZ context money is rarely talked about but our colleagues in the US or the UK are not shy of the topic.

All my research is designed to help mentors and mentees build great relationships. Thousands of young people across Aotearoa have mentors and as a researcher, I believe my role is to get the best information possible to support the development of high-quality mentoring relationships. By researching disclosure, I hope this knowledge facilitates close, trusting mentoring relationships, while also ensuring disclosure is safe and ethical.

Q What are your next steps?

A My PhD research focused on the mentors' perspectives and experiences, but there is a lot more to learn about disclosure from a mentee perspective. What do mentees feel when a mentor discloses? What does it take for a mentee to say I'm prepared to disclose to my mentor? Understanding the behaviours and conditions that lead to mentee disclosure is another important part of quality relationship development. This will be the number one priority in my research work for the next little while.

Dr Hilary Dutton in conversation with Joy Eaton

BREAKING NEWS

Great news that Dr Hilary Dutton has been awarded a Rutherford Post-Doctoral Fellowship for a two-year study of youth experiences of self-disclosure. This is a follow-up to her work on mentor disclosure described in the Mātauranga interview (above). **Congratulations Hilary!**

ABOUT US

The New Zealand Youth Mentoring Network (NZYMN) is the national hub for the youth mentoring sector in New Zealand. We provide advice, support, access to resources and professional development in intentional youth mentoring.

Manaakitanga:
we uphold the mana in others.

Mātauranga:
we promote knowledge and understanding.

VALUES

surrounding our operational circles underpin the **WHY, WHAT and HOW** of the New Zealand Youth Mentoring Network.

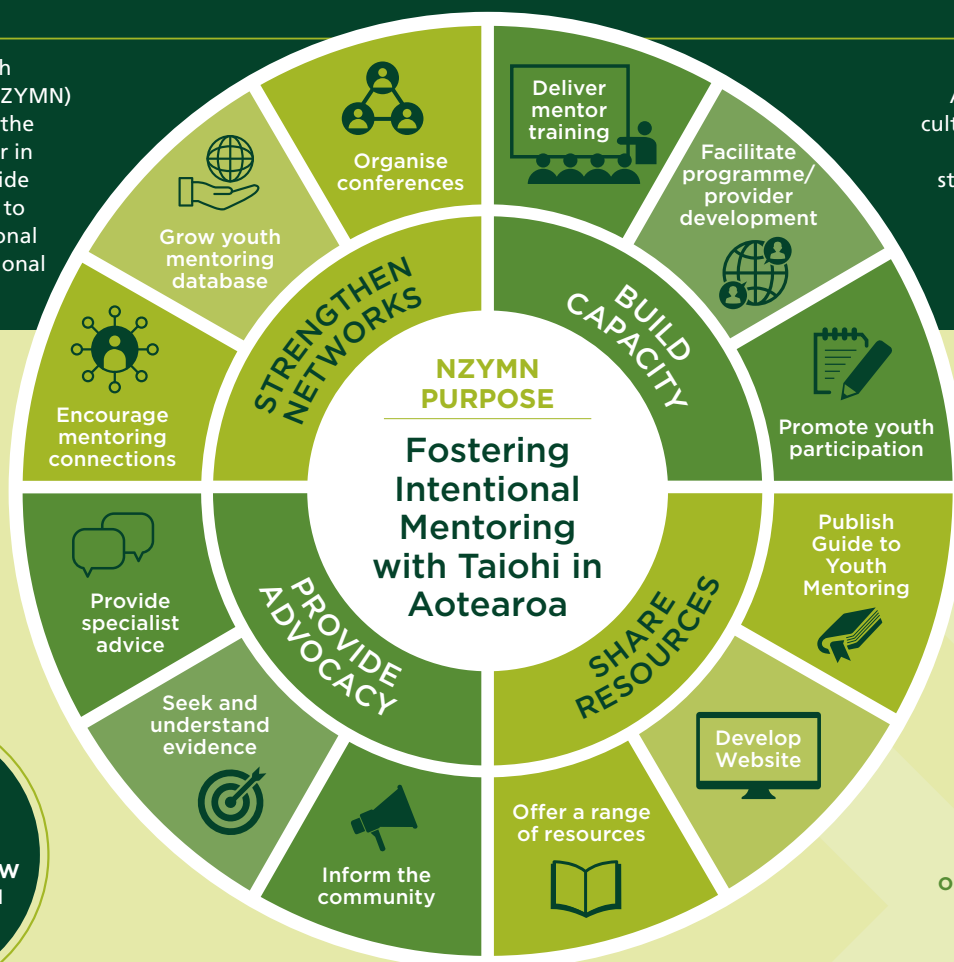
VISION

Youth mentoring in Aotearoa New Zealand is culturally located, informed by best practice and is strong, effective and safe.

Tautua:
we lead through service.

Grounded:
we are informed by cultural perspectives.

Collective Impact:
we build energy, optimism and hauora.



Whai Wāhitanga: Participation

In preparation for NZYMN's new workshop *Whai Wāhitanga: Active Youth Participation in Mentoring* writer and facilitator Rod Baxter met with young people from Heart 4 Youth. He had three questions for them.

1. How important is mentoring?
What does it mean to you?
2. How much choice and control do you have?
3. How does mentoring help to connect you to others and something bigger?

Five young people plus a mentor were happy to be part of the conversation. The young people had strong, positive feelings about the relationship with their mentor.

"It is cool to have someone to check up on you."

"...good to get advice from someone older – someone who is not your parent."

"A mentor is a friend, no judgement, no sides, no expectations - you can't disappoint a mentor."

These mentees saw decision making as part of the mentoring relationship, particularly with a focus on the activities they did with their mentors. There was also a realisation that there are times, for legal or safety reasons, when mentees can't make the decision.

"We mostly get a choice – mentee gets to pick what happens."

"We help each other to make choices."

"...means I don't think about those things but would be good to have a discussion."

In answer to question three the young people expressed real appreciation of the time they spent with their mentors including making connections with mentor's family and friends. The mentees could see that time with the mentor gave them a different perspective on life.

"[Mentors are] not your age, from a different world."

"...takes you out of your world - have a break from your own world."

These thoughts and comments have been valuable as NZYMN has prepared resource material for a series of nation-wide workshops about youth participation in decision-making.

It was also great that two of these young people agreed to join Ross McCook (Heart 4 Youth founder) on a trip to the INVOLVE Conference. Hemi joined a youth panel organised to support Rod Baxter's keynote address (you can see this on Youtube: INVOLVE 2021). Both Hemi and Connor contributed to the following breakout session. Hemi's advice *"In an organisation there are always a couple of standout kids – not shy - get them together to have a chat about things."*

Find out more about the concepts of Whai Wāhitanga by joining an NZYMN workshop in 2022 or from Ara Taiohi's work on the Mana Taiohi framework.

— Newsletter is available on our website —

www.youthmentoring.org.nz

LIFTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
YOUTH MENTORING IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

