

**UNDERSTANDING JUVENILE TRANSITIONS FROM THE
JUSTICE SYSTEM**

By

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed:

Angela Joseph

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this qualitative research project is to understand the transition process of young people from the Youth Justice (YJ) system and identify the factors that influence them during this process. The research included eight youth participants who were involved in a concept mapping workshop, and five professionals who were interviewed. The youth participants who had either current or previous YJ involvement were provided through the mapping workshop the choice to share their experiences either verbally, pictorially or textually (written). They discussed their early influences for their criminal offending, their time in YJ, the transition processes they were involved in, their lives post-transition and their hopes for the future, and their own recommendations on how the process can be improved for future YJ youth.

The five professionals who at some point were working with youth with YJ involvement were interviewed about the YJ transition process. During the interviews they spoke about their experiences working with YJ youth, the processes undertaken when a young person transitions from YJ, and their own recommendation on improving the transition process and practice for youth offenders.

According to the participants there are various risk and protective factors that affect youth during and after their transition from YJ and can either hinder or encourage their successful outcomes. From the findings it is suggested that YJ youth need to connect positively to their social environment and be provided with effective youth participation. In addition the research identified the need to incorporate a positive youth development approach while working with young people from the YJ system, in order for them to have positive outcomes.

The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) has been used to analyse and discuss the findings of this study. Moreover, the framework provided by the YDSA has been used to present recommendations towards facilitating successful outcomes for YJ youth, and suggestions for improving policy and practice that affect YJ youth transitioning from the justice system.

CHAPTER 1

Juvenile Transitions from the Youth Justice System

Introduction

This thesis will examine the transition process of young people from the Youth Justice system (YJ) in New Zealand. Eight youth who had previous or current involvement with the YJ system contributed as participants in concept mapping workshops. Concept mapping is a participatory research tool, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The youth participants provided information on their influences for criminal behaviour, their experiences in and their transitions from YJ, and recommendations on improving this process. In addition five professionals who worked with youth from the YJ system participated in one-on-one interviews to inform the research. The participants were asked to discuss the processes and procedures that young people experience while in the YJ system, the YJ transition practice, and the factors that influence youth during their transition. The information gathered from the interviews and the concept mapping workshops provided a clear understanding of the process young people encountered during their time in and transitions from YJ. The participants' experiences and opinions provided recommendations on ways to improve the transition of YJ youth and facilitate successful outcomes.

Positioning of the researcher

There were a number of reasons for conducting this research. The motivation was due to my life, work and community experiences. I have always had a keen interest in understanding how people live and interact with others. This led me to pursue Bachelors in psychology and anthropology for my undergraduate degree. While working through my degree I gained employment working for Child, Youth and Family services (CYF), at a YJ facility, which served as a residential remand centre for young people with criminal charges. As the youth I worked with at the facility were dealing with charges at the Youth Court they were placed in the custody of the Chief Executive under the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 (CYPF Act).

CYF is a government department that falls under the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) in New Zealand. CYF explain their support responsibilities as:

We help families help themselves. We believe all children belong in families that will love and nurture them. We team up with many different groups and people so that families have the support they need to help their children thrive” (Child Youth and Family).

YJ is a section of the CYF department:

Youth justice is for children and young people who have broken the law. It gives them a real opportunity to change their life for the better without getting a criminal record. We work with young people to help them face up to their mistakes, be accountable and move on to a positive future (Child Youth and Family).

The CYPF Act (1989) is a legislation passed by the New Zealand Parliament. The Act provides children and young people with care and protection, also including youth justice. New Zealand has separate justice processes for under seventeen year olds; the child offending process for 10 to 13 year olds and the youth justice process for fourteen to sixteen year olds. Under the CYPF Act (1989) children aged ten to thirteen cannot be prosecuted for offences other than murder and manslaughter, while youth aged fourteen to sixteen can be formally charged and prosecuted for any offence. Young people aged seventeen or over are dealt with in the same manner as adults (Ministry of Justice). Offending by young people is dealt with by the Youth Court. The Youth Court is separate from adult criminal justice systems and is strongly focused on the rehabilitation of youth offenders (Ministry of Justice, 2002). A further explanation of YJ proceedings and processes is provided in the following chapter (Chapter 2).

The young people at the YJ facility received schooling and healthcare, while special referrals allowed them to access mental health services, drug and alcohol services, anger-management therapy and programmes to challenge offending. These are provided depending on the legal status, family history, and the state of mind in which the young people present themselves.

Over the years I often noticed that many of the youth I came across had sporadic or disrupted schooling, drug and alcohol addictions, and mental health needs. However my biggest concern was the frequent return of young people back to YJ, because of failed transitions and or reoffending. Quite often many of the young people talked about family problems, lack of family support, peer pressure, drugs and alcohol and gangs as reasons for returning. Yet many of the youth had hopes of attending university

and other professional courses, or gaining employment after their discharge from the YJ facility.

I wondered whether young people were being sent back into the community with inadequate skills and support, and thus unable to cope with the conditions set out in their transition plans. On discharge from the YJ system most youth I worked with were unsure and doubtful about staying away from crime and keeping to their transition plans though they hoped they would. Despite limited support and skills YJ youth were expected to cope with life and function as a normal adolescent, though they had none of the support a regular teenager would have. I wanted to explore possibilities for better transition rates of youth from the justice system, and hence began research on this topic.

While researching YJ transitions I realised there was a lack of current research on this topic in New Zealand. There was one research project on Family Group Conferences (FGC), their practices and achieving effective outcomes for young people. However other information that exists are court proceedings for youth offenders, literature reviews and conference papers. There are other New Zealand studies that explored the transition of care leavers from State based care, this has been used in this research as many YJ youth have previous CYF care involvement, and undergo similar out of care treatment such as mental health, drug & alcohol, education and life skills services.

While working for CYF I was also involved with community youth projects and youth advisory groups, which increased my interest in youth participation, and empowerment. My deepest passion is to channel a voice for young people who did not have the tools, or the opportunities to express their opinions.

Thus the research was inspired by my curiosity to understand how young people fared post-YJ involvement, and what enabled them to function successfully in society. Despite the limited support, and social problems quite a significant number of young people were able to stay away from offending or returning to YJ. Therefore I wanted to gain a better understanding of those factors that prevented recidivism, and promoted positive outcomes among YJ youth. Moreover, the lack of current research involving YJ young people encouraged me to pursue youth participants who would be willing to voice their opinions and share their experiences on their YJ involvement and transition.

Research Aims and Hypothesis

The purpose of the research is to:

- Understand the transition process of youth from the justice system.
- Highlight the risk and protective factors that influence youth transition from YJ.
- Consider the data collected as recommendations towards facilitating positive transitions from the YJ system.
- Encourage the need to incorporate a Positive Youth Development approach (PYD) when working with youth.
- Provide YJ youth an opportunity to voice their opinions on practices that affect them.
- Contribute to the knowledge and research on YJ transitions in New Zealand.

The hypothesis for the research is that YJ youth who are well prepared, provided with opportunities to participate in decision making processes, adequately supported, and encouraged can transition successfully from the YJ system. The unstated assumptions are that youth who transition from YJ are generally ill-prepared, ill supported and lack skills to deal with the stresses related to their transitions. Therefore by providing young people with additional protective factors and opportunities to build their capacity YJ youth will possess the necessary tools needed to achieve positive outcomes during their transitions and subsequently in adulthood.

Research Justification

There are differing definitions of youth in New Zealand. According to the CYPF Act 1989, “child means a boy or girl under the age of fourteen years”, while a “young person means a boy or girl of or over the age of fourteen years but under seventeen years; but does not include any person who is or has been married or in a civil union” (Children Young Persons and Their Families Act, 1989). While according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) “a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years” (1990). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) is an international human rights treaty that sets out the basic rights of children and the obligations of governments to fulfil them” (UNICEF, 2008). In slight variation to the definitions mentioned above the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) describes young people as “young women and young men moving between childhood and adulthood, aged twelve to twenty four years inclusive” (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007, p. 11). The YDSA is a document that sets out how the

government and society can support young people to develop the skills and attitudes needed to take part in society, now and in the future (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). The YDSA is explained in detail in the following chapter (Chapter 2).

As previously mentioned the CYPF Act (1989) stipulates how children and young people who offend are dealt with in New Zealand. Therefore support and rehabilitation is mandated to young people according to the age category they fit in. This practice does not fit with the definition of youth in the best- practice youth development framework outlined in the YDSA. Often recommendations to improve transitions focus on the extension of support for State cared for youth until their early adulthood (Leoni, 2007; Ward, 2000). Therefore, there is a need for a revision in the definition of youth within government and non-government organisations to better assist YJ youth.

YJ youth reoffend or breach bail conditions set out in their plans due to factors such as unemployment, criminal peer groups, and substance abuse (Maxwell, Kingi, Robertson, Morris, & Cunningham, 2004). This is a trend despite the interventions put in place to prevent young people becoming professional criminals. There are many factors that contribute to this pattern of youth offending. According to the YDSA young people are connected to their social environments such as family, community and peer groups. The YDSA Strategy incorporates a strengths-based approach and identifies that young people possess a set of risk and protective factors that influence their development.

One aspect is the living situation of the young person. Most of the young people who are associated with the YJ system continue to live in environments that foster and enable young people to pursue criminal behaviour, yet child services are unable to provide them with alternative living options (Collins & Clay, 2009). Many of the young people who are placed in YJ residences have an extensive history of CYF involvement, and often have troubled backgrounds with a family history of violence, abuse, criminal offending, mental health problems and substance abuse issues (Becroft & Thompson, 2006). Those who are provided with different options such as independent living are found unable to cope with the pressures of such an arrangement due to numerous factors. Most youth involved with the justice system are unable to look after themselves as they lack the support system, the skills and the networks to sustain their independent living (Collins & Clay, 2009). Moreover a significant number of YJ youth lack skills such as budgeting, balancing school or work and social

relationships. In addition these youth are generally unaware of or unable to ask for help regarding health, financial support, and have limited family support (Maxwell et al., 2004).

Statistics show that youth from the justice system have higher rates of substance abuse, and mental health problems. About eighty percent (80%) of young people who go through the youth court have a drug or alcohol dependency that is connected to their offending (Becroft, 2009b). Those under the age of eighteen make up about seventeen percent (17%) of police apprehensions for disorderly behaviour under the influence of alcohol (Lash, 2005). “An apprehension is recorded when a person has been dealt with by the Police in some manner (e.g. warning, alternative action, referral to an ‘intention to charge’ Family Group Conference (FGC), prosecution) to resolve an alleged offence. An apprehension does not always involve an arrest” (Ministry of Justice, 2010a).

New Zealand statistics show that the proportion of youth apprehensions decreased between 2001 and 2010 by twenty percent (20%), but the rate of violent apprehensions for youth has increased since 1995 (Ministry of Justice, 2010a). National statistics highlight that the majority of the young people apprehended by Police are male. In 2010 seventy eight percent (78%) of the children and youth apprehended by police were male. Most youth apprehensions were New Zealand European or Māori. Between the years 1995 to 2003 there were similar rates of police apprehensions between the two ethnic groups, but since then there has been a change. The percentage of Māori youth apprehensions had increased, in 2006, forty seven percent (47%) of fourteen to sixteen year olds who were apprehended were Māori, while Pacific youth were the next largest group (Chong, 2007). However, between 2003 and 2010 there was a decline in apprehension of Caucasian children and young people decreased by twenty eight percent (28%) (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

Many young people have little preparation before their transition away from youth justice, and have limited consultation regarding their YJ transition plan (Maxwell et al., 2004). Quite often there is limited communication with the young person and between the agencies involved in the transition, which results in the repetition of programmes, and services.

Being involved with the YJ system can have possible negative effects on young people. For instance judicial interventions increase their involvement in crime in adulthood and this is partly due to disrupted schooling, which lowers the chances of employment opportunities as adults (Gatti, Tremblay, & Vitaro, 2009). In addition eighty percent (80%) of young people who are involved in the Youth Court are not engaged in any formal education (Becroft, 2006). Often due to transient placements and disrupted education YJ youth lack age appropriate schooling and skill level, and thus face difficulties to transition into school or the workforce post-YJ (Maxwell et al., 2004). Furthermore many young people within the justice system have psychological disorders and mental health concerns resulting from various socio-economic factors (Becroft, 2006; Fergusson, 2009). These factors need to be taken into consideration when working towards supporting positive youth development in New Zealand. It also highlights the need for specific interventions and support systems to enable the successful transitions of YJ youth into society and adulthood.

There is a need for further research in the field of YJ to evaluate the current transition practices and outcomes for young people, and measure resilience from adolescence into adulthood. Currently there is a nation-wide, five-year long transition study being undertaken by Massey University that examines young people's transition from youth services from various sectors. The researcher hopes the findings from her research will provide some information to complement the knowledge gained through the aforementioned study.

The lack of current research on YJ youth can be attributed to the privacy issues surrounding young people, especially those under government guardianships. Despite such restrictions there is a need for evaluation to ensure positive service outcomes. Further research, evaluation and youth consultation are vital in order to make informed decisions that facilitate evidence-based practice and ultimately contribute towards successful outcomes for YJ youth.

New Zealand research on youth transitions

Four different studies focusing on Family Group Conferences (FGC) in New Zealand was conducted as part of a large research project in 2004. The four studies that eventuated from this project were *the retrospective study* which examined data on 1003 cases of young people who had FGCs, *the prospective study* which observed the current

practice of YJ co-ordinators, the *Māori study* that aimed to better understand best practice for Māori participants, and the Pacific study which focused on the needs and issues affecting Pacific people in relation to FGC (Maxwell et al., 2004). Each of the studies discovered that post-FGC many of the young people were engaged in employment or education and were determined to stay away from crime. The research also reported that family background and support had significant influence on whether young people reoffended or achieved positive life outcomes, as they were identified as a source of support and guidance. Furthermore the Māori and Pacific studies encouraged the use of culturally appropriate tools and approaches to ensure better service provision when working with ethnic groups.

Ward (2000) completed her Masters of Social Work thesis on the young people leaving statutory care. The research examined the files of thirty five youth who were sixteen years of age, and were at the point of leaving care. The study examined the services, guidance and support care leavers received, the pre-discharge preparation they underwent and the effectiveness of statutory care as a 'parent' in ensuring these young people transitioned successfully. Ward discovered that foster care youth were generally "ill-prepared, ill-equipped and ill-supported for life after care", though they started living independently before the rest of the population they were not adequately prepared to do so (Ward, 2000).

For her Masters thesis Yates (2001) conducted a study with eight young Pākehā/ New Zealand European boys and girls between sixteen to twenty years of age. The research examines the experiences of care leavers in New Zealand. Six out of the eight participants had experienced unsuccessful or disappointing transitions, and only two had supported and managed transitions. However one of the participants who had received supported discharges from care expressed that it had occurred abruptly, and on-going guidance and family-support would have been beneficial (Yates, 2001).

Similar to the above mentioned studies Leoni (2007) examined the transition of young people leaving care in New Zealand. However the study focused on the experiences of Māori care-leavers. The research involved eight Māori care leavers and eight professional staff and community members who had experience working with Māori care-leavers. The findings were similar to those of Yates (2001) and Ward (2000). The research stated that preparation was not consistent or well-planned; there was a lack of

standard practice for working with Māori leaving care, and care-leavers struggled post-care due to multiple risk factors such as history of family violence, irregular placements, sporadic schooling, mental health issues and substance abuse addictions. Leoni (2007) recommends the use of culturally appropriate approaches such as the Mauri framework and strengths-based approach to achieve the best possible outcomes when working with young Māori. The research also provided recommendations for improving leaving care practice using the Mauri framework.

Thesis Structure

Chapter one presents an introduction providing a general overview of the research being presented. The chapter presents the positioning of the researcher, the research aims and hypothesis, justification for research and an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter two is a literature review, which provides an overview of research from international jurisdictions and New Zealand on youth transitions from YJ and State care. Most of the research included is from the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia. Due to the lack of current New Zealand research specific to youth transitioning from YJ, studies examining foster care, and at-risk youth with disabilities were also included (Leoni, 2007; Ward, 2000; Yates, 2001). These studies were incorporated due to their focus on youth transitions, despite the participants being care-leavers. The review also includes some conference papers presented by judges who work in the Youth Court.

The chapter will first explain the New Zealand YJ system, its procedures and principles, in order to provide the reader with a general understanding of the workings of the YJ system. An explanation of the legislation and policies that YJ practice will also be provided.

The review goes on to present the theoretical approaches and frameworks that informed the research. This section will demonstrate the importance of the Positive Youth Development approach (PYD), and the YDSA framework in youth development. Then strengths-based approach and several Pacific and Māori cultural frameworks will be described and the importance of incorporating such frameworks when working with youth will be explained.

Then the review will provide explanations on the five main risk and protective factors, which are family and living situation, peer influence, substance abuse, mental health, and education and employment. Each factor will be explained according to the influence it has on YJ youth during their transition, and recommendations to alleviate the risk will be provided at the end of the each section. The chapter will end with a summary and conclusion of the reviewed research.

Chapter three presents the methods and methodologies used in the research. The chapter outlines the frameworks and methods used to design, conduct and collect the data for the research. The chapter starts out by presenting the difference between methods and methodology, to provide the reader a clear distinction between the two. Then a description of qualitative research methodology, and concept mapping and interview methods used to gather the data for the research are provided. The chapter also discusses the use of Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, which is an approach used to engage marginalized youth in research. It is a participant-centred approach that encourages youth participation and values young people's lived experiences (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009).

The research methodology is then discussed with a particular emphasis on the PYD approach emphasised in the YDSA which has been used to guide the current research. According to the YDSA young people are recognised as contributors and partners in their development. Through this approach the researcher hopes to encourage young people and adults to collaborate towards a better understanding of YJ youth transitions. In addition Māori frameworks such as Kaupapa Māori (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002), Mauri framework (Leoni, 2007) and E Tipu E Rea (Keelan, 2009) and Pacific frameworks such as the Cultural Ethnic Model, and Cultural Festival Model embrace the cultural, familial and traditional aspects surrounding young person. These approaches shaped and informed the methods used to engage participants and gather and analyse the data for the research.

The next section covers sampling and the specific selection and recruitment of youth and professional participants. This is followed by a description of the specific methods used for data collection with the youth and professional participants. The themes and topics explored during the workshops and interviews are presented. Then an

explanation of how the data was analysed is provided. Finally problems encountered during the research and the ethical considerations are acknowledged.

Chapter four presents the research findings gathered from the eight youth and five professional participants. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the findings gathered from the young people, and the topics covered will follow the workshop schedule; starting with their influences for being involved in the YJ system, their transition experience and finally their recommendations on how to improve this process. All the concept maps and important quotes are provided to support the findings.

The second part of the chapter will present the findings gathered during the interviews with the professional participants. This section will present the views of the professionals on the risk and protective factors that encourage youth to be involved in the YJ system, the influence those aspects have on their transition, and their recommendations on ways to improve youth transitions from YJ, what aspects need to be put in place to prevent recidivism. Direct quotes from the participants are provided, and all the themes that emerged from the interviews have been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter five provides the key discussion points made in relation to the findings provided in the previous chapter. The chapter is divided into two sections. Section one will incorporate the YDSA goals framework to illustrate the recommendations towards improving the YJ youth transition process. The findings have been organised according to the three aims of the YDSA to provide a clear and comprehensive picture of the actions that can be taken to support YJ young people's positive development across social environments and government setting. Each section is followed by a matrix that summarises the findings for each of the three aims. Section two will present the limitations of the research.

Chapter six presents the implications and the recommendations for future research based on the outcomes of the research. The chapter has two parts; it starts with the summary of findings, which provides an overview of the research findings and analysis discussed in Chapters Four and Five. The next part is then broken down into three topics that are fundamental to the current research, and in which recommendations are made, these are: incorporating a PYD approach when working with YJ youth,

importance of youth participation within their social environments, and using PAR research methodologies with young people.

Conclusion

This thesis aims to better understand the transition of youth from the YJ system, and identify the various factors that influence their outcomes. There are many factors that contribute to the recidivism of youth offenders, and therefore it is hoped that the information gathered will contribute to the information and knowledge on YJ. Furthermore it is hoped that the recommendations made as a result of the research will contribute towards improving current transition processes for YJ youth.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The literature review will provide an overview of the information and research material from New Zealand and other countries on the transition of youth offenders from the YJ system.

The chapter will start with a brief description of the YJ system in New Zealand. This will include explaining the objectives of the CYPF Act, the way youth offenders are dealt with by the Police, and pathways youth navigate within the justice system.

The next section will describe the theoretical approaches that informed this research project. This is carried out by providing a brief description of the principles of the PYD and strengths-based and resiliency approaches. In addition the YDSA framework for youth development in New Zealand will be explained. Then cultural frameworks which were used to inform the way the research would be conducted and delivered to the participants are described. The Pacific theoretical frameworks are the Cultural Ethnic Model and The Cultural Festival Model, and the Māori models are: Kaupapa Māori Model, E Tipu E Rea and the Mauri model.

This is followed by a review of the main risk and protective factors that affect YJ youth, which are family and living situation, peer influence, substance abuse, mental health, education and employment. Recommendations to alleviate the risk factors are included at the end of the discussion on each factor.

The final section provides a brief summary and conclusion of the literature review.

The selected literature is taken from journal articles, books, government reports and theses from the years 2000–2012. Research referring to youth leaving care is also included due to the lack of specific or current studies on youth transitioning from the justice system in New Zealand.

Youth Justice processes in New Zealand

Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989

The CYPF Act (1989) is legislation passed by the New Zealand Parliament. The Act (1989) provides a guiding framework within which the State can intervene and advocate for children and young people. The CYPF Act (1989) saw a change in social work interventions from a problem-focused treatment-based system to one where young people and their families are involved and taking responsibility for their own offending (Becroft, 2003). The CYPF Act (1989):

Attempts to provide ways of dealing with young people in the community and within their families wherever possible; holding young people accountable for their offending; involving victims, families and young people in the processes of decision making; putting in place measures to assist with reducing reoffending; reducing time frames for decisions; ensuring the tasks agreed to at the Family Group Conference (FGC) are completed; and making processes and services culturally appropriate (Maxwell et al., 2004, p. 1).

The CYPF Act (1989) sets out separate justice processes for children (from birth to thirteen years) and youth (aged fourteen to sixteen). The separate systems are due to the vulnerability and the age of the children and youth and this is to protect, and address the needs of the individual whilst holding them accountable for their offending (Ministry of Justice). Children under the age of fourteen cannot be prosecuted in court except for offences of murder or manslaughter. Child offenders are either dealt with by a warning which is covered under the CYPF Act (1989) under section 209 and 210, get a Formal Police Caution under section 211 and or be referred to CYF and have a FGC. Depending on the seriousness of the offence there is an option of children being referred to the Family Courts, whether the child presents a need for care and protection. In certain cases the Police may not take any action if they believe no offence was committed. Alternatively youth aged fourteen to seventeen can be formally charged and prosecuted for any offence. Those over the age of seventeen are dealt with by the police in the same manner as adults (Ministry of Justice).

The above mentioned systems for dealing with child offenders are also in place for youth between the ages of fourteen to seventeen. In addition young offenders can also be referred to CYF for an FGC, be arrested and formally charged in the Youth Court, while serious offences like murder and manslaughter are finalised in the High Court

(Ministry of Justice). The CYPF Act (1989) emphasises the importance of diverting young people from the courts and custodial options, and provides ways to strengthen relationships between young people and their communities and families. According to this legislation under the CYPF Act (1989) YJ involvement can result in young people either be given an informal or formal warning, dealt with in a diversionary manner or placed in the custody of a parent or guardian, iwi or cultural social services or any organisation or person approved by the Chief Executive, under sections 234-238 of the Act. The New Zealand YJ system practices multiple methods such as police warnings (for less serious offences), diversionary programmes and FGCs instead of criminal proceedings when dealing with youth offenders, unlike United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK) where youth incarceration is a popular solution (Becroft, 2009a).

About seventy six percent (76%) of youth offences are dealt with by the Police (through informal and formal warnings) rather than court proceedings (Becroft, 2003). Young people with serious offences are placed on either supervision with activity or supervision with residence order. Older youth are transferred to the Department of Corrections, and to the District Courts, depending on their offence. Therefore YJ youth can have varied transition experiences depending on their placement and custody.

The department of CYF falls under the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), and help protect, care and support children and youth in consultation with their families and guardians (Child Youth and Family). One aspect of CYF is YJ. YJ provides young people who have broken the law with the opportunities to make amends for previous mistakes, and take responsibility and rehabilitate, so as to achieve a better and positive future (Child Youth and Family).

Youth Offending Strategy

The Youth offending Strategy is another government document that helps guide the YJ sector. The Strategy “aims to prevent and reduce offending and re-offending by children and young people” (Youth Offending Strategy, 2002: 1). The Strategy identifies eleven principles which are based on the YJ provisions of the CYPF Act:

including accountability, recognising the interests of victims, age and developmental appropriateness, best practice, cultural responsiveness

(including consistency with the Treaty of Waitangi) and limiting involvement in the formal youth justice system (Caldwell, 2009, p. 2).

These principles provide key focus areas on improving YJ service provision. According to the Strategy the focus is on the rehabilitation of youth offenders rather than retribution, while simultaneously holding them accountable for offending (Ministry of Justice, 2002).

Integration of Cultural Approaches

As mentioned in the previous chapter (Chapter 1) Māori youth are over-represented in the YJ system. Therefore to effectively address the needs of Māori youth the government has in recent years put in place a range of interventions and programmes.

In Māori custom and law, tikanga o ngā hara, the law of wrongdoing, was based on notions that responsibility was collective rather than individual and that redress was due not just to any victim but also to the victim's family. Understanding why an individual had offended was also linked to this notion of collective responsibility (Ministry of Justice).

The whānau meeting among Māori extended family groups is still used in some areas to resolve disputes. It was this model that was used in an attempt to bridge the indigenous practices with the current criminal system to develop a modern system of justice, which culturally appropriate. The Te Kooti Rangatahi/ The Rangatahi Court are one such initiative. “The Rangatahi Courts is a Youth Court that is held on a marae and the Māori language and Māori protocols are incorporated as part of the Court process. The purpose of the hearing is to monitor the young person's completion of his or her Family Group Conference (FGC) Plan” (Taumaunu, 2012, p. 1). Becroft explained that the though the FGC is being held on a marae, the YJ processes remain the same (Ministry of Justice, 2010b). He hoped that this imitative would unlock “the potential of the local marae community to work with the young offender and their whānau” (Ministry of Justice, 2010b, p. 1). Although Rangatahi Courts are open to all young people regardless of their ethnic background, they are specifically designed for Māori youth. The marae is a traditional Māori meeting place which is a “focal point for Māori cultural activities within any Māori community. Marae have traditionally been used as the appropriate venue to settle disputes within Māori communities” (Taumaunu, 2012, p. 2).

The first Rangatahi Court sat at Te Poho-O Rawiri Marae in Gisborne, in 2008. Now there are nine Rangatahi Courts around New Zealand (Taumaunu, 2012). Becroft (2012) states that the Rangatahi Courts is an initiative to connect youth with their iwi and community, and for the Youth Courts to build partnerships with the iwi and local marae. He also states that this initiative has improved quality of process for young Māori and the intervention is more closely linked to the vision of the CYPF Act 1989.

The Pasifika Youth Court is a similar initiative as the Māori Rangatahi Courts. It is led by the Ministry of Justice in partnership with the Pacific community. The Pasifika Court aims to address Pasifika youth offending by utilising the strengths of the Pacific community. These Courts will work as FGC monitoring courts in the same manner as the Rangatahi Courts. Young Pacific people will be dealt with in a culturally appropriate way that upholds the values of the Pacific family and community, and improve outcomes for the youth and the wider Pacific communities (Ministry of Social Development). There are currently two Pasifika Youth Courts in Auckland (Becroft, 2012).

Positive Youth Development Approach

“The field of positive youth development focuses on each and every child’s unique talents, strengths, interests and future potential” (Damon, 2004). The interests of practitioners concerned with increasing the potential of young people from diverse backgrounds and improving their chances for successful outcomes, converged into the “formulation of a set of ideas that enabled youth to be viewed as resources to be developed and not as problems to be managed” (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007, p. 7). The resources needed for youth development was recognised as existing within their homes, schools and their communities, and that development occurred across time. In addition for the healthy growth of youth there needs to be opportunities for young people to participate and contribute within their contexts of resources (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007).

Often traditional approaches focus solely on problems that young people encounter while growing up such as those which include neglect, abuse, drug and alcohol addictions, mental health problems and economic and social depravity (Damon, 2004). In contrast the PYD perspective emphasises the potential of youth rather than their inadequacies, regardless of their family histories and or disadvantaged backgrounds

(Damon, 2004). Though the PYD approach recognises the challenges and the developmental disadvantages encountered and experienced by young people, the focus is not on overcoming these deficits rather it advocates for increased opportunities for young people to be involved in their social environment, build their capacity and contribute positively to their communities (Damon, 2004). Damon describes the aims of the positive youth development approach as:

understanding, educating and engaging children in productive activities, rather than correcting, curing or treating their maladaptive tendencies” (2004, p. 15).

Hamilton, Hamilton & Pittman (2004) describe youth development as an:

...approach emphasizing active support for the growing capacity of young people by individuals, organisations and institutions, especially at the community level... is rooted in a commitment to enabling all young people to thrive” (p. 1).

The authors further describe development as leading to the five Cs: competence, character, connections, confidence and contribution. Competence is described as the knowledge and skills that enable people to navigate and function effectively in their environment, and the ability to achieve goals. Character is the motivation to do “what is just, right and good”. Connections are their social networks. Confidence is the “assuredness a person needs to act effectively” enabling them to “demonstrate, and build competence and character in challenging situation”. Contribution means that a person can use these “attributes not only for self-centred purposes but also to give to others” (Hamilton et al., 2004, p. 3).

Delgado identifies seven overarching themes to the youth development approach (as cited in Collins, 2001, pp. 283-284):

1. An inherent belief in the worth of youths
2. The importance of cultural heritage
3. The importance of young people exercising control over their lives
4. A holistic perspective of assets and needs
5. A belief that young people have innate capacities
6. Community responsibility for youth development

7. A long-range commitment to youths

These themes encourage young people to be reviewed holistically taking into context their culture, age, family background and previous experiences, and be provided with opportunities to capacity build and voice concerns.

The PYD approach in New Zealand is guided by the YDSA; a document developed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs (now known as the Ministry of Youth Development) (MYD) to set out how the government and society can support young people between the ages of twelve to twenty four years to develop competencies needed to actively interact in society now and in the future (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). The document sets out how the government, families and communities can support a young people in their development. It draws on the aspects of the PYD approach and encourages the shift in thinking of youth in terms of their deficits “to understanding young people as partners and contributors”. The Strategy’s vision is “a country where young people are vibrant and optimistic through being supported and encouraged to take challenges” (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007, p. 15). The principles that govern this Strategy are:

1. Youth development is shaped by the ‘big picture’
2. Youth development is about young people being connected
3. Youth development is based on a consistent strength-based approach
4. Youth development happens through quality relationships
5. Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate
6. Youth development needs good information

In addition to the principles the YDSA also has three specific aims and four goals to implement and ensure positive youth development is achieved. These principles, aims and goals contribute towards young people being able to contribute to and feel connected to their society and others; believe they have viable future choices; and building their sense of identity. According to the YDSA the positive youth development approach creates a platform for consistent youth policies and programmes that can facilitate young people to achieve better outcomes, , and increase their capacity by providing opportunities to interact with and influence change in their communities (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007).

In accordance with the PYD approach and the YDSA, the Youth Advisory Group of the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust (WFCT) based in Christchurch, New Zealand developed the Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa framework (PYDA) (Jansen et al., 2010). The PYDA sets out the criteria against which organisations and projects can be assessed whether they appropriately and adequately support youth people. The framework explores the connection between the community and young people and how to improve the interaction between both to foster positive development. It is designed as a best-practice guide for individuals and organisations that work with young people, to encourage and enable them to effectively support youth within the context and culture of New Zealand. This guide is complementary to the YDSA (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007) and its purpose for positive youth development.

Strengths-based and Resiliency Approach

O'Connell (2006) explains the strengths- based approach as:

A positive psychology perspective that emphasises the capabilities and strengths of the individual. It starts with and accentuates the positive... They identify and reveal internal strengths and resources (resiliencies) that exist within an individual, family, or group as they occur in specific problem contexts (p. 2).

The strengths-based approach identifies factors that support and contribute to the happy and productive lives of young people (Barwick, 2004). Barwick (2004) describes this paradigm as identifying positive factors both in the individual and environment that support the healthy development of young people, by building on their strengths. Strengths are defined as those factors such as internal skills, competencies and characteristics that create a sense of accomplishment; capability to build positive relationships with family and peers; the ability to cope with stress; and power to accept responsibly for one's own development (O'Connell, 2006). Services in the strengths-based approach are generally community based, unique to each young person, culturally sensitive, and co-ordinated and collaborated with other agencies, youth and their families (Barton, 2006).

The approach recognizes that each person's development is shaped by a combination of risk and protective factors, either within or beyond their control. Protective factors are identified by the YDSA (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007) as aspects which:

Enhance life opportunities and promote good health and wellbeing. They can reduce the impact of unavoidable negative events and help young people resist risk-taking behaviours (p.20).

In addition the YDSA explains that risk factors “increase the likelihood of difficulties in life and poor health and wellbeing” (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007).

The strengths-based and resiliency approaches are recognised by certain researchers such as O’Connell (2006) and Collins (2001) as complementary to each other. The two approaches emphasise strengths and resources within the person, rather than classifying them according to their problems. The strengths-based approach identifies risk and protective factors that influence youth development, while the resiliency approach emphasises the ability to cope with stress and the capacity to transform and change despite the environment (Collins, 2001; O’Connell, 2006). Despite the positives, researchers fear that the resiliency approach places too much emphasis and expectations on young people to overcome stress and negative experiences with their own capabilities, and not seek support from those around them (O’Connell, 2006).

Arguing against the individualism focused resiliency approach, Ungar (2012, p. 14) defines resilience as “a set of behaviours over time that reflect the interactions between individuals and their environments, in particular the opportunities for personal growth that are available and accessible”. Ungar (2012, p. 17) further describes resilience as a cluster of factors that enable positive development through peoples’ ability to cope with significant adversity, through navigating “their way to the psychological, social and cultural resources that build and sustain their well being, and their individual and collective capacity to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways”. Therefore, it is important to understand the interactions between and within various individual, social, economic and political support systems and, how these services and supports can contribute to create opportunities and risks for young people (Sanders, Munford, & Liebenberg, 2012).

Propp, Ortega and NewHeart (2003) use the empowerment model as a tool when working with youth transitioning out of care. The model places emphasis on the incorporation of youth in the decision making process, where they are in collaboration with and respected by service providers, caseworkers, and social workers. Thus, youth

will have an opportunity to recognise their strengths and capabilities and work towards achievable goals with responsibility, pride and a sense of purpose.

Cultural Frameworks

In New Zealand, there are many different ethnicities represented in the YJ system. In order to effectively interact and work with them, one must be aware of the multiple approaches to a problem. One way of dealing with the problem is being able to incorporate different cultural frameworks in relation to the different ethnicities and identities encountered in the system. The majority of young people in the YJ system in New Zealand represent Polynesian/Pacific Island, Māori or New Zealand Pākehā backgrounds. Therefore the review incorporates several Pacific Island and Māori cultural and theoretical frameworks as a guide to working with ethnic minority youth.

Pacific Frameworks

Pacific people place a high value on cultural identity, and this is seen as “fundamental to the wellbeing and personal growth of clients” (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001, p. 247). An awareness and sensitivity to the Pacific cultures promotes effective social service delivery. The Pacific Island frameworks considered here are: ‘The Cultural Ethnic Model’ and ‘The Cultural Festival Model’ (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001).

The Cultural Ethnic Model discusses the importance of people’s cultures and ethnicities, and the development of one’s own cultural identity and practices (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001). The model encourages people to “identify institutional barriers” that prevent them from exploring their full capabilities, to recognize their cultural strengths and skills and to claim opportunities to “meet their needs and aspirations” (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001, p. 257). This model also “promotes cultural practices that are empowering and restorative in nature” (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001, p. 257). In the YJ context young people can then be provided with an opportunity to “restore peace and harmony” to all those involved in the process.

The Cultural Festival Model is another Pacific framework that emphasises the need to recognize one’s cultural practices and traditions. In this model cultural festivals are highlighted as they are seen as directly linked to the celebration of one’s identity within that culture. The model is already currently being incorporated in New Zealand through

events such as the Pacifica/ Polynesian Festival and the Auckland Secondary Schools Cultural Festival (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001).

Māori Frameworks

Kaupapa Māori emphasises cultural identity, and central to the ideals of the framework is desire to represent and be Māori (Pihama et al., 2002). Kaupapa Māori originates from the Māori context of language, traditions and values. It is generally used in the context of research in the field of education and academic discourse and is increasing used in other fields of study (Mane, 2009). This framework captures Māori as individuals and as “collective members of community, working towards advancing the well being of the collective” (Mane, 2009, p. 1). It focuses on the positive outcomes for those within the community such as whānau, hapū and iwi (family, sub-tribe and tribe), and for Māori as individuals (Mane, 2009). Incorporating the Kaupapa Māori theory can encourage better understanding of the cultural backgrounds and indigenous identities of the young Māori leaving the YJ system.

Working with cultural frameworks promotes positive results as they encourage young people to take pride in themselves, their surroundings and who they are and what they represent. Māoritanga was described by Apirana Ngata as the ability of Māori to maintain their traditional customs and positively and successfully showcase that to Pākehā (Pihama et al., 2002). From this word comes Kaupapa Māori which Mereana Taki describes as “ground rules, customs, and the right way of doing things” (as cited in Pihama et al., 2002, p. 31). Kaupapa Māori comprises of six intervention elements (Pihama et al., 2002) :

1. Tino Rangatiratanga (the self-determination principle)
2. Taonga tuku iho (the cultural aspirations principle)
3. Ako Māori (culturally preferred pedagogy principle)
4. Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga (the socioeconomic mediation principle)
5. Whānau (family structure principle)
6. Kaupapa (the collective philosophy principle).

Kaupapa Māori recommend incorporating one’s identity, community, family and culture when making decisions or seeking solutions to a problem. In this case Kaupapa Māori provides the tools to develop a successful transition plan for indigenous youth

leaving the YJ system. By providing opportunities to connect with community and family, and be involved in decision making, young Māori can assert their identity and critique society and the societal pressures placed on them. In turn this builds capacity in these youth to be more active in their own livelihood and in their community, and ultimately to survive the challenges they face in society (Pihama et al., 2002).

The Mauri Framework incorporated by Leoni (2007) in her thesis on youth leaving care provides a specific approach for working with Māori young people. The framework was used as an evaluation tool to test the levels of mauri regarding the leaving care process for Māori care leavers in New Zealand. Māori identify mauri (life-force) as “the connection with all process”(Leoni, 2007, p. 55). It unites everything and is primary to life. The framework identifies three states of being; mauri moe, mauri oho and mauri ora, and Leoni also mentions another element which is Tihe (Taina & Hariata Pohatu, as cited in (Leoni, 2007). Mauri Moe is the highs and lows experienced by clients (Leoni, 2007). Mauri Oho is the willingness to “move forward” and engage with others to create positive change. Mauri Ora is the state of awareness of personal and group responsibilities and accountabilities (Leoni, 2007, p. 57). It is the ability for an individual to “take responsibility to make necessary improvements where required” (Leoni, 2007, p. 57). These four elements of the Mauri framework can provide guidelines towards working with and improving the current transition practice and processes for YJ youth.

E Tipu E Rea is another Māori framework that was developed from a proverb written by Apirana Ngata. This framework is based on the context of young people, and their development through youth participation (Keelan, 2009). Young people are placed at the centre of planning and development of projects or programmes, and encouraged to be involved in every step of that process. The framework consists of the four main elements; Time and place, Resources, Cultural integrity and spiritual integrity, which are outlined in detail in *Table 2.1: E Tipu E Rea: Guidelines for implementation*. Through this framework, Ngata hoped to encourage young Māori to use all the resources available to them, in order to progress. Also according to Keelan, Ngata advised young Māori to become involved in their culture, and participate actively in a positive way. This created cultural integrity which is an important element of E Tipu E Rea. The last element is spiritual integrity; embracing religion and the concept of God

(Keelan, 2009). These aspects have been incorporated into a Taiohi Māori development framework by Keelan in 2002.

Table 2.1: E Tipu E Rea: Guidelines for implementation (Keelan, 2009)

Time and Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to the here and now of the young people involved. • Uses the space of young people. • Young people involved in deciding on content. • Programme moves at the pace of young people.
Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme resourced to ensure success. • Programme resources suit the needs of the young people involved. • Young people involved in identifying and securing resources.
Cultural integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The culture(s) of young people involved are integrated into the programme. • Young people are encouraged and supported to know about their culture and the cultures of others.
Spiritual integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirituality is integrated into the programme. • Spirituality is regarded as normal. • No one is teased or mocked for their beliefs. • Respect is highly valued as a norm.

Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Offending

Whilst some young people are able to successfully transition from the YJ, others refuse to desist from crime and offending. Research suggests that YJ youth are affected by varying risk and protective factors that either cause them to continue offending or encourage successful transitions (Becroft, 2006). The five main factors outlined in this section are:

1. Family and living situation
2. Peer influence
3. Substance abuse
4. Mental health
5. Education and employment opportunities.

In addition the review includes theoretical frameworks and models mentioned above to explain how these factors impact young people and their transition from YJ.

Family and Living situation:

Youth transitioning out of care are generally discharged back to their families or to independent living depending on their age. This is common practice in New Zealand and in other developed countries (Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Leoni, 2007). In New Zealand, young people are discharged from care and the justice system at the age of seventeen, excluding the few cases who experience extended care till the age of twenty (Ward, 2000; Yates, 2001). Being removed from the child welfare system is carried out regardless of the “young person’s wishes, maturity or readiness for independence” (Ward, 2000, p. 21). While older youth offenders (typically those aging out of the YJ system, around the age of seventeen years) are provided with a choice of independent living, younger adolescents do not enjoy this option and are returned to their family, or extended family or whānau despite their wishes (Altschuler & Brash, 2004).

In the research study conducted with Māori care-leavers Leoni (2007) explained how care leavers generally have a history of abuse and come from multiple placements, with irregular parent contact. According to Fader (2008) poverty, family size, and family disruption are seen as factors that cause a lax in discipline for youth, thus increasing their risk of being involved in crime. Altschuler and Brash (2004) highlight that in most cases the returnee’s family could be in disadvantaged areas; low-socio-economic areas that have high levels of crime and violence. Therefore young people often returned to environments with stressors that previously encouraged their offending behaviour.

Most young people, including those from the justice system rely heavily on family or adult care-givers for their emotional, social and financial support. Therefore family plays an integral part in the development of an adolescent. Youth originating from troubled backgrounds and have experienced traumatic events such as family disruption, multiple placements and abuse, resulting in mental health problems face far greater disadvantages during the transition process (Southerland, Casanueva, & Ringeisen, 2009). Young people who had experienced maltreatment in adolescence were more likely to continue to have criminal involvement in adulthood and the lack of family (adult) support resulted in discontinued education and employment opportunities.

Therefore the young person is stuck in a vicious victim cycle due to their social circumstances (Southerland et al., 2009).

Researchers Gatti, Tremblay and Vitaro (2009) conducted a study in Canada with male youth participants aged ten and followed them through to the age of seventeen. The study used questionnaires to investigate the negative effects of the justice system on young people and uncovered that parental supervision and family income were negatively correlated to predictors of adult crime. Low parental supervision during early adolescence was also a factor in predicting criminal records in adulthood. The results highlighted that even a single stable guardian proved as a protective factor that enabled young people to successfully transition and desist from offending.

In addition family history has shown to affect how long a young person will resist offending. An Australia study conducted by Denning and Homel (2008) examined case files on YJ youth and discovered that clients who were subject to a child protection notification as children were more likely to re-offend than those who had not. It was also found that those youth with unresolved family problems “were hundred and nine percent (109%) more likely to recidivate than those whose family issues were identified and addressed” by social services (Denning & Homel, 2008, p. 201). The study further emphasised the need to engage families in decision making and counselling process. “The probability of high-risk offender recidivating dropped from ninety six percent (96%) to fifty five percent (55%) when their family problems were addressed” (Denning & Homel, 2008, p. 207). Therefore by addressing family issues YJ youth had greater chances of achieving positive transition outcomes.

Maxwell et al (2004) a New Zealand research project that investigated the practices of FGC and their impact on youth outcomes highlighted that of the 1003 youth involved in one of the studies about forty seven percent (47%) of them had previously been notified to CYF for care and protection reasons, while of those eighteen percent (18%) had a referral for a FGC. Moreover many youth who are involved with the justice system have previous involvement with CYF or the State, and many of the risk & protective factors are often similar between these groups of young people. Research shows that there are high rates of offending among children and youth who have previously been in care. A care and welfare background increases the risk of youth offending by ten to thirty five (10-35) times compared to the rest of the youth population (Robertson, 2009).

These findings highlight the need for family empowerment and support to ensure young people are provided with benevolent placements that can contribute towards successful outcomes.

A New Zealand study by Ward (2000) conducted with care-leavers highlighted that young people were nervous about living independently, as they were generally underprepared or equipped for life “after care”. Similarly in a qualitative study conducted by Yates (2001) on New Zealand care-leavers it was identified that though government service standards advocated for care-leavers to be adequately prepared in terms of skills for successful transitions from the system, this was not the case and many young people were discharged regardless of their social and emotional development. Similarly, Ward (2000) identified that young people leaving care lacked readiness and preparation for independent living. The study highlighted that sixty three percent (63%) of the youth transitioning out of care had no mention of independent living skills development in their care plans and seventy one percent (71%) of the youth had no record of independent skills training. She also noted that these young people were highly vulnerable; ninety four percent (94%) had behavioural, emotional and developmental needs, and about thirty seven percent (37%) had diagnosed disorders (Ward, 2000).

Mendes and Moslehuddin (2003) highlighted that young people who live with “regular” families transition out of home only in their early 20s, and experience long transition periods with continued emotional, social and financial support. Yet State-cared for youth were expected to successfully and suddenly transition to independence and adulthood once they reached the age of discharge (Gil-Kashiwabara, Hogansen, Geenen, Powers, & Powers, 2007). Ward (2000), Yates (2001) and Leoni (2007) recommended the extending government support for young people leaving State care to the age of 20, when they are less vulnerable and able to support themselves better. Steinberg, Chung & Little (2004) researched the re-entry process from the developmental perspective and stated that in order for a successful transition young people need “adequate maturity” to take on adult like responsibilities. The review focused on how young people could develop maturity through psycho-social capital, which is described as the ability to “create and take advantage of positive life experiences” (Steinberg et al., 2004, p. 24).

Many young people leaving care or the justice system have very few positive experiences, as a result of which they are inadequately prepared for independent living. Research on the re-entry process of youth identified that youth who encountered inadequate family support, and difficulties with living independently experienced isolation and insecurity once they have “graduated” from the system’s care (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). According to Leoni (2007) both Pākehā and Māori care-leavers who were provided with support services during their transitions phase were more likely to have better outcomes in the community.

In addition Wiseman (2008) expressed the need to lobby for more support services such as living skills training, programmes and courses to educate young people both pre and post release from the justice system. Visser and Travis (2003) conducted a study with adult prisoners in the United States of America and identified that the provision of social services facilitated a smooth transition process. Collins (2001) also examined the impact of independent living skills training, such as budgeting, credit, consumer skills, education and employment skills, and found a positive correlation to successful transition.

A study conducted by Abrams, Shannon and Sangalang (2007) in a correctional institution in the United States of America, evaluated the benefits and limitations of a transitional living programme using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study found that transitional living programmes did not have an effect on reducing recidivism for incarcerated youth or preventing involvement with their prior lives. Despite the limitations the findings provide programme developers with insight into the transitional process of young offenders (Abrams et al., 2007). Moreover the study highlighted that providing sufficient and effective programmes and support are vital in ensuring successful transitions of marginalised youth from adolescence into adulthood. Youth involved with the YJ system face many challenges, and providing community support and living and social skills development can help solve some of the problems faced by them during the re-entry process (Abrams et al., 2007).

According to the YDSA young people need to be provided with opportunities for decision making especially when those decisions affect their own lives (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). The YDSA also recognises that youth need to be supported throughout their decision making process, learn appropriate skills to cope with the

challenges and be provided good information, to reduce the risk of making uninformed decisions (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). Though many organisations recognise the importance of youth participation, they are also quick to hold young people responsible if they make mistakes (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007). A component in E Tipu E Rea is encouraging young people to use the resources that are available to them and in doing so youth benefit from, and subsequently contribute to their own well-being (Keelan, 2009).

Propp, Ortega, and NewHeart (2003) conducted a research review on the concept of self-sufficiency, and independence in relation to youth transitioning out of care. Due to the limitations of independent living, the researchers recommended an altered approach to the transition process called 'interdependent living'. This approach would allow young people the freedom to work alongside adults and be able to request for support when they were unable to deal with certain challenges (Propp et al., 2003). According to the YDSA young people need to be connected and supported within their social environments, which are their families, peers, community, school and work to develop positively (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). A partnership approach can ensure that YJ youth stay connected and supported to take responsibility for their development during their YJ transitions. Furthermore in recognition of The Cultural Ethnic Model minority youth need to be provided with culturally appropriate possibilities towards independent or inter-dependant living in order to fully develop their capabilities.

Peer Influence:

The influence of peers on YJ youth during their transition from YJ can be both negative and positive, depending on each individual's peer group. Youth offenders generally seek out other deviant peers, who reinforce anti-social behaviour, which can often cause stress to parent-child relationships and affect family bonding and the rejection of prosocial peers (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Visher and Travis (2003) emphasised that new relationships and positive peer relationships enabled adult prisoners to avoid their former lives. Though the study is about adult prisoners, youth are likely to experience a similar positive correlation with crime avoidance and positive peers.

A recent study on social interactions of youth in their transition phase, conducted by Barry (2010) found that during adolescence young people who lacked appropriate social support sought other social networks such as their friends to provide for this need. In

order to gain friendships often youth with troubled backgrounds involved themselves in offending, starting with petty theft to impress their friends, which further develops into a routine (Barry, 2010). During the transition phase from adolescence to adulthood women were less likely to re-offend than men, and the motivation to desist was greater when offending meant jeopardizing relationships with family and friends (Barry, 2010).

Abrams (2006) conducted a qualitative study on youth perspectives of the various challenges encountered in the transition process and the coping methods they used. Nearly all of the young people rarely made new connections and mostly reunited with their old friends and family despite knowing the risks involved. This finding was also replicated by Abrams et al. (2007). Abrams (2006) also stated that in certain cases youth offenders who reconnected with their previous peer groups had learnt to handle those relationships differently and chose to be less involved with the illegal activities of their peers post-juvenile justice involvement.

A young person with strained family ties is very likely to seek out old peers, and thus experience a greater risk of recidivism. The risk of youth returning to their old lives is greatly reduced if connections can be made with prosocial peers or nurturing and attentive adults (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). The Cultural Ethnic Model advocates linking young people with their cultural roots, and providing options to develop their cultural identity, thereby allowing adolescents to connect positively to their social environment and community (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001). As social networks are a crucial source of support for youth, providing positive support and peer networks during the transition phase will greatly increase their chances of successful transitions into adulthood and in society (Barry, 2010).

Young people transitioning out of the justice system lack basic communication skills and extended stay in institutionalized settings can only further hamper social skills. Abrams (2006) described the greatest challenge that youth offenders faced during the transition process was “old friends and influences”. The study identified that YJ young people experienced difficulties in making new friends, and consequently reunited with old peer groups and gangs despite the risks in those relationships. Research has identified that the grouping of high risk youth tends to increase the likelihood of recidivism as they reinforce one another’s deviancy (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). However mixing marginalised youth with prosocial peers creates support networks for

youth offenders and encourages maintaining prosocial behaviour (Singh & White, 2000). In addition Singh and White (2000) recommended providing youth offenders with social and cognitive skills training on how to interact in social settings, and communicate with different people, and introduce them to “alternative thought and reasoning processes. For example new ways of working through problems or strategies for self control” (2000, p. 47). Problem solving, empathy, assertive communication, and dealing with difficulties are intended programme outcomes, which may reduce recidivism.

Furthermore Singh and White (2000) identified various interventions to reduce youth offending in New Zealand. Youth mentoring and providing positive role models were highlighted as effective interventions for working with Māori youth. Mentoring programmes paired ‘at-risk-youth’ with an adult mentor, who would act as a role model and provide supervision to the young person. In New Zealand, CYF encourages mentoring programmes such as ‘Big Brother/ Big Sister’, due to their promising results in terms of reducing reoffending, and improving life outcomes (Singh & White, 2000). Research findings from the United States of America that emphasise the positive short term results with mentoring programmes, including youth involved in mentoring programmes reported high satisfaction ratings, less involvement with drugs, alcohol, weapons and gangs, and avoided fights (Bilchik, as cited in Singh & White, 2000). Mentoring is based on the strengths-based paradigm; mentors identify and mirror back to the young person the strengths and capabilities they possess. Mentors spend time and listen to their mentee, thus building rapport and helping create self-worth and positive expectations in young people (O’Connell, 2006).

An American study conducted by Bouffard and Bergseth (2008) examined the preliminary process and outcomes indicators of a juvenile offender re-entry program with a mentoring component using electronic and database client files. The study reported that mentoring activities contributed to the effectiveness of programmes for young people, and also increased the chances of successful transition due to the prosocial bonds established and strengthened through mentoring (Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008). Research has identified that mentoring has positive effects such as the improvement of grades, school attendance and social skills for young people who are involved in the justice system and are at-risk of delinquency (Waller, Houchin, & Nomvete, 2010).

Another initiative suggested in a recent study was the need for a transition specialist. These specialists were recommended to “provide interactions that stress self-determination, social skills training, and developing a set of services based on the needs and strengths of the youth” (Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009, p. 290). Therefore the transition specialist would serve to be a point of contact for the young person during and after their transition from YJ. In addition the service provided by these transition specialists was recommended to be long-term and maintain regular follow up to ensure that youth receive continued support, engagement and involvement in the community (Unruh et al., 2009).

Substance Abuse:

The use of alcohol and drugs is extremely common among young adolescents, and research has acknowledged its link with youth crime (Becroft, 2009a). In New Zealand about eighty percent (80%) of the young people appearing in court had alcohol or drug dependency or abuse issues (Becroft, 2009c). More than half the youth in an American study were under the influence of alcohol or drugs when they committed crimes (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). This research also identified that numerous youth offenders fail to receive sufficient treatment for alcohol and drug addictions, and subsequently return to their cycle of substance abuse and offending. Altschuler and Brash (2004) recommended that youth offenders received continued service and treatment to prevent relapse, and to increase their chances of positive outcomes.

Most drug and alcohol services are based on adult treatment models and there is a need for youth specialised drug programmes. Becroft (2009) discussed this need in regard to its importance in New Zealand. At present Christchurch offers youth offenders a specialized Youth Drug Court which is “designed to enhance collaborative multi agency work with young offenders” (2009a, p. 16). Becroft further states that in general there is a need for more community based youth-specific drug and alcohol services made widely available.

Another youth specific initiative that currently exists for youth in Auckland is Community Action on Youth and Drug (CAYAD); a service that connects various community organisations and youth agencies to attain common developmental outcomes. The programme provides education and awareness to the harm created by

drugs and alcohol, and encourages communities to take responsibility for their youth (2010). CAYAD aims to increase community awareness about drug and alcohol issues, evaluate current policies and practices to develop best-practice and facilitate youth voice and discussion on reducing drug related harm (2010).

CAYAD ensure that through their service they encourage positive youth development, as their focus is on resiliency and community connectedness. Their objectives are derived from the Kaupapa Māori framework. A holistic approach is used when working with youth: vital support systems such as families and the community are encouraged to take more responsibility both in education and addressing drug and alcohol effects, and its potential harm both on the individual and those surrounding them. It is programme that should be provided to YJ young people, presenting indicators for future substance abuse and to those youth requiring support during their transition.

Berzin (2010) recommends services to embrace a collaborative approach between agencies locally, regionally and nationally. Therefore providing a unified and cohesive youth approach, across various organisations. Though there are a few organisations that deliver services in accordance to this recommendation, but there is a need for other services to follow suit.

Chung, Schubert & Mulvey (2007) conducted a research study to examine the re-entry process of serious adolescent offenders in two American metropolitan cities, with four hundred and thirteen (413) young people. The research highlighted the lack of participation of youth offenders in community based services post justice system involvement (Chung et al., 2007). The figures were much lower for older youth and those from minority cultures. The reason behind such low participation statistics could be attributed to the mainstream approach to the services provided.

According to the Cultural Ethnic Model services should be culturally sensitive, and individualised delivery of these services is recommended to have positive and successful outcomes for Pacific youth (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001). Moreover the Mauri Model recognises that individuals need to consciously want to change their circumstances, and work towards positive change (Leoni, 2007). Young people with drug addictions need to consciously make a decision to change, and resources and programmes provided should be designed to meet their specific needs (Keelan, 2009).

Barwick (2004) emphasised family and community based drug education as highly effective in reducing drug-related harm. More research is needed to further understand substance abuse among youth offenders, and specialized targeted services need to be developed in order to ensure the successful transition of young people from the justice system. Youth drug and alcohol services need to incorporate a consistent PYD approach and also adapt cultural components when designing programmes, to cater for the large representation of Māori and Pacific Islanders within YJ (Becroft, 2009a; Leoni, 2007).

Mental Health:

The prevalence of mental illness among youth offenders is extremely high. About eighty percent (80%) are estimated to have less serious mental disorders such as conduct disorder, attention deficit disorder, and mood and anxiety disorders (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). The emotional effects of abuse in early childhood predispose youth towards psychological problems, such as depression, disruptive behaviour and suicide (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2003). Sullivan (2004) identified many instances where institutionalised youth offenders rarely show signs of mental illness outwardly but have or were later diagnosed with mental health problems. About one third of the Ward's (2000) care leavers sample had diagnosed disorders, and about ninety one percent (91%) had received mental health services during their time in care. Southerland et al. (2009) found transitioning youth with the risk of mental health problems were more likely to re-offend, and were at a greater risk of criminal involvement.

Most young people receive treatment and support whilst involved in the YJ system, but research has found that 'aftercare' services for these youth are minimal (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). In addition the failure to continue treatment and medication, and restricted access to health care often cause a relapse in mental illness in young offenders and in certain cases may even worsen (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). The successful transition of youth with mental health concerns requires intensive and continued mental health services. In addition young people require specialised youth mental health services as being involved in the adult system can pose many barriers for youth, and (Southerland et al., 2009). The study also recommended more age appropriate services that transition youth can easily access.

Interpersonal skills training and individualized cognitive-behavioural counselling were identified as the most successful at reducing recidivism rates among youth with mental health concerns (Altschuler & Armstrong, 2002). According to Mulitalo-Lauta (2001) services need to be culturally sensitive and engage families and communities, in their cultural context. Therefore, mental health services must recognise the context in which young people come from, their culture, language and traditions, and provide support accordingly. Through The Cultural Ethnic Model young people and those working with them will find the processes “safe, restorative, rehabilitative and empowering” (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001, p. 258).

Counselling services are encouraged for transitioning youth offenders to provide emotional support and guidance. Also early identification of mental health needs and introduction to community-based services along with treatment has proved to reduce youth offending behaviour during their transition phase (Unruh et al., 2009). Therefore further research is needed to replicate these findings, and more specialized services developed and implemented to capacity build youth offenders in New Zealand. A nationwide mental health service for youth is required and yet to be developed in New Zealand, thus further research specific to this field is essential (Becroft, 2009a; Yates, 2001).

Education & Employment:

Many youth offenders “function well below their age appropriate grade level in school” with many being “functionally illiterate” (Harlow, as cited in Barton, 2006, p. 50). Youth with justice system involvement functioned below average academically and had higher rates of academic failure and repeating grades compared to the non-youth justice counterparts (Layton, Anrdern, & Lee, 2010, p. 27). Youth offenders face many challenges in regards to educational achievement. These include lack of appropriate schooling during YJ involvement; difficulties in school enrolment after leaving the justice system; school being a precipitating factor for or location of prior offending; returning to community in the middle of an academic year; unstable and disjointed schooling (Barton, 2006). Serious youth offenders are reported to have no significant or meaningful engagement with educational programmes (Becroft, 2009a), which puts them in a much worse predicament than those with minor youth offending histories. Disruptions in living situation and schooling hinder success at school and also have further consequences for delinquency (Osgood, Foster, & Courtney, 2010). Moreover

limited education reduced employment opportunities for YJ youth and this often affected their living circumstances. As a result according to Osgood et al. (2010) several young people live in poverty, struggle financially to pay expenses, depend on State support, are homeless, involved in criminal activity or incarcerated in prisons.

Research states that youth offenders demonstrate less commitment to education (Chung et al., 2007). In New Zealand the estimated number of young people disengaged from the educational system ranges between thousand to three thousand (1000-3000) youth (Becroft, 2009a, p. 14). Literature has consistently found that youth offenders are academically underachievers and very few complete high school or go on to further education (Wiseman, 2008). Wiseman (2008) reported that only one third of youth aged nineteen who had been in care graduated from high school. Researchers have identified that young people in the YJ system have needs that vary from the general school population. Foster care and YJ youth generally lack stability in placements, which then affects their continuity in schooling. They were more likely to experience stigma teenage pregnancy, truancy, expulsion and enrolment refusals (Sullivan, 2004; Ward, 2000).

In a New Zealand study of youth from two juvenile prisons researchers found that about ninety two percent (91.67%) of detained youth had at least one learning disability (LD) (Rucklidge, McLean, & Bateup, 2009). The study stated that LDs were more pronounced in prison populations than the general population. Moreover reading comprehension was the strongest predictor of future offending and anti-social behaviour among incarcerated youth than other tests of reading ability (such as spelling or word reading) (Rucklidge et al., 2009). Youth with learning difficulties were more likely to experience school failure and less likely to succeed in employment and other aspects of life in society. Therefore, the study recommended youth in the justice system be routinely assessed and incorporating interventions that target their LDs, to ensure they attain the best possible outcomes (Rucklidge et al., 2009). The YDSA states that being engaged in school and feeling positive about their education can increase the chances of youth performing well in other area of their lives, especially at work (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). Therefore with increased school engagement YJ youth can better connect with their community and develop skills to greatly increase their chance for positive outcomes.

Not only do youth offenders lack age-appropriate education they also lack adequate job skills and thus face considerable difficulty obtaining jobs during the transition process. A year on from the study, Ward reported that of the seventy one percent (71%) (25) of the sample who had left school, only four percent (4%) (1) were employed full-time, eleven percent (11%) (4) were on pre-employment courses, while fifty seven percent (57%) (20) were unemployed (Ward, 2000, p. 24). Though these are statistics of care leavers, due to the similarities in the populations this can possibly be an area of concern with YJ youth.

In countries such as in the United States of America and the United Kingdom the criminal records of youth offenders may exclude them from certain jobs, and disadvantage their search for employment (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). In New Zealand this is not the case; youth offenders not involved in the District Courts do not possess a record that is available to the general public or to employers (2002).

Altschuler and Brash (2004) looked at the various factors that affected the transition of young offenders away from crime and into adulthood and recommend educational, and actual work experience programmes to those transitioning from the justice system. This in turn will ensure that young people can function to their full potential, and be able to positively develop aftercare. According to the strengths-based approach a single positive adult outside the circle of family and friends can successfully motivate and engage high-risk youth (O'Connell, 2006). O'Connell (2006) identified that for most youth this positive adult was usually a teacher or mentor. Therefore more training opportunities should be provided for teachers and mentors who work with YJ youth or teach in disadvantaged neighbourhoods to sufficiently empower them with skills needed to effectively work with these youth populations.

Young people often are cut off from services and the system once they are eighteen, and with limited life skills they have much less chances of being successful in society (Ward, 2000; Yates, 2001). Tweddle (2007) suggests that extended services need to be provided especially in the health and financial sectors, and the pathways to education and employment training made easier to pursue. Visser and Travis (2003) identified that employed and engaged adult offenders were less likely to commit crimes. According to a study conducted by Berzin (2010) system involved youth, such as those with history of being in the child welfare system and now the justice system fare worse

or are more vulnerable compared to those who have no involvement. Most system-involved youth lack resiliency due to their previous negative experiences. Yet, resiliency can be rebuilt in young people with encouragement, “intellectual development, future outlook, and parent-child relationship” (Berzin, 2010). Therefore to build resilience among YJ youth and to reduce the effects of their negative experiences they need to be adequately prepared and provided with support, education and vocational training opportunities in consultation with the young person and their family.

In relation to The Cultural Festival Model explained by Mulitalo-Lauta (2001), and the Mauri Model (Leoni, 2007) minority youth who are interested in learning more about their culture and associated practices should be encouraged to participate in cultural events and festivals to not only engage with other culturally similar youth but also to develop their own identity (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001). Providing such opportunities will allow youth offenders to be more engaged and even possibly give them an avenue to continue participation and thus reduce the risk of re-offending.

Furthermore the involvement of employers early in the lives of the youth may help break some of the stigma experienced by young offenders (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Barwick (2004) suggested that certain principles needed to be incorporated for employment programmes to be effective. These included the importance of relationship building, longer intensity and duration of programmes, involving family during certain stages of the programme, and relevance to the young person and future focus. If the above suggestions are taken into consideration while developing education and employment programmes, the success rates for youth transitioning into the work force could be significant.

Conclusion

The review examined various research literature on the transition process of youth involved in the justice system. Approaches such as the PYD, and the strengths-based and resiliency approaches were recommended due to their focus on the strengths of the young person rather than on the traditional deficit models, which are problem focused. These approaches promote the positives, capabilities and strengths within the young person and their environments while, supporting them to build their capacity to achieve positive outcomes.

Pacific and Māori frameworks were used to better understand particular issues and provide recommendations when working with Māori and Pacific YJ youth. The Pacific frameworks referred to were The Cultural Ethnic Model and The Cultural Festival Model which recognise the cultural context of and the development of young people's identity (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2001). According to the Pacific approach young people are identified through their cultural norms and practices. This is similar to Kaupapa Māori where being Māori is celebrated, and is central to young people's identity (Pihama et al., 2002). The Mauri Model recognises the experiences of young people leaving the system, their personal attitude towards change, and their awareness of their responsibilities. In addition E Tipu E Rea places young people in the centre of the discussion, it encourages the involvement of young people in decision making processes and the development of programmes that suit their needs (Keelan, 2009).

The transition experience of YJ youth can be affected by various factors identified in research as risk and protective factors, which can either hinder or support this process. The five risk and protective factors identified in the review were family, peer influence, mental health, substance abuse, education and employment. The review highlighted that YJ youth lack age-appropriate development and skills compared to those who do not come from a justice system background. Often youth were discharged from the system with limited to no skills and without formal support, despite their wishes or level of maturity. Furthermore, YJ youth generally were ill-prepared, lacked positive family and peer support, required education and employment skills training, and in many instance failed to receive mental health and substance abuse aftercare. As a result of these disadvantages the majority of youth offenders faced unsuccessful transition processes. Though New Zealand provides programmes to benefit YJ youth during their process there are still areas that can be improved. Thus further research in this field is necessary to gain a better understanding of the factors that impact YJ youth during their transition, and to provide recommendations for improving the transition process.

CHAPTER 3

Research Design

Introduction

This chapter will begin with the researcher clarifying the difference between methods and methodologies for the benefit of the reader. The difference between methods and methodologies is best explained the research completed by Mato (2011). Methods is described as the way data is collected, whilst methodologies is the underlying principles behind research approaches and frameworks. Methodology also determines the methods or techniques researchers use for their data collection and analysis (Mato, 2011). Based on this knowledge the researcher discusses and demonstrates the research methods and methodologies used to execute this research.

The chapter will provide an explanation of the methodological approaches of the current research, highlighting the qualitative research methodology, PAR approach and the PYD approach outlined in the YDSA. The chapter starts with a description of qualitative research methodology and some New Zealand and international research studies that incorporated this approach. It is followed by a brief discussion of the concept mapping tool and interview research methods. The chapter then provides an overview of how the YDSA framework was incorporated into the research. Next the researcher describes the participant selection (sampling) and sampling processes used. This is followed by an explanation of the themes focused on during the workshops and interviews. Data analysis will then be reviewed followed by the issues encountered during the research. Finally the ethical considerations taken for the research will be provided.

Aim, hypothesis and methodology

The main aim of the research was to understand the transition process of YJ youth and investigate the various factors that impact YJ youth transitions. In addition recommendations to improve the YJ transition process will be made as a result of the findings. The research also examines the people who are involved during YJ transitions and the extent to which young people are partners in the decision making process about their future. This is extremely important as youth participation is at the centre of this research project. The participants in the research were two separate groups: young

people between fourteen to nineteen years of age, who had prior YJ involvement and professionals who at some stage had worked with YJ youth. The professional staff included alternative education transition workers, teachers, mentors and an ex-YJ case worker. The professionals were involved in a semi-structured interview process, whilst the young people were involved in a concept mapping workshop. The data collected from both these groups, provided great insight and a wide spectrum of opinions into the processes that youth undergo when they get involved with the youth justice system in New Zealand.

Qualitative research methodology

Qualitative research is “an approach that allows you to examine people’s experiences in detail, by using specific sets of research methods such as in-depth interview, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods and life histories or biographies” (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). In addition qualitative research uses “strategies to gather data and... is based on the assumptions that reality is socially constructed and variables are complex and difficult to measure” (Johnston, 2010, p. 188). Johnston (2010) also states that qualitative research is best interpreted within its context. According to Gilgun (2005, p. 40) qualitative methodologies are “useful for understanding meanings that human beings attribute to events in their lives and, through discourse analysis, can aid in understanding intersections of cultural themes and practices and individual lives”.

In recent years qualitative researchers have acknowledged the importance of the cultural contexts of participants, and the cultural bias of qualitative research methods that are derived from western contexts (Munford, Oka, & Desai, 2009). Most importantly the difference lies in whether the research is conducted in an individualist or collectivist culture as that will determine the methods used for data collection, analysis and dissemination of findings. Munford et al. (2009) highlights the importance of cultural context on research practice and the need to include cultural knowledge into the research process. Munford et al. (2009, p. 422) also further urges researchers to be “mindful of their research practice and protocols” to ensure that the research does not undermine local and cultural knowledge, and the participants’ have authority over “how their voices are to be heard and their stories are to be told”.

Through the concept mapping workshops the researcher intends to provide an opportunity for YJ youth to voice their opinions on YJ transitions and suggest recommendations towards improving this process. The reason for conducting qualitative research was because the lives of young people are best understood if they can describe their experiences in their own words. This is based on the researcher's belief that first-hand information would be more effectively expressed in qualitative research than if participants had to reduce their experiences to mere numbers or to rate their opinions on certain topics, which are common quantitative research methods. According to Ungar (2004, p. 359) qualitative research methods "increase the volume of marginalized voices to produce thick enough descriptions of lives lived... and to challenge researcher standpoint bias that orients findings toward an adult-centric perspective". Moreover, qualitative research allows participants a certain amount of freedom to talk about aspects they deem important.

New Zealand studies

A research project based on the YJ system in New Zealand is the study conducted by Maxwell et. al (2004). The research used a mixed methods approach which included the use of surveys, interviews, observations and data files on the youth participants involved in the study. There were four studies that encompassed the research; the retrospective study collected data from one thousand and three cases (1003) cases of young people who had Family Group Conferences (FGC) through the Social Work information system (SWis) and interviewed over half of the youth, while the prospective study observed the practice of YJ co-ordinators and provided information on one hundred and fifteen (115) cases from the retrospective study, and young people, families and victims were interviewed. The study also explored how to increase understanding of best practices for working with Māori and Pacific youth and their families.

The two New Zealand youth transition studies that incorporated qualitative research methodologies were conducted by Yates (2001) and Leoni (2007), which involved the interview method. Though these studies researched transitions of youth leaving statutory care they have still been included due to similarities between YJ and statutory care youth.

Yates (2001) conducted a qualitative research study with eight Pākehā care leavers: six young women and two young men, aged between sixteen and twenty, who had left care. Yates used the narrative interview method, to focus on their accounts of the care and leaving care experience. The data was then analysed against the principles of the CYPF Act 1989 (s13) and in terms of the protective and risk factors that exist in young people's lives (Yates, 2001).

The study completed by Leoni (2007) looked at the transition process of Māori youth from foster care in New Zealand. Leoni conducted interviews with seven Māori who had left foster care and one who was transitioning out of care at the time of the study, and ten professionals and community members who had worked with or were involved with care-leavers. The data was analysed using the Mauri framework.

Overseas experience

There are studies conducted in the United States of America and the United Kingdom about youth leaving the YJ system, and their life after care. Sullivan (2004) used case studies of seven young men who were based around New York City, and some of whom he had known since their childhood. Each case study was analysed for specific challenges that each of these young people faced in education, employment, mental health, substance abuse and building social relationships. Sullivan (2004) considers the perspectives of incarcerated youth, who were re-entering the community and discusses the various challenges faced by them. The study then used their opinions and experiences as recommendations to improve outcomes for these young people.

A study involving qualitative methodology when working with youth was conducted by Abrams (2006). The study conducted semi-structured interviews with ten youth who were released from a "twelve month therapeutic-correctional institution". The study sought to understand through young people's perspective the challenges they faced over the course of their transition period after release from a juvenile justice facility. The participants were interviewed in three stages from pre-release to three to six (3-6) months post-release. The young people stated that they had faced challenges in daily situations such as jobs, transportation, school, and trying to stay away from old peers and influences. The interviews were able to capture the various areas in which young people themselves thought they struggled during their transition. It highlighted their mental journey from being in the facility to post-release and how they fared in the

community. Their experiences were highlighted as recommendations for improvement in the transition of these young people.

Concept mapping method

As mentioned earlier in the previous chapter (Chapter 2) Massey University is conducting a nation-wide youth transition research project. Due to the similarity in topic, the current research supervisor, Dr Teorongonui Josie Keelan, and the researcher contacted the researchers at Massey University, Robyn Munford and Jackie Sanders for some suggestions. They suggested using either a community or concept mapping method with the youth participants.

According to Chun and Springer (2005) concept mapping is:

A pictorial representation of the groups' thinking which displays all of the ideas of the group relative to the topic at hand, shows how these ideas are related to each other, and optionally, shows which ideas are more relevant, important, or appropriate... data are generated from participants' own words, and maps are interpreted regarding the meaning of phenomenon in the actual context (p. 60).

The idea for using the concept mapping method with young people was to encourage them to express themselves in ways they were most comfortable to share information.

Young people are more likely to participate actively if they were provided with less traditional methods such as questions-answer interviews (Chun & Springer, 2005; Sanders & Munford, 2005). Sanders & Munford (2005) conducted research with young people to encourage them to discuss policies and practices that affected them, and understand their experiences. The research incorporated methodological debates over which approaches were effective in ensuring youth inclusion. The research explored the ways young people reflected and described their experiences, opinions and suggestions on how organisations facilitated effective approaches to youth participation (Sanders & Munford, 2005). The researchers stated that different youth engage and respond differently to different techniques and so a combination of methods can encourage them to share their experiences in ways appropriate to them (Sanders & Munford, 2005). The study also stated that young people were more likely to participate if they were actively involved, rather than if it was a traditional interview process. Hence through approaches such as eco maps, city maps and life stories/narratives the researchers were

able to engage youth in the data collection and analysis stages of the research. The eco maps helped identify the people came in contact with regularly, while the city maps provided the physical location for these experiences and the daily life story mapped the way they experienced a day from start to finish. The qualitative process allowed the young people to decide the course of the interview, choosing to expand and elaborate where they saw essential, rather than be limited to the areas of the researcher's interest (Sanders & Munford, 2005).

In a study conducted by Amsden and VanWynsberghe (2005) community mapping was adopted as a research tool to engage the youth participants. Community mapping is defined as a:

Visual and relational data-gathering technique that can be used to document not just geographical, but also other forms of abstract data (Amsden & VanWynsberghe, 2005, p. 361).

The research embraced the PAR approach (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008; Rodríguez & Brown, 2009), where the research collaborates with “the population under investigation, with the goal of action or intervention into the issues or problems being studied” (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009, p. 1). PAR is based on the belief that in order to best understand social issues the information should be acquired from those affected by them and is most often used in research with “disenfranchised populations” and conducting research with socially marginalized youth to investigate social and educational problems. According to Rodriguez & Brown (2009, p. 5):

PAR despite its challenges, is a vital approach to understanding and addressing challenges that marginalized youth face and helping them to build their own capacity for transforming their lives.

When young people are consulted and included in making decisions on issues that affect their lives, they are capacity built to contribute to society and social environments. Facilitating such opportunities ultimately leads to community empowerment and development. In Amsden and VanWynsberghe (2005) the maps created by the young people were used to determine community assets, the importance youth placed on these areas, and how they interacted with their community. This helped create a picture of that community and highlighted areas where and which services were working well, or not.

It also provided a picture of how young people perceived and interacted with the world around them.

Children's drawings and art work have been used in research in psychology and psychotherapy, but relatively fewer studies in other disciplines. However in recent years incorporating drawing and narrative in child and youth research has been recognised as it allows for young people to be "engaged holistically, creatively and practically in an activity that connects with the imagination", and "provides an opportunity to represent experience" (Leitch, 2008, p. 39). Combined with verbal narrative research methods, the "drawer" can give voice to what the drawing is intended to represent (Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith, & Campbell, 2011).

PAR has been instrumental in providing "insights into the experiences and perceptions of youth, from which adult researchers are distanced" (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009, p. 6). In addition, PAR provides marginalised youth opportunities to participate in processes they are less likely to be involved in, and can be an "educative, developmental, and empowering process in which they critically examine and confront their everyday challenges, and can help to prepare them as efficacious, positive change agents" (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009, p. 7). Allowing them to engage and participate actively in research encourages the process and helps break down stereotypes of research being a boring activity conducted by adults (Amsden & VanWynsberghe, 2005). Qualitative research understands the importance of people's lived experience and the act of building social and relational meaning to their existence. The YDSA states that young people are shaped by their social surroundings and the interactions (with people and places) within these environments (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). Furthermore, providing them with an opportunity to voice their opinions allows adults to be aware of aspects which need attention or support, and most importantly it embraces youth as a vital part of our community and our future.

Interview method

Interviews in social research are seen as "a means for collecting empirical data about the social world of individuals by inviting them to talk about their lives in great depth" (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 42). In-depth interviews capture "the insider perspective", in the "participants' own words, their thoughts, perceptions, feelings and experiences" (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 43). Interviews are structured according to the questions being

asked, the wording, and the order (Mato, 2011). Interviews can either be unstructured, in-depth or semi-structured. Unstructured interviews have a broad focus and explore the same issues across the research sample but vary the wording and their sequence between interviews. Semi-structured interviews involve the interviewer asking the same key questions in the same order each time for all interviews and sometimes probe for further information (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The in-depth semi-structured interview process was chosen for this research as it gave the researcher flexibility to probe where necessary and also allow the participant to describe their life experiences and articulate world-views freely rather than be confined to a structured, researcher dictated interview (Liamputtong, 2009). This process was only used for the professionals who were involved in the research, as they were more likely to be comfortable with one-on-one in-depth interviews.

Incorporating the YDSA framework

The YDSA encourages “young people to develop skills and attitudes they need to take part positively in society, now and in the future” and it shifts “our thinking from the old focus on youth problems to an understanding of young people as partners and contributors...” (2007, p. 4). The PYD is consistent with Kaupapa Māori; it provides young Māori a restorative process to connect with whānau, hapū and iwi (Smith, 1997). It encourages young Māori to develop through belonging to a group and gaining knowledge through shared experience, teaching and learning (Smith, 1997). This research is based on principles of the YDSA. Youth development is: shaped by the big picture, about young people being connected, based on strengths-based approach, happens through quality relationships, when young people fully participate and need good information (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007, pp. 7-8). The YDSA framework and principles shaped research design, delivery, and data analysis:

1. Youth Development is shaped by the big picture

Young people’s experiences are shaped by their social, economic and cultural contexts and values. The themes explored through the research focus on the social, financial and cultural experiences of the participants. The interview questions the professionals answered revolved around how social, cultural and familial aspects affect YJ during their transition. In addition the workshop topics explored whether family/whānau were involved in the planning of the

young person's transition, and whether their culture and social environment such as friends and family were vital in helping the transition process.

2. *Youth Development is about young people being connected*

The YDSA states that healthy development is about young people having positive connections with social environments. The youth participants were asked to include experiences of being involved in services and programmes and the people they met, while in the justice system and after they transitioned. This information provided on the concept maps identified the connections young people were able to establish and maintain during their YJ transitions. During the workshops YJ youth were asked to include their involvement in school, community groups and work. In addition the young people were urged to explore themes around their key support people such as friends, family and professionals.

3. *Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach*

This principle acknowledges that development is based on risk and protective factors, and skills young people need for positive development. Risk factors are those that hinder healthy development, whilst protective factors “enhance life opportunities and promote good health and well-being” (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007, p. 20). According to the Mauri model ‘Mauri moe’ is the highs and low experienced by clients (Leoni, 2007). The research explored the protective and risks factors related to YJ transitions, and focused on the factors that contributed to a successful transition YJ youth. The YDSA highlights that for healthy development young people require social, emotional, physical and autonomy skills.

4. *Youth development happens through quality relationships*

Supporting and equipping young people with positive relationships leads to positive development. Young people need supportive people to encourage and help them to transition from adolescence to adulthood, and this need is greater for marginalised youth. YJ young people require support systems such as mentors, family assistance, supervision and financial support and guidance in order to ensure healthy youth development. The prevalence of these support systems was explored in the research. The youth participants were asked to

include the key support people and services that helped them during their transition phase. Participants explored their relationships with family, friends and professionals and described which relationships proved important to them during their transitions. Those relationships were highlighted for future recommendations.

5. *Youth development triggered when young people fully participate*

Young people need opportunities to “increase their control of what happens to them and around them, through advice, participation and engagement” (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007, p. 22). Young people need opportunities to voice their opinions especially when it affects their lives; this is one of the themes explored through the study. They were asked to provide information on whether youth in YJ are included in the decision making process, the reasons for including or not including them, and whether that impacts their transition. Through the workshops YJ youth were provided with an opportunity to voice their opinions on experiences that have affected their lives. In addition through the use of the concept mapping method young people were able to express themselves in ways they see fit. The E Tipu E Rea framework states that youth programmes should be relevant and move at the pace of the young person. In accordance with the framework the workshops used the concept mapping tool as a relevant method for young people to express themselves creatively and provide important information on YJ transitions. In addition during the workshops adequate time and resources will be provided to the young people.

6. *Youth development needs good information*

“Youth development is informed by the effective research, evaluation and information gathering” (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007, p. 24). Research and evaluation is part of understanding how young people experience the world around them, what the current trends are and what affects them. It informs the “big picture” of youth development, and provides effective feedback to those working with youth. The research was informed by the cultural frameworks mentioned in the previous chapter (Chapter 2). The PYD approach and cultural frameworks provided the researcher to conduct a youth involved project where data was directly collected from young people and those working with them, about factors and services that have benefitted and supported YJ

transitions. The cultural identities of young people were recognised, and the researcher included suggestions to encourage YJ youth to explore the cultural aspects within the planning of their transition plans, their families and their own identity. The Kaupapa Māori framework recommends incorporating young people's identity, culture, family and community within decision making process. The principle of whānau is central to Kaupapa Māori, and the principle of whānaungatanga is integral to Māori identity and culture (Pihama et al., 2002). The cultural values, customs and practices around the whānau creates a sense of "collective responsibility", which is a vital part of Māori survival and educational achievement (Pihama et al., 2002). In addition the "principle of whānau ensures that Māori have a shared vision for research and can support family members undertaking research" (Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs, 2006, p. 334). Therefore, in accordance with the Kaupapa Māori framework parental consent was sought from the parents and guardians of the youth participants. This was to inform and involve them while, acknowledging and respecting their role in the youth participants' lives and their cultural significance to the research. Thus, allowing participants and their families the autonomy to choose to be involved in the research process, in accordance to their cultural values and practices.

Sampling

"Qualitative researchers sample for meaning rather than frequency", they are more interested in what rather than how much or how many (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 11). Purposeful sampling is referred to by Liamputtong as a "deliberate selection of specific individuals, events or settings because of the crucial information they can provide that cannot be obtained so well through other channels" (2009, p. 11). Purposive selection was used for the research as there was a set criterion for the selection of participants.

Sample recruitment of youth

The criteria for the youth participants were: aged fourteen to nineteen, and had been involved in the YJ system at some point of time in their lives. After receiving ethical approval, many youth organizations in Auckland where young people frequently attended were contacted. The researcher then posted flyers and spoke to youth workers to identify young people who would fit the participant criteria. The research was explained to key contact people within the organisations, who later linked the researcher to the young people. In addition those young people who were willing to find out more

either contacted the researcher directly or passed on their contact details through their youth workers. In certain cases the researcher was able to contact the young people in person, while others chose to have the research explained over the phone. Those young people who agreed to participate were provided with participant information sheets (Appendix A) either in person or mailed to their home addresses a week before the workshops. A phone call from the researcher ensured participants had gained parental/guardian consent and also informed them of where the workshop would be, and a time was set to the convenience of the young people.

The youth participants were given a choice to either have individual or group workshops, with many choosing individual workshops. Workshops were conducted at a youth organisation easily accessible to the youth. In addition transport to and from the location was provided if necessary. Consent or Assent forms were signed at the start of the workshops (Appendices D-E). The workshops varied in length of time from two hours to about four and a half hours each, during which conversations were recorded and notes were taken (with informed consent).

The researcher aimed to have equal representation of young people from different cultures, ages and genders, but a few of the young women who showed interest in participating were unable to attend the research workshops as they were out of the Auckland region. Despite trying to include more female participants, only two young women fit the criteria and were willing to participate. The YJ system generally houses a smaller percentage of girls than boys and that could have contributed to the disparity in participation.

Sample recruitment of professionals

The professionals were recruited in a similar manner to the youth participants. The research workshop flyers were posted and emailed to several youth organisations. Also key people within each youth organisation were identified and notified about this research opportunity. These key contacts within each organisation referred the researcher to professionals who fit the participant criteria. In addition, many professionals were informed about the research through word of mouth, and details were given if they wanted to find out more. After the researcher was notified of an interest to participate professionals were emailed the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B). This was the preferred option for professionals due to their busy

schedules. The professionals were more eager to be involved, as they saw the benefits in research and evaluation of YJ youth transitions.

Youth Workshops

Data collection with the young people involved a qualitative method called concept mapping. The concept mapping workshop comprised of two sessions where young people either chose to draw, write, or used pictures from magazines to discuss their transitions. The first session explored the young people's YJ (lived) experience and journey. In the second session the young people provided recommendations through their experience of YJ, by drawing their 'perfect positive neighbourhood'. Each of these sessions was structured around themes aimed at exploring the research hypothesis (Appendix H). Each young person was made comfortable before the sessions were started, they were provided with food and drink and were informed that they could take breaks whenever necessary. The themes that were explored during the mapping workshop revolved around:

- Their personal backgrounds (i.e. family, peer relations, schooling)
- Their journey to, through and out of YJ
- The services and people they encountered and utilised.
- Their perception of their abilities to survive and manage during their transitions
- The support systems they had before, during and after their transition from YJ.
- The aspects and people that influenced their transition.
- Their recommendations for how the transition process can be improved for future YJ youth.

A copy of the full list of themes explored during the concept mapping workshop is attached as Appendix H.

During the workshops food was provided, as providing food is a necessity when working with young people and children. Moreover some workshops took four to five hours to complete and food was essential. Also sharing food lessens the anxiety of not knowing one another, and creates an informal setting to continue with work (Leoni, 2007). In some cases it acts as a bonding activity and opens up conversations about likes and dislikes, which was the case in a few of the youth workshops.

The youth participants were thanked at the end of each workshop, and were provided with the option to have a copy of the research on completion.

Professional Interviews

Data collection with the professionals involved a semi-structured interview; with open ended questions (Appendix I). There were five interviews carried out with professionals who had worked or were working with youth transitioning out of the YJ system.

The topics covered during the interviews with the professional participants were:

- Their experience of youth transition processes and procedures in the YJ system.
- The pre-transition preparation that youth undergo (i.e. life skills training)
- People involved in the transition process
- The support systems that are in place to encourage the young person
- Knowledge of family and whānau involvement.
- Descriptions of successful YJ youth transition
- The factors that contribute to a successful transition
- Recommendations on how to improve the process for young people.

The professional interviews were not provided with food, as the interviews were intended to be less than an hour.

A full list of the guiding questions used during the interviews is provided as an attached copy in Appendix I.

Data analysis and interpretation

The data analysis incorporated techniques and strategies that were embedded in thematic analysis and semiotic analysis, as there were two different types of data collected. “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data” (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 284), whilst semiotic analysis is the “study or science of signs” and it “places particular importance on exploring the deeper meaning of the data” (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 290). Semiotic analysis encourages the researcher to look beyond the obvious and deconstruct meanings in relation to other texts. Using semiotic analysis will help further uncover the meanings behind the youth concept mapping data, as most of the work done during the workshops involved

drawings, important phrases, diagrams and pictures of the life of YJ youth. This will also allow the researcher to compare and contrast the different experiences mapped by the young people. The data analysis followed Kvale's three contexts of interpretation which are:

Self-understanding where the researcher attempts to formulate in condensed form what the participants themselves mean and understand; critical common sense understanding where the researcher uses general knowledge about the context of statements to place them in a wider arena; and theoretical understanding where the interpretation is placed in a broader theoretical perspective" (as cited in Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 201).

The professional participant interview recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriber, while the researcher transcribed recordings obtained during the mapping workshops. The concept maps and the transcribed interviews and workshop recordings were coded for themes using a computer research programme. Common themes and patterns were identified across the two participant groups. When interpreting the information the focus was to identify the patterns, similarities and differences related to youth transitions from the YJ system, and how this process could be improved. This information was then further analysed and incorporated into the goals framework of the YDSA to provide a clear and comprehensive picture of the various social settings that impact youth. In addition cultural frameworks such as the Mauri model and the Pacific frameworks were used to further analyse certain factors identified in the research.

Issues and challenges encountered during the research

Initially the research was to be conducted at a YJ residential facility. Due to the privacy and risks associated with the location acquiring ethical permission was difficult and proved to be a challenge. In addition there were concerns around conducting research with YJ young people, and the possibilities of exploitation or coercion. Thus the ethics application was reviewed several times to ensure the research would be conducted with utmost care, and sensitivity. Once ethical approval was acquired, the study needed research permission from the Research Access Committee of the MSD. Despite acquiring university ethics approval, MSD research access was not granted to conduct research at a YJ facility nor include youth who were under the guardianship of CYF. This forced the researcher to reconsider the location of the research and the participants anticipated to be involved.

During this process the researcher continued to look for youth who were not under the guardianship of CYF. These young people proved a challenge to track down as they were likely to be disengaged from youth organisations, unless mandated to attend by the courts. Locating and contacting YJ youth proved a major challenge as these youth often have transient placements, and frequently change contact details. Furthermore this proved increasingly difficult due to the restrictive age range of the youth (fourteen to seventeen). Therefore to make the search easier the age range of the youth participants was extended to nineteen years of age, in hopes of finding youth who fit the criterion. Furthermore many youth organisations were hesitant to involve their young people, and those who were willing to have them participate struggled to maintain regular contact with them.

Timeframe of the research

The time frame of the research was to be one year from the date of commencement. However, due to the numerous challenges considerable time was lost, pushing data collection to be commenced at a later date, which subsequently delayed the completion of the research.

Ethics

The initial ethics approval was applied for and granted by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on 20th May, 2011. Due to the change in criteria a second ethics application was launched and the approval was granted on the 8th of December 2011. The participants were provided with participant information sheets, and week prior to the concept mapping workshops and the interviews (Appendix A-B). The information sheet included details about the research, the contact details of the researcher and research supervisor, and also provided contact details for counsellors and counselling agencies, if they needed further support due to discomfort caused by the research. The ‘participant information sheets’ also stated that if at any stage before data-collection participants felt uncomfortable about being involved in the research they could withdraw from the process, which none of the participants did. Moreover during the research, if participants felt uncomfortable, they could ask to have either the mapping workshop or the interview stopped.

At the start of the workshops and the interviews the participants were asked if they had read the information sheet and were then given consent or assent forms (if the

participant was under the age of sixteen) to sign (Appendices D-F). Most of the youth participants were under the age of twenty and were being cared for by parents or guardians. Thus parents and guardians were also provided with information sheets, and consent forms a week prior to the workshops, to ensure they were aware their child/children were participating in the research, and to also ask for their consent (Appendix C and Appendix G). All participants were informed at the start of the research that their involvement would be anonymous. The anonymity of participants was extremely important for ethics approval as the information being recorded is extremely personal and sensitive. All the participants were thanked at the end of the workshops and the interviews and were given the option to receive a copy of the thesis on completion.

Conclusion

The methodological approaches used in this research are qualitative methodology, PYD approach, and PAR approach. These approaches encourage the active engagement of youth in research, especially on matters that directly impact their lives. The youth participants were involved in a mapping workshop, while the professionals were involved in a semi-structured interview process. The workshops and the interviews carried out are only a small portion of the entire YJ population in New Zealand. However the participants involved in the research provided insight into factors that affected YJ youth and recommendations on how to enable successful YJ transitions. The data was analysed and coded using thematic and semiotic analysis, which provided the researcher with themes and concepts for discussion and theory building/formation. Ethical approval was sought and granted through the AUTECH ethics process to ensure the safety of the participants and the validity of the entire research process. There were issues with data collection due to the involvement of young, minor and vulnerable participants. Yet these were overcome with minor changes in the research participant criteria. The findings of the mapping workshops and the interviews are explained in detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the opinions and experiences of the participants who were involved in the research. The chapter is divided into two parts: voice of the youth and professional opinion. The first part will discuss the life experiences of the youth participants. Topics covered will follow the progression of concept mapping workshop; starting with their influences for being involved in the YJ system, their experience of the YJ transition process and finally, their recommendations on how to stay away from crime and support for transitioning youth. The views included in this section are spoken and written statements, and pictorial representations by the youth participants.

The second part of the chapter will present the views of the professionals on risk and protective factors that influence young people prior to and during their YJ transitions. Finally the recommendations provided by the professionals on ways to improve youth transitions from YJ will be presented. Their views will be described using their own statements presented during the interviews.

Voice of the youth

Participant Information

Eight participants with either prior or current YJ involvement were recruited and agreed to participate in the research project. All the participants were recruited from the same city but were of four different ethnic backgrounds namely Pākehā/ New Zealand European, Māori, Tongan and Samoan.

Table 4.1 Youth participant information

Type of Mapping workshop	Participant	Age	Gender	Concept Map #
Group	A	20	Male	1, 3
Group	B	19	Male	2, 3
Individual	C	15	Male	4, 5
Group	D	17	Male	6, 7, 9
Group	E	16	Male	8, 9
Individual	F	18	Male	10, 11, 12
Individual	G	15	Female	13,14, 15, 16
Individual	H	17	Female	17, 18, 19

The table (*Table 4.1: Youth participant information*) shows that the male participants were over-represented in the research, with six out of eight being male and only two out of the eight being female. Males are generally over-represented in the YJ system, and proved easier to contact than young females with YJ experiences. Table 4.1 also shows an inclusion of a twenty year old in the research, despite the age criteria of the current research only including fourteen to nineteen year olds. The participant was nineteen when included into the research, but between the recruitment stage and the mapping workshop he turned twenty. Also, due to the young person's interest to be involved in the research and the difficulties with tracking YJ youth; the researcher did not exclude the participant from the research. Moreover, according to the YDSA (2007) this young person still fits the definition of "youth" in New Zealand, as he is still under twenty-four years of age. Thus, including the twenty year old participant did not compromise the integrity of the research intention to involve youth participants. However, the researcher will only refer to the findings of this young person to support information already presented by the other youth, and will not introduce new data only discussed by this participant, thereby focusing on material provided by participants who fit the research age criteria.

The young people were given an option of either being part of a group or an individual workshop. Four participants chose the group option and four chose to work individually. However due to some potential participants not attending the workshop, one young person was left to participate alone.

The first part of the mapping workshop involved young people discussing their journey to and through YJ, which included their family backgrounds, influences to their offending, their transition from YJ, and their future goals. The second part involved them designing and mapping their perfect neighbourhood inclusive of people and services they thought benefited a young person transitioning from the YJ system. The research findings include their verbal narration of experiences, pictorial representations and written material. The names of people, places and organisations have been blanked out on the concept maps to keep the anonymity of the participants. In certain cases the researcher contemplated omitting certain information provided by the youth participants about charges and other personal information regarding their feelings to certain situations and organisations. Blanking out important aspects of the participant's story would be to mute their voice, which would contradict the intention of the research.

Therefore a decision was made to leave the information unaltered to provide the true voices of the young people, rather than adult perspectives of what is appropriate and relevant. Moreover, the quotes presented are direct quotes from the young people, though they may not always have the right spelling, or be grammatically correct. In certain cases the researcher has provided the correct spelling for the misspelled word, the meaning of certain things for the benefit of the reader. However, the researcher has not placed [sic] at the end of the quotes solely because all of the quotes in the research are direct quotes which have not been edited or altered.

A notable difference was identified in the way the young male participants described or organised their life experiences from the female participants. The former compartmentalised their lives in stages, for example as before, during and after YJ, while the latter in age order and each age group was defined by the important experiences or life events that shaped their YJ journey. Furthermore, the young women were more descriptive and in depth in re-telling their experiences, while some of the young men only provided minimal explanations or descriptions of their life.

Experiences prior to YJ

Although the research focuses on the transition of young people from the YJ system, it was important to understand the influences to their offending behaviour. The various factors mentioned provide an insight into the backgrounds and experiences of the participants. Most of the youth participants provided negative influences and talked about troubled histories, while only a few provided positive factors as well. The following paragraphs will discuss the factors that young people mentioned as influences or backgrounds that led to their offending.

Many of the participants had experiences living away from family, in foster homes and being involved in CYF. A young female participant talked about her early childhood experiences:

Age 0-11: was in foster homes, racist as didn't feed us three meals a day. Me and little sister didn't get much attention from caregivers...Dad took off and left mum so it was just my mum, then she went to women's refuge...
Age 11-12 years: Mum always got hidings from my dad; he was a gang member. Ran away from home to get away from the violence (Participant G).

In her “Life story” in Concept Map 13 under the section marked “13 years” she wrote “violence, gang affiliated, foster home, dad leaving at two years and running away from home” as important experiences that influenced her YJ involvement. At age fourteen she also wrote “fighting with mum and getting kicked out”.

Another young girl described her experience of witnessing her mother being involved in crime and also being violently mistreated:

When we left [region in Auckland] because my mum started dealing crack and something bad happened and she went up to the house to go sell but something bad went wrong and I ran up and they were bashing my mum (Participant H).

On her map (Concept Map 18) about her life experiences leading to YJ, Participant H talked about her mother being “busted” for drugs and sentenced for the crime. Due to this she and her siblings were placed under the custody of CYF and ultimately had to live with an uncle. She explained that time as:

Kinda traumatic for us, because we always lived with her, so it was like home ... it was just ‘cause she was on drugs but like I don’t care (Participant H).

Both these female participants described in detail their family problems as important events that shaped their YJ lives.

A few participants also talked about money as a motivating factor to commit more crime.

I don’t do like big crimes, I just go racking clothes, and food, that’s all I do now... My parents say that I don’t need to go on that [referring to the youth benefit] because they’ll give me money but I’ve to wait every time their pay comes and that’s too long and I always spend my money in one go... I want money every day because I’m doing something every day (Participant C).

The participant seemed to trivialise his criminal behaviour and his need for instant money motivated his offending, his justification for his need of money seemed to negate his feelings about committing crime.

The older youth participants were aware of the social pressures and influences that their community and social environments had presented to them during the early stages of

their offending. One young man attributed his offending to the environment he was raised in:

Being raised in [an Auckland suburb], really impacted the way I thought and acted. Drugs, alcohol, violence, crime was an everyday thing around [Auckland suburb]. It would be like swimming in muddy waters and not even noticing being so used to it (Participant B, Concept Map 2).

When I was going school I first experienced drinking and drugs because I was growing up in a society where teenagers experience drugs and alcohol and I got peer pressured into doing it (Participant A, Concept Map 1).

A key factor mentioned by the majority of the young people was peer influence and peer pressure.

I started hanging around a different crowd outside of school. That new crowd...influenced me to steal. (Participant C Concept Map 4)

Started hanging out with the wrong crowd, got involved in gangs (Participant F, Concept Map 10)

One of the female participants talked about how she got involved with drugs and alcohol:

Started doing drugs (weed), alcohol, smokes because of friends that was doing it and they were going through the same stuff I was (Participant G).

A majority of the youth participants resorted to more offending as a result of or in order to sustain their drug and alcohol habits:

Drinking to get wasted of my face, smoking weed everyday and then getting bored and thinking of getting out there and popping cars and robbing houses, just make some money to get wasted (Participant D, Concept Map 6).

Another young woman describes how her drinking and offending was the cause of the death of her friend:

I drank drove and kill my best friend. I got charged with under the influence of alcohol causing death and causing injury [sic] (Participant H, Concept Map 18).

The school experiences varied across the youth participants. Almost all of the young people described sporadic and disrupted schooling, which often included anarchic experiences leading to their expulsion from school. However one of the participants expressed his early school experiences as part of his “superman” stage, where life was positive and he felt invincible and nothing could harm him. This superman stage of his life was depicted on his work with a big red superman symbol and was titled “My head was up in the clouds”. He explained this stage of his life as:

I had everything going for me, I was enrolled at school, doing good with academics and sports, but being easily persuasive and a serious pride issue it was inevitable that I would find myself behind bars (Participant B, Concept Map 2).

Although school could have been a positive experience for this participant, as acknowledged by him his personal weaknesses led to his eventual involvement with YJ. He is the only participant that could acknowledge personal short-comings as a negative influence, while most other youth participants attributed their early childhood or adolescent experiences as influences for their criminal offending.

A majority of the other participants’ relayed experiences where school was the location for their offending and deviance:

Fighting first started for me at school because it was a popular thing to know how to fight (Participant A, Concept Map 1).

As mentioned previously this participant talked about school also being where he started doing drugs and alcohol. On the whole his school experiences had fostered his criminal offending. In addition to the other negative experiences in school, truancy issues were also discussed by many of the young people:

Fights, that’s how I got kicked out of school... Wagged to smoke weed with my friends (Participant G, also refer to Concept Map 13).

Another participant talked about school being her place for offending and described missing school due to her drug habit.

More crime in school I guess, like selling at school. Just for fun, cause I got it for free so I wanted to know how much money I could earn. I stopped after three days (Participant H)

Started missing school a lot but would only go to certain [certain] classes...Would always be late, turning up at second period always [always] (Participant H, Concept Map 17).

Experiences of YJ transition

A majority of the youth participants had experiences of being involved in an FGC at some stage in their YJ involvement. Many described having professionals, families and programme coordinators included in their FGC.

I had a Family Group Conference; I was put on a course. My family, lawyer, social worker, police youth advocate were at my conference (Participant C, Concept Map 4)

Came together at YJ for FGC with my social worker, [YJ professional], family to put a plan together for when I leave, was to do 200 hours community work, 7 to 7 curfew, attend [alternative education provider] course and sentence 6 months at a [youth justice programme] and engage with family (Participant D, Concept Map 6).

Most of the young people described themselves and their families not being involved in the planning, having no input during the FGC and being ill-prepared about FGC processes and outcomes.

Had no input/no choice... No one asked me what I want to do (social w.) [Social worker] (Participant G, Concept Map 14).

Had an FGC. Hardly any planning. No opinion for my family (Participant F, Concept Map 10).

However one participant talked about the planning prior to her FGC and being involved in the planning prior to her FGC.

I got a phone call regarding to meet up to sort out the plan of action. Then I went to the meeting to plan when and where the FGC was going to be held (Participant H, Concept Map 18).

The young person further talked about being provided with an opportunity to speak during her FGC:

Didn't know what to say, I was like speechless. They gave me a choice, but not really. Do you know how you have to apologize to the family, but I couldn't, that's why I didn't like it, I couldn't say anything it wouldn't come out. I was just standing there and crying; I just wanted it to stop (Participant H).

Despite adults providing her the opportunity to have an input this young person was distressed over the incident and overwhelmed by her emotions, and did not feel comfortable to express herself.

Some of the young people also shared their experiences of being in YJ, and the people that supported them during their YJ involvement and transitions.

Do counseling [counselling], a lot of thinking and talking to people that you know, you feel right and can understand you from what point of view your coming from” (Participant D, Concept Map 6).

The authority I was used to didn’t exist I was surrounded by people wearing the same clothes as me but really wanted to help... The help from staff, endless hours of reflection helped me become a much better person and to equip me for society (Participant B, Concept Map 2).

These young people felt positively about the help they had received, because they were able to connect with adults and professionals. The factor that most encouraged them was the ability of professionals to relate and understand the struggles and difficulties that young people face.

There were some young people who also talked about the struggles they faced during their initial stages of YJ involvement. Some of the young people talked about reoffending and returning to YJ, while others described their journeys from YJ, often talking about their personal struggles and the people who helped them.

I spent a year or half a year just waiting for a placement (Participant F).

He also went on to talk about the struggles he faced during his placement in a foster home.

There wasn’t enough meetings we could’ve had, while I was waiting, like to make me feel comfortable around them because we didn’t get to know each other before, we should’ve, before I went out. And then when I actually went out, like just felt uncomfortable, when I first went there (Participant F).

I breached my bail conditions by not abiding by my curfew time (7 to 7). Also reoffending (Participant C, Concept Map 4).

But this young man went on to describe that the second time around he had a more positive transition:

I completed my supervision order. My social worker, friends and family helped me complete it. Being at course kept me occupied. I had strong family support (Participant C, Concept Map 4).

The first help I got was from a social worker who was based at the [Auckland suburb] police station... she would take me to sport practices, court cases, job interviews, pretty much helped me to the best of her ability and even beyond that (Participant B, Concept Map 2).

My mentor helped me organise and plan my FGC. My first social worker was no help didn't get any assistance, until I got a new one things worked more better for me... the policeman was good to talk to, he went through a similar situation (Participant H, Concept Map 18).

These young people appreciated the help they received and support they were provided from professionals.

There were other young people who also mentioned their teachers as being positive support.

The person I look up to is my tutor he's been there for me when I was at YJ and now has enrolled [me] in a rugby league team (Participant D, Concept Map 7).

I'm apart [a part] of a good course. I talk to all my friends, my tutors (Participant E, Concept Map 8).

Making new friends also supported youth during their transitions. When one young person was asked what helped her stay away from her previous influences she stated her "new friends". The participant later explained that these friends were not entirely new and were peers she had previously attended school with. She further explained that these peers had been sidelined during her offending but had continued to be a "good influence" for her during her YJ transition (Participant G, Concept Map 15).

Another young person talked about having supportive family member and being involved in a course as aspects that were helping him during his transition:

I'm in course. Doing some of my FGC plan. My nana is my support I can talk to her anytime. When I finish course I want to jump on to the [Sport Education provider] rugby league course (Participant E, Concept Map 8).

Self-reliance and independence were recurrent themes within the youth research findings. Some of the participants talked about being independent while growing up

and credited their transition away from YJ as being self-motivated. In addition they explained they did not require external support due to their independence.

Maybe it was too free, my mum did care, but she didn't have time to look after me, I was looking after myself pretty much (Participant H).

This sense of self-sufficiency is also highlighted in the information she provided on her concept map. The young person discussed how she raised herself without any support, and aptly titled it "Adulthood 14 – 17 years old".

I grow up raising myself, making my own decisions, didn't need approval (Participant H, Concept Map 17).

Similarly two other young people asserted that their successful transitions were personally motivated despite the struggles that were around them:

I found it really easy to adopt back to society. I went to church and ... after school sport teams to keep my mind off of the never ending financial problems and dramas... being committed and giving it nothing but my all I managed to complete college and graduate (Participant B, Concept Map 2).

I was getting sick of my lifestyle then I knew I needed to change so I decided to get help, so I decided to go church...church has really made a difference in my life it makes me feel happy about myself (Participant A, Concept Map 1).

One young person talked about his rushed termination of support:

Turned 18 CYFS [CYF] trying to rush everything, trying to get me out of the foster home. No contact with social worker, which could of been helpful (Participant F, Concept Map 10).

Liked being independent instead of people always making the choices for me (Participant F, Concept Map 11).

Despite the abrupt termination of his support systems the young person was happy to be independent and being able to make his own choices rather than being directed by adults.

Self-reliance was also noted when young person discussed their post-YJ goals. One participant felt strongly about being on the benefit and wished to be able to support herself once she had completed her FGC plan.

Finish my FGC in March, and then get a full time job, don't like being on the benefit, while doing my NCEA Level 1 & 2 (correspondence) (Participant H).

The same sentiment about being on the benefit was also shared by another young person:

I want to be the first in my family not to be on that. I was the first in my family to get a job (Participant F).

Though many of the young people talked about having future goals to get a job neither of the young people at the time of the research had a job of any form. However many of the older youth reported having problems attaining and retaining jobs. Two of the participants talked about working for a demolition company with a distant family member. When asked if they were getting paid well they replied:

We were getting ripped off; he ripped us off (Participant B).

Another participant wanted to have a job but due to university and course commitments the young person was only able to work certain hours:

Because I'm going to be studying during the day from 9 to 3pm, I asked if they do night shifts but they don't (Participant F).

Young people also are not adequately prepared to deal with work place requirements and etiquette, and often lack the skills to seek out potential jobs. One of the young people talked about going to a retail shop for a job interview:

I was going to go work, they told me to come back the next day with my CV and then she told me to dress up all nice, but when I went in it was a different person, and I was like, I don't want to bots it [look stupid], so I missed out (Participant F).

The young person in this situation was provided with inaccurate information, combined with his lack of confidence and ability to confront the situation resulted in a failed attempt. Furthermore when asked if he could apply online for jobs, the young person stated not knowing how to.

The second part of the research involved the young people drawing their perfect neighbourhood to provide recommendations for improving the support provided to youth transitioning from YJ. Some recommendations were also made verbally during the workshops.

Recommendations

All the youth participants enjoyed designing their ‘perfect neighbourhood’ as it allowed them to express themselves creatively through art and writing. The participants were enthusiastic to provide recommendations on ways to improve the transition process for YJ youth by supporting them within their communities.

A key recommendation by all youth participants was the need for support for YJ youth:

More support for young people after they have finished their sentence, before and after. Support to be with the young person until they feel ready that they can handle themselves (Participant F, Concept Map 11).

Another participant included a mentor within her neighbourhood, although it was just to create a link perhaps as a background support for youth (Concept Map 14). This participant also included “supported bail” in her perfect neighbourhood. It seemed she believed such support would be positive as it is placed directly under an orange and yellow sun with a happy face (Concept Map 16). When the participant was asked to explain what supported bail was the young person explained:

Supported bail... you just pretty much have a worker that comes and picks you up in the morning and then takes you out. If you’re 24/7 [curfew] they take you out and keep you occupied (Participant G).

Another participant wrote “same age friend” as support within the young person’s community (Concept Map 12). This highlights the need for young people to relate to professionals or people their own age who can be positive role models and influences to them.

However many of the young people failed to identify and include any support people in their perfect neighbourhood. Participant A and B identified their key support people such as social worker, youth worker, church pastor, police, teachers and coaches, friends and family yet they were placed in the corner of the map and were alienated from the rest of the neighbourhood. Family and friends were placed closest to the community and were drawn as hugging each other (Concept Map 3).

In a slight variation Participant C drew a detailed neighbourhood with schools, hospital, recreational centres and professional services. However the participant drew a river that separated himself, his family and friends from the neighbourhood and did not include a

bridge or any transportation to get across the river. Moreover though the young person recognised the need for CYF and the Police, they were physically the furthest away from him and his family and friends (Concept Map 5). Though these young people were able to identify the need for certain professional roles within YJ transitions, they placed greater value on informal support systems such as family and friends.

When the researcher asked another participant to include support people into her neighbourhood she responded:

I don't think [named mentor] will live with me. I want to be independent (Participant H).

Despite having good rapport with her mentor the young person felt she would lose her independence if she included a professional who was part of her formal support network into her neighbourhood.

Six young people out of the eight participants included school or university or alternative education course in their perfect neighbourhoods. Participant C had three levels of education providers: university, school and alternative school within his neighbourhood. The young person also provided reasons for the inclusion of these services; the university was where "I want to go to course and study journalism", while the NZ newspaper was explained with "I want to be a journalist". The young person had definite future goals and knew where he would need to go to further his education and career (refer to Concept Map 5).

Some young people had a very strong positive representation of school and it was a major part of their "perfect neighbourhoods". For instance Participant G placed a happy sun directly above her school. It highlighted the positive attitude the young person had towards schooling and education (refer to Concept Map 16).

Another young woman included a marae as a family home where young people could get home schooled (refer to Concept Map 19). Her explanation was as follows:

What if everyone got home schooled, at the marae. No bullies and cant wag. No bad influences, no older influences (Participant H).

Though the young woman is not Māori she identified strongly with the culture due to the people who were in her social environment.

In contrast none of the other participants mentioned any cultural programmes or services in their mapped out neighbourhood. However there were representations of youth culture, for instance four of the young people drew skate parks, and one group specifically put tagging on the walls (Refer to Concept Map 9). These are a direct representations of recreational activities strongly linked to youth and adolescence.

Some of the young people stressed the need for specific services or programmes to help them stay out of trouble or help them during their time in YJ or while they transitioned.

Recommend yps [young people] to do activities as in sport programmes (Participant F, Concept Map 11).

Self-esteem, and friends, counselling, courses, should be able to have a say (Participant G, Concept Map 15).

One young person drew a youth centre, which housed counsellors and help lines as a recommended space for young people (Participant C, Concept Map 5).

One interesting suggestion was the “X-YJ youth advisory group”. The participant included this partly because of his interest to share his story to others.

A group of ex-yps, like a group that’s been there, and know what it’s like to be there and they can share their stories...their experience... Some social workers are good because they can relate to the troubles they’ve been through, but some other staff they don’t know what it’s like (Participant F).

He believed that YJ youth are more likely to connect and listen to people who came from similar backgrounds or understood the struggles they face.

When one young person was asked what more could be in place to support her mum she suggested a social worker.

Mum- social worker for family (Participant G, Concept Map 14).

The services most important to the participants were youth recreational centres, sporting parks, rugby fields, and gyms, where young people could play sport and hang out (Concept Map 3, Concept Map 5, Concept Map 9).

Moreover five young people specifically believed that a church was necessary in their communities (refer to Concept Map 3, Concept Map 9 and Concept Map 12). Two

young people were especially detailed about the way they described their church. On the door of their church Participant A & B wrote:

All welcome we don't judge (Concept Map 3).

The church represented a safe zone for these youth where everyone could be included without judgement or discrimination. Both these young people had a strong link with church and their positive outcomes were linked to being involved in a church community.

Other participants suggested having homes for those who needed family support such as family homes for “kids [who] don't have a home” (Participant G), while another young person drew a house titled “Family/ Home/ Foster family (Participant F, Concept Map 12).

He explained the conditions for the “foster family” as:

I'd rather they go back to their own family rather than foster family, depends on if the family is good or not, I won't put them back with their family if they weren't good, like abusive, alcohol (Participant F).

These young people showed social consciousness in their ability to include and explain the need for certain support services for their community.

The youth participants encouraged more supervision by parents and guardians while growing up.

I think supervision is a main factor...It was all me. I didn't have a parent right next to me saying “no”. Yeah I could disappear for two or three days and no one would ask me where I was. I didn't need approval (Participant H)

Moreover another young person talked about his plan being easy to follow because of the rules (Participant C). Contrary to adult beliefs young people seemed to appreciate rules and discipline.

Many of the young people included aspects of economical significance in their maps of their neighbourhood. Two young men included a bank (Concept Map 9), while another participant included “Financial support + furniture money” as a recommended service

(Concept Map 12). Another participant recommended the need for “youth loans under \$2000” and economical transportation, such as “sober vans” which operated on donations, biking tracks and free electronic transportation called “Trans” [a name given by the young person]. She stated that the free transport was “another way to get home safely” (Participant G, Concept Map 19).

Another young person recommended a “job house”, where young people could get “help to find [a] job” (Participant G, Concept Map 16). It was a significant size in the map providing some indication that this support service is quite important to this young person.

The need for a driver’s licence and driving courses were mentioned by two participants. One young person drew a car with “licensing +driving” written on it. This young person had a huge fine due to driving without his appropriate licence, when the researcher asked why he didn’t have his licence he stated that he could not afford the licence.

Included within their perfect neighbourhoods often were diagrammatic representations of hospitals, doctors, nurses and ambulances. It highlights the need for such services during youth transitions, and possibly making them youth friendly would increase their significance and usage.

One young person strongly advocated for a positive attitude as a means to motivate change and create successful outcomes.

If you want to stay away from all of that life, it’s all up to you, how you think. When I first went into YJ I was like I didn’t care about anything... then after all the help I got during my stay in there, it just made me think different, then lucky I made that choice that I didn’t want to have that life, that’s why I started changing. There’ll always be that help there, but it’s all up to you if you want to change, at the end of the day it’s your choice, lucky I made that choice (Participant F).

Professional opinion

Participant Information

The research also included interviews with five professionals. The first part of the staff interviews sought information on participant’s job descriptions, and professional

backgrounds. The following table (*Table 4.2 Professional participant information*) presents information regarding the five participants and their roles working with YJ youth. The participants came from various areas within the youth work sector.

Table 4.2 Professional participant information

#	Gender	Role in Youth Justice
1	Male	Transition Liaison/Educator for an alternative education provider
2	Female	Previous CYF Youth Justice Professional/Youth Worker
3	Female	Mentor and Youth Worker at youth organisation
4	Female	Mentor / Clinical Services Administrator at a youth organisation
5	Male	Educator/Transition Liaison for alternative education provider

The participants represented various ethnicities including Pākehā/ New Zealand European, South African, and Samoan/ Māori. They also varied in age groups and years of experience. Though all participants had worked with youth, two of the participants only had a year's experience with YJ youth specifically. The rest of the participants ranged between three to seven years of experience working with YJ youth. The research only required four professional participants; however, an extra professional showed interest to participate and was thus included. In total there were five participants, three female and two male. Each participant spoke about the risk and protective factors they considered impacted young people and their transition outcomes. The professionals also discussed the transition planning and finally provided recommendations on how to improve the transition process for young people.

Influences: Protective and risk factors

A wide range of factors influence and affect the transition process of young people. The following section will discuss the main factors that professionals believe have the greatest influence on YJ youth. The protective factors enable successful transitions while the risk factors were those that hindered a young persons' progress.

Protective Factors

The following answers the question asked on what factors contribute towards successful YJ transitions. The question was designed to gain a broad range of aspects that professionals believed enabled young people to have positive outcomes. The five participants highlighted different factors that contributed to YJ youth transitions.

The professionals stated that youth who were engaged in education or employment were more likely to have successful transitions.

I also see a young person either being employed or getting an education and sticking with it. That I think is a success (Participant 2).

For anyone involved in YJ I think a successful outcome is for them to continue to be part of the community and to be successful in that, so in terms of studying or finding a job or doing whatever they are wanting to do, so they're contributing to the community (Participant 4).

Another professional spoke about her mentee being involved in alternative education and about the young person's aspirations to be transferred into mainstream schooling.

Well, because she's pregnant and she was going through morning sickness, she wasn't attending as regularly as she should be, but this year she's back into it and she's just attending regularly. She wants to do well in it and she is doing well. She wants to get back into mainstream school (Participant 3).

This participant also talked about how pregnancy was a positive for her mentee as it encouraged the young person to abstain from drugs and alcohol:

She found out she's pregnant, and she's not drinking or she's not taking drugs or alcohol because she's pregnant and in that respect the pregnancy is a positive thing (Participant 3).

Four out of the five professionals explained that having a vision and positive future goals contributed towards a successful transition.

That they're busy doing something that they enjoy; like employment or education and have goals and aspirations for the future and know what they want or have an idea of what they want to do in the future and what they don't want (Participant 3).

A vision, a picture of the preferred future, and one that the person themselves owns even to a degree. I know that we can see a lot for young people often before they do but it's not enough that we see them. I think that's pretty foundational and often a lot of our work; across all agencies

and services and professions is about trying to sow the seeds of a picture of the future in whatever way, shape or form, hoping something will germinate so I think that's essential as a foundation (Participant 1).

Factors I think, visions got to be; they've got to have a purpose/reason for staying out of trouble (Participant 5).

Within the person, you can put all the support in place, have all the family at the hearing, or at the discharge process and everybody supporting that young person, but if he is not inclined to make the change, then that change is not going to occur. So that's an important step...we need to be stimulating his desire to make a success and to make positive changes (Participant 2).

She further recommends providing young people with smaller achievable goals:

When we look at a young person, offering them big things in life or big career paths or big educational plans is not the answer, because most of them cannot focus on huge plans and huge things. I believe that the simple things, simple programmes that will target the individual need (Participant 2).

These professionals explained that the ability to envision the future enables young people to think differently and encourages them strive for better outcomes.

Another professional explains why a lack of motivation can prevent young people from engaging with the services offered:

Back to vision, you'll need the motivation for the young person...to engage in the things being provided because if they don't have the motivation, then they won't go and be involved and they'll have the same issues and the same problems, it becomes a vicious cycle... vision...that's fundamental; the ones that seem to succeed have grasped onto that or created it, and that's driven with motivation and desire for change (Participant 5).

Another key finding provided by most professionals was the importance of the appropriate support people in the lives of YJ youth:

Having good mentors and role models helps as well (Participant 3).

A strong supportive family is really important for these young people, even if it's not necessarily their immediate family, just anyone that's going to be around them... that's going to help them out. Good role models, in the shape of mentoring or counselling or whoever that role model is for them that will help them through (Participant 4).

The other thing that's essential for a young person for a successful transition is someone who cares. It only needs to be one person... whoever that person

or people that are, that support there needs to be a willingness to journey long haul (Participant 1).

She engages really well with the Counsellor... Also giving her some kind of space to talk about what's been going on for them and how the experiences have been...having counselling is a good idea (Participant 3).

The professionals also discussed what this support would look like and what the support would need to be like.

The ideal support would be someone who's firm, sets good boundaries, or and that sees them for who they are, as opposed to seeing their charges or and the potential in them. A good mentor's probably quite important; someone who can stand alongside and really champion them on (Participant 5).

Other participants talked about having good peer groups that will positively influence the young person.

When professionals were asked how long they believed services should support the young people many suggested longer timeframes for service provision. One of the professionals stated the following regarding the length of time services should be available to young people:

In terms of family and personal support, should be lifetime of support, but in terms of agencies, up until the young person kind of lets, and they normally do, that they can do it by themselves (Participant 4).

One of the participants encouraged YJ professionals to view YJ facilities and residences as an opportunity to re-engage youth who have previously been disengaged from education, health, employment and any extracurricular activities.

When in residence there's all the services available; from health: primary health, mental health... shelter, food... and actually a big part of getting back on track is, 'now I get three meals a day and they're healthy meals and I've got a few adults around me who are reasonably nice to me', and the education support... I actually see the residential experience as potentially being the best thing that could possibly happen for some young people... it's just that they're in one place and one time, they're a captive audience (no pun intended) and there is a chance for services and assessment to be done from a variety of services and for those services to plan some great outcomes for the young person and their family. Potentially that's a real positive about Youth Justice. When they leave, ideally all those same support services should be there in practice (Participant 1).

The participant highlights that collaborative practice based on wrap-around service approach and interagency communication is vital for providing efficient services to young people.

The participant also further explained three contexts within which people feel a sense of belonging and identify with:

There's a concept that says everybody, all of us need a third place... First place is family, second place is school and in terms of young people in transitioning they all need a place to belong; they need a sense of family so that's the whānau side. Often the whole residential experience itself have become the second place sadly for a lot of young people but I don't think we should beat ourselves up about it but should make the most of it to make it as positive an experience as possible. When they leave, their second place... that's why it's so critical to connect with work or education otherwise the second place is missing... Also there's a need for a third place...another place to relate. For a lot of young people that we deal with, at some part of their life and in their world...that might have been like a church type experience. Someone might give you a sports club (Participant 1). Having them involved in some kind of community; like a church community or something like that; often seems to help (Participant 3).

Risk factors

The next section looks at the responses given by professionals when asked what aspects do young people struggle with during their transitions. However some of the risk factors included in this section are aspects mentioned by the professionals when asked to describe factors that contributed to successful YJ transitions. The reason the risk factors are mentioned is because some of the professionals despite being asked about factors that contribute to a successful transition most often provided risk factors that hindered positive outcomes.

A key risk factor mentioned by almost all of the professionals was negative family factors.

If they have had a family background of violence or neglect, abuse things like that, then from my experience working with them, they seem to be more likely to get involved with crime (Participant 3).

Participant 1, a YJ educator talked about his experiences working with YJ youth and their families:

My experiences in terms of Youth Justice is where there is a family, family really are on board, it can be incredibly positive and probably adds hugely to the success of the transition. The two other scenarios which are sadly at times more common is either family aren't involved that is they don't care or, family are involved but actually family are the problem... Youth Justice has taught me that sadly for a lot of the young people the biggest issues are not necessarily peers, they're actually family (Participant 1).

Participants also stated that parents and family members of YJ youth do not have the skills to support them effectively. One ex-YJ professional explained:

Young people who are usually offending do not have the support of family, or the family do not have support or the skills or resources to provide that young person with what that young person needs (Participant 2).

When asked what factors hinder the successful transition of adolescents from the YJ system, three out of the five professionals highlighted anti social peer groups.

One big factor is peer pressure and getting involved with the wrong crowd of people and so if their mates are getting into trouble they can often get involved with that... Often, if they get back in with their old mates, who are still involved with crime, and lead them astray again, or they just get involved with criminal activity (Participant 3).

Another professional explains how gangs substitute family for at-risk youth:

Gang life, gang associations are a big issue. Some young people realise this is an issue but don't know how to get out of it...That essentially... becomes their family... there's not many of the young people, who have strong gang associations, who have really strong, healthy functioning families. More often than not there's some dysfunction (Participant 5).

They friends their gang mentality and their strong, strong affiliation with their gangs. Sometimes the gangs take over as families for them, which is the saddest thing on earth... [They] are looking for that family and finding it where they have always found it, in the gangs (Participant 2).

Anti-social peer groups and gangs were cited as major deterrents to positive change and transitions for youth.

Similar to the youth participants, professionals also recognised the financial struggles faced by young people. It was seen as a motivating factor towards criminal behaviour. Though this is only expressed by one professional it was a recurrent theme mentioned among the youth participants.

A lot of young people are Pacific Island and Māori and poverty is an issue for some of them. Some have openly said the reason for their offending is to help get money to provide for their families (Participant 5).

Other factors that professional participants believed were risk factors were mental health issues such as self-harm and suicide due to previous abuse.

More often than not there's some dysfunction. Some young people's issues are mental health or cognitive delays, mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction... We've got self harmers...young people that have suicide as a real option and sometimes they have attempted, and to me the common themes; they can't see the light at the end of the tunnel (Participant 5).

The lack of a vision or goals among youth transitioning from YJ were also presented as personal barriers towards achieving successful outcomes:

The biggest issue...is the lack of vision or lack of purpose...They don't have anything to aim for, they don't know how to set goals, have a dream of what life could be like and the young people who seem to succeed grasp onto that and onto a dream... and it's possibly why we see some last a few months, some last six months before reoffending, and the ones that don't can be back in a week later (Participant 5).

Often if they are unemployed or not in any education, so they're not really doing anything then they'll tend to get into trouble again because they don't have anything else to do (Participant 3).

In accordance with the findings among the youth, the professionals also highlighted the need for supervision of youth.

If they don't have anyone checking in on them, like they should back at YJ, there they have social workers... They just get left to their own devices (Participant 3).

She highlights the need for youth to be supervised so that they can be monitored and steered in the right direction if necessary.

Transition process

Most of the professionals discussed being involved in a transition or discharge meeting or FGC. The procedures carried out prior to YJ youth transitions are explained by one of the professionals:

A discharge meeting should be held with the young person. The discharge meeting is held where we'll have people from the case leading team, psychiatrists, psychologist, people who will be on the outside supporting the young person... If it's a Māori young person some Māori community based

people will be there. The discharge meeting will be around what the young person will be doing when he leaves residence and what we can do to improve the situation and how support is going to be in place. At the discharge meeting, even the parents will be welcome and if the parents need support for this young person, then that will be offered to them as well (Participant 2).

Another professional explained the process of planning and conducting an FGC:

Most plans mainly start with their social worker in conjunction with the case worker, Police. [The alternative education provider] have some involvement... and all the other agencies that mentioned above [which include services such as mental health, drug and alcohol, and youth forensic services] also can feed into that... Plans are done primarily it seems between the social worker, case worker, police... FGC's are quite important for discussing the plans and most young people, pretty much all of them have FGC's where the suggested plans being put forward (Participant 5).

When asked whether this meeting was to be planned prior to the young person's transition, professionals stated that though ideally it would need to, it was generally not the case.

Transition plans are started with the care team when a young person comes into residence. Previously it was at the discharge meeting which is to be held two weeks before the young person is discharged (Participant 2).

In the ideal world we would know some length of time ahead whether a young person is going to transition... Youth Justice is probably the most unpredictable; a young person goes to court and you think they're going to come back and be remanded; they never come back. That's a real problem, a real challenge (Participant 1).

The professionals were asked whether young people and their families had input during the FGC or discharge meeting. In contrast to the youth participants most of the professionals confirmed that young people and their families participated during the FGC.

A general idea or plan is drawn up, that's in discussion with the young person, and the social worker and family, so the family inputs into their FGC plan... Family has three places which they communicate with the case worker, social worker and the lawyer... All along they [referring to YJ youth] have the opportunity from the discussion with the social worker, and case workers as well, lawyers and then at that the FGC itself they can also because they are part of that meeting (Participant 5).

Interestingly all of the youth participants disagreed with the professionals on the matter of youth and family participation.

According to the professionals placements within families/whānau or in the same environment that a young person originates from can be problematic and result in recidivism and negative outcomes. Despite the risks young people continue to be placed in environments which do not provide them the best possible chance to desist from crime.

The biggest challenge for everybody is when a young person leaves; the first question is where are they going to live? It's very hard for any of us to do anything about transition planning if we don't have a definite address. Sometimes the address is all set, we're all going, we're all planning towards this and two weeks out, Auntie says, 'Nah, he's not coming to live with me', and the whole plan now is in jeopardy (Participant 1).

Moreover, participants explained that due to family dynamics or being unable to deal with the young person family often reject the adolescent, and are unwilling to house them.

CYF have been involved with her family since she was fairly young and she's not actually allowed to live with her parents because of domestic violence from her dad (Participant 3).

In the ideal world, then you've got to look further off in the whānau network to see if you can find some influences and places that might be supportive of that transition process. Again, sometimes that's not feasible either because there is no one willing to be involved or because of the young person's life and track record, whānau have said, 'enough's enough, we don't want to go there again' (Participant 1).

Throughout the interviews in various instances participants highlighted the inconsistent practices of YJ professionals.

As soon as they're sent to YJ, there is some movement depending on the social worker, depends on how fast plans, or lawyers also feed into the plans. Good social workers, good plans are drawn up pretty quick; the slacker ones the plans can take a lot longer (Participant 5).

Professionals also discussed follow up on young people during their transition from the YJ system.

The [YJ] team...do the transition for the transit into the public and they will deal with the young person for three months. They do not have to meet the young person but regular phone calls, check up and interaction with the other support services (Participant 2).

Recommendations

This section will provide the professional opinions on the 'areas of concern' and recommendations towards facilitating positive transitions outcomes for YJ youth.

One of the professionals explained that youth who come in contact with YJ often have negative self-image and low self-esteem, therefore the initial step identified by the professionals was to change their self-talk:

Every young person that comes into Youth Justice has been often told that they are criminals or criminally minded so we need to readjust that kind of thinking and keep highlighting their positives and that they can be better than that behaviour that they are displaying... 90% of them are really good people with bad behaviours, so we just need to remind them that they have skills, resources, abilities and that they can make those changes (Participant 2).

During the planning of FGCs and the early stages of the youth transitions participants encouraged YJ professionals to gain a better understanding of each young person and their family, adequate time for planning transitions, providing young people and their families with input in decision making, and individualised transition plans. The following responses will discuss these recommendations:

To be able to take the time to get to know the young person and their family...and know what dynamics are playing up, that's really going to affect how the young person engages with the different services (Participant 4).

Good lead time in terms of planning and communication (Participant 1).

Lengthening, the time between... an agreed plan and doing some work around expectations once they leave (Participant 5).

Having the young person actively involved in the plan. They can become actively involved, when they actually aiming and understand what they are in for. So they've got that input so they go to the course because they've chosen that course... The young person having a good say into what's happening next but I think more often than not, they can't because they don't know what they want, they don't know what is possible (Participant 5).

Having a plan/plans in place that suits their needs and that they actually want to do or are at least open to doing, so for example if they're going to choose community service, then do something that they actually don't mind doing rather than something they hate (Participant 3).

The thing that don't helps them is having an FGC plan that is like non-suitable, and it can be either having too much stuff on that plan, or just having things that they aren't financially able to commit to (Participant 4).

The professionals also highlighted key aspects needed to support youth during their transitions, such as supportive professionals, better collaboration between services, longer service provision, gradual termination of services and family support.

Her family has a social worker, but none of them like her... doesn't treat them with very much respect. Then she has a Youth Justice social worker as well... she speaks very condescendingly of my mentee, also in my first meeting I had with her and my mentee and her mum, she didn't speak very nicely to them and also, she doesn't seem to check in as much as she should. I would not recommend her as a social worker...I've had lots of feedback from young people about social workers who aren't helpful; there are some who are (Participant 3).

However the professionals were able to identify and recommend the type of people that youth need working with them:

Key support people... has to be people who have a passion, not just wanting or needing job and people who come from a sensible background where they can impart to the young people, common sense which is essential in life...They should be like the lifeline to the young person (Participant 2).

Young people when they feel cared about and ...can engage with them really well, then it's more likely for the young person to have a positive outcome... Having people to support them and ...giving them some kind of space to talk about what's been going on for them and how the experiences have been, I think having counselling is a good idea (Participant 3).

It's based around, relational synergy as well; a young person who gets discharged and there's going to be a need to maintain an education link and maybe the tutor, they've got a good relationship, then they take the ongoing relationship to tracking, keeping in touch with the school, the young person, how things are going and any other areas we can help (Participant 1).

Furthermore, the professionals highlighted the importance of supervision and professional support systems.

It can be a really tough job. A lot of social workers just burn out and I think there needs to be systems in place to help that not to happen. Perhaps they need more self care or something like that, or more holidays (Participant 3).

Providing families with support such as family education was also highlighted as a way to support YJ youth and their families ensure successful outcomes:

Family is the first step but the family need support as much as the young person to make the outcome successful... We have such a lot of youth offending that parenting skills are important; parents need to be taught how to parent ...then we can prevent the youth offending... concentrate first on what it's starting from... That is a major part of their transition process being unsuccessful because if they go back into the same environment, their parents do not have the skills to assist them or if they're not living with their parents, they're living in foster homes (Participant 2).

Most of the professionals identified the gaps in services provision:

A successful transition starts on admission and that means good gathering of background information from all services, good assessment and reporting of current state from all services and ongoing good communication between all the services, the young person, the whānau and the social worker in the community... A successful transition is absolutely dependent on everybody being able to talk to one another, consistently regularly (Participant 1)

The coordination between agencies... all these agencies becoming involved in the young person's life,... but communication between agencies is sometimes broken and we're all working towards a common goal of transitioning this young person successfully, but we're not communicating well between each other as an agency or we don't have enough understanding of what each agency is responsible for with this young person... An improvement that we could do is helping support agencies actually getting to know each other and ... each others' roles in this young person's life (Participant 4).

In a youth mentoring context, the research suggests it could take at least eight months for ...a young person who's male to even begin to get to the point of openness and transparency with a mentor so if you've got a six month programme of transition support and the research says it's probably going to take in the ideal world – a male – eight months to get to the point of transparency and openness then what's the value of that relationship in support for those six months (Participant 1).

Certain critical services have come to the end of their life or the kid has turned the magic age... 'now you're an adult, we no longer support you' and the scary thing is that once that age is reached there is even less available for the young person than there is when they're under 17 (Participant 1).

I wouldn't say there should be a time period because each individual's time period varies, but you would see progress, you would hear of progress so when that progress is taking place, then that person may not need to be so involved in the young person, so it's a gradual tapering off, not six months or three months or five sessions, but as the need is there (Participant 2).

The professionals highlighted the need for collaborative service provision and extended service timeframes to providing YJ youth with coordinated and sustained support during their transitions. In regards to post-YJ transitions an area of concern highlighted as a result of the research was the abrupt termination of services due to young people reaching their age limit. This is a major concern for youth both transitioning from YJ and from statutory care (Leoni, 2007; Ward, 2000).

Similar to the findings with the young people, professionals also highlighted better programmes and service provision for young people. The responses that follow identify the suggested services, though varying in types of services recommended by the youth.

Within the system, the programme is the most important and it should be counselling sessions with qualified counsellors (Participant 2).

The service gaps are residential drug rehab for adolescents and the other big gap huge gap is adolescent forensic mental health (Participant 1).

A young person connects, like anybody else does, with people and often... we're so focussed on the services that we miss the important link which is how are those services delivered (Participant 1).

Requires good programming and it requires insight into that young person on an individual basis, not just as a group (Participant 2).

One professional talked about the negative stereotypes people had about YJ youth and encouraged changing community attitudes towards YJ young people.

Once they're out of YJ and in the community working, I suppose people's attitude towards young people that have had experience in YJ and people just not giving them a second chance (Participant 4).

Conclusion

The findings represent the views of eight youth and five professional participants on YJ transitions. The young people talked about coming from troubled backgrounds. They also shared that peers, alcohol and drugs and their school and social environments often influenced their YJ involvement. During their transitions from YJ the main concerns highlighted by the young people were the lack of input from them and their families during the FGC, and the lack of planning and follow up during and after their transitions. Despite these negative influences most of the youth participants were able to have successful transitions. The factors highlighted through their experiences

included personal vision and motivation, supportive family, supportive professionals, mentors, being engaged in school and sports. The main recommendations from the youth participants were the need for mentors, financial support, family support, youth involvement in FGCs, and more connections with their communities through schools, sport, recreational activities and church.

The professionals highlighted family as the main concern for young people. In addition they discussed the inconsistent and isolated practice between the various services, and a lack of appropriate support for youth after their YJ transition. As recommendations to improve youth outcomes professionals suggested the need to provide young people with adequate support, longer service follow up timeframes, facilitating engagement with and transitions into schools and the community, fostering the development of personal visions and goals to see change within themselves, and educating families to effectively support YJ youth. All participants, both the youth and professionals agreed that increasing youth participation and involvement within families, and communities would lead to better transition outcomes for YJ youth.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

The chapter is divided into two sections. First, the discussion provides an analysis of the findings presented in the previous chapter (Chapter 4). This is carried out by placing the findings of the research in the YDSA goals framework. The goals framework helps to identify the actions that can be taken to support young people's positive development across social environments and government settings (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). The findings have been broken down into the three aims of the YDSA. The actions taken to support YJ youth relate to each of the three aims and appropriate social environments and areas of central and local government. In addition each aim will be used as a guide to provide recommendations on suggested ways to achieve positive youth development within the context of YJ transitions. At the end of each sub-section a framework with a summary of the key points pertaining to that aim will be provided in a tabular form.

The second part of the chapter will present the limitations of the research.

Section 1

Applying the YDSA Framework towards facilitating positive YJ transitions

The YDSA is a tool that promotes the use of the PYD approach within New Zealand (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). The YDSA provides a framework to clearly identify areas and settings within which to support and enable YJ youth to positively develop during their transitions. The YDSA goals framework helps to identify the actions that can be taken to "support young people's positive development across social environments and settings and government areas" (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007, p. 27). The three aims of the YDSA are:

- Aim 1: All young people have opportunities to establish positive connections to their key social environments
- Aim 2: Government policy and practice reflect a PYD approach
- Aim 3: All young people have access to a range of youth development opportunities.

The most common forms of criminal behaviours among the youth participants were assaults, theft, drug and alcohol related charges which often also contributed to driving-related offences. Many of the young people had varying outcomes from being placed in secure YJ facilities, to community based placements, or family placements. All these young people were involved either in an FGC or some form of discharge meeting where their rehabilitation plans were executed. Their plans often included community service, being engaged in school or alternative education courses, youth programmes such as mentoring or offending related programmes and counselling. Some of the reasons for offending identified by the young people were: associating with the wrong crowd, being involved in drugs and alcohol, boredom, financial hardship, and also the lack of parental supervision or support. In addition the reasons for desisting from offending identified as a result of the research were: self-reliance and resilience, engaged in education, involved in the community, connected to strong support systems and having a vision and personal motivation to change. These aspects are discussed within the three aims of the YDSA in the following sub-sections.

The Tables 5.1 to 5.3 provided after each sub-section has been modified to fit the findings of this research, by combining a few closely related ‘social environments settings’ to make a single category. For instance government funded youth development programmes and non government agencies and voluntary youth agencies have been combined to make a single category.

YDSA Aim 1: Opportunities to establish positive connections

The second principle of the YDSA states that youth development occurs when young people are connected to their social environments (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). In order to thrive in society young people need to be engaged in society through education, employment and or community involvement, have strong and stable support such as supportive parents or other adults, personal motivation to change, and the ability and skills to deal with demanding situations (Herz, Ryan, & Bilchik, 2010; Steinberg et al., 2004). Research examining the transitions of juvenile offenders have identified family, peers, schools and neighbourhoods often as factors that have the most influence on young people (Barwick, 2004). Osgood et al.(2010) suggests that these resources contribute towards an individual’s resilience. Resilience is “the ability to surmount difficulties and to recover quickly from stressful events and mishaps” (Osgood et al., 2010, p. 218).

From the research findings a key factor discussed by most of the professionals was the lack of family support, and the absence of supportive and caring parents or adults to ease the transition of youth from YJ to society and adulthood. All five professionals highlighted that the families of YJ youth were often unsupportive, were the reason for the young person's offending and or lacked the skills to support the young person. This was also relayed through the life stories presented by the youth participants. A majority of the young people's early experiences included troubled family histories, absent family members during their childhood, and or financial struggles. Many of the youth participants stressed their self-reliance, raising themselves, being independent, and motivating themselves to change and desist from crime and offending. This picture of youth offenders presenting multiple family problems has also been identified in Maxwell et al.'s (2004) research project conducted on YJ FGC practices and outcomes.

A few young people from this research on transitioning from YJ also talked about their involvement with CYF due to their family problems, which caused them to be separated from their family. One of the youth participants stated that her troubled family situation had driven her to find peers experiencing similar problems, which eventually led to offending and substance abuse. Similarly the data collected from the retrospective study of the 'Achieving Positive Outcomes Project' (Maxwell et al., 2004) identified that forty seven percent (47%) (Out of 1003 cases) of youth in that study were found to have had prior CYF (State care) involvement. The study also highlighted that youth with prior state care involvement had multiple placements throughout their lives and it often negatively influenced future offending (Maxwell et al., 2004). Furthermore, CYF involvement often affected the living situations of young people. A few of the youth identified transient living situations in their concept maps. Multiple placements often increase the risk of school drop outs, fewer prosocial peers, and fewer opportunities to connect with or gain a sense of belonging within one's community through social, cultural and recreational activities (Becroft, 2009c). Young people including YJ youth need families that can provide care, discipline and support to positively develop into successful adults (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007).

Family/ whānau, peer support, and having supportive professionals are important aspects for the positive development of YJ youth (Steinberg et al., 2004). Caring and supportive parents and guardians enable young people to experience healthy development and transition to adulthood. The youth participants in the research

identified family, friends, social workers, teachers, tutors, and mentors as key support people during their transition from YJ. However, they placed high value on informal supports such as family and friends and tended to undervalue formal support such as support services or people associated with YJ. This was also identified in Abrams's (2006) study. Therefore maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships during their transition can significantly prevent negative outcomes and recidivism (Osgood et al., 2010).

The participants in the research recommended family support and parenting skills to improve the relationships between young people and their families. Moreover, it was recommended that social workers and parenting skills development be provided to the families of YJ youth as ways to support the parents. This would ensure parents and families can effectively support their children and youth during and after their transitions. Becroft (2009a) suggests in his review that incorporating holistic family based interventions such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) as effective in reducing reoffending and addressing issues that affect the family which often contribute to the young person's delinquency. MST is a family and community based intervention, where the young person is interconnected to a complex network of family, peer, school and neighbourhood, while the FFT is an "outcome driven prevention/intervention programme for youth who have demonstrated the entire range of maladaptive, acting out behaviour and related syndromes, and are at a high risk of reoffending" (Becroft, 2009a, p. 15). Research has proved that recidivism is reduced when family problems are addressed (Denning & Homel, 2008).

International research has identified that parent effectiveness training and family support can be beneficial for younger adolescents in preventing reoffending (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Junger-Tas (2009) discusses parent training as an intervention to educate and to regard parents responsible for the actions of their children. The intervention was based on the premise that parents have considerable responsibility for the actions of their children (Junger-Tas, 2009). Thus addressing parent needs can probably have a positive influence on children and young people. In New Zealand parenting programmes such as the Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P) is an intervention for parents with children and youth with conduct and severe anti-social behaviour (Becroft, 2009c). These interventions can help strengthen the relationships between parent and child and also provide families with tools to support young people

effectively. Furthermore families need to be encouraged to include youth in decision making throughout their transition process and post-YJ.

During the FGC process some youth participants felt that their families did not have sufficient input or preparation prior to the meeting. Therefore the participants advocated for increased participation of families during transition planning and preparation. In contrast the professional participants stated that families were provided with opportunities to input during FGCs. The lack of family preparation and participation was similarly identified in Maxwell et al.'s (2004) study. The study stated that some of the families attending felt inadequately prepared or consulted about the details of the FGC, were not provided adequate opportunities or were not able to input due to communication and language barriers (2004). Furthermore, Maxwell et al. (2004) stated that the FGC response to culture was over-simplified and often not specific to the young person or their family's ethnicity (Maxwell et al., 2004). Though the participants of the current research did not explain why their families did not participate, the reasons identified in Maxwell et al.'s (2004) study can be highlighted as recommendations for possible areas for development. To alleviate some of these concerns there is a need for FGC and YJ transition parent information to be in different languages. Moreover, YJ professionals should involve the family and other cultural leaders to conduct culturally relevant and informed FGCs.

Associating with delinquent peers is found to be the most powerful predictor of criminal behaviour (Becroft, 2009c). The participants identified the influence of peer groups during YJ transitions. A majority of the young people felt that they were influenced by their peers or peer pressured into anti-social behaviour. One youth participant talked about having supportive parents yet being involved with the "wrong crowd" outside of school. Despite positive parental support, peer influence had greater effect for this young person. Research has found that often peers can overshadow parental influence during middle adolescence, leading to poor bonding with the family (Altschuler & Brash, 2004).

In addition, a few professionals discussed gangs as substitute for family, due to the lack of supportive families. Two of the youth participants from the research demonstrated being socially conscious of the pressures faced by adolescents in society and the consequences of it. They acknowledged the difficulties they faced and also talked about

inevitably being victims to such influence. The data gathered highlighted that though some young people were able to recognise the risks of “hanging out” with deviant peers, they still continued those relationships and were unable to sever ties. However, some youth participants though unable to make new friends, were able to build their previous prosocial relationships with peers who they had possibly sidelined during their criminal endeavours. These findings are supported by Abrams’s (2006) study where young people were unable to make new friends, and continued to reunite with old friends; despite knowing that this would risk compromising their goals. Becroft (2009c) identified that during puberty the influence of family decreases as the influence of peers increases and that of all the risk factors anti-social peers had the strongest causal relationship for youth offending. Therefore associations with anti-social peers can often lead to unsuccessful transitions and most often lead to recidivism. To reduce association with anti-social peers, YJ youth need to be provided with opportunities to be involved in the community and in peer support networks to increase their chances of meeting prosocial youth (Singh & White, 2000).

Although more than half of the young people were happy to be discharged from the YJ system, only a few young people felt they were adequately prepared and supported through the discharge process. Providing young people with appropriate transition and post-transition support was one of the main recommendations made as a result of the research. The participants highlighted key support people such as mentors and community based support as part of their transition plans. Many of the young people in the research either lacked appropriate family support or often their families lacked the skills needed to support them. Therefore providing supportive adults and peers outside of the family can provide guidance, and support and role modelling of prosocial interactions. Positive support and quality relationships enhance positive youth development and are the best predictors of successful adulthood among youth offenders (Steinberg et al., 2004). Moreover, connecting YJ youth with community organisations and support can work to break stereotypes and change community attitude towards young people and vice versa.

Connecting young people to their communities through mentoring and the provision of mentors was recommended by the participants. The youth participants highlighted the need for a mentor to provide advice and guidance during their transitions and post-YJ. Research has supported that mentoring increases prosocial bonds and increases the

chances for successful transitions (Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008). According to Singh & White (2000) being involved in mentoring programmes encourages desistance from crime. One young person recommended a “same age friend” as a mentor for YJ youth. This possibly suggests that young people need someone they can relate to, who will understand their struggles and backgrounds yet provide guidance and support when required. Young people highlighted the importance of professionals who could connect with and relate to some of the struggles young people experienced. Within the MSD Statement of intent 2012 – 2015, the Government has informed its intent to continue the Fresh Start programmes, which are mentoring based programmes. They also intend to “better practice guidance and working closely with providers on strengthening contract requirements to improve service delivery, and close monitoring of outcomes” (Ministry of Social Development, 2012, p. 36). Programmes such as Fresh Start can be beneficial in facilitating prosocial networks within communities and schools, and providing appropriate social skills training for YJ youth. Providing opportunities for positive peer interactions within school environments could possibly reduce some of the negative experiences YJ youth experience in schools.

Six out of the eight young people involved in the research described negative experiences during their time in school. A majority of them had sporadic and disrupted schooling, which included anarchic experiences leading to their exclusion from school. The youth participants in the research shared experiences of being involved in fighting, drugs and alcohol and stealing, often resulting in truancy and missing school. As a consequence many of the young people were “kicked out”/ expelled from school. Several YJ youth have sporadic schooling due to constant placement change, which research has linked to increased delinquency (Osgood et al., 2010). It can be argued that youth with sporadic schooling not only fail to gain academic skills, but they also fail to gain prosocial skills and attitudes needed to develop friendships and a sense of belonging (Becroft, 2009c). In addition, transfers to new schools and placements can have both academic and social difficulties (Sullivan, 2004). Due to issues such as truancy and intermittent schooling YJ youth generally have poor academic achievement, limited vocabulary and poor verbal reasoning (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Socially they might need to make new friends and re-establish school status and reputation that quite often leads to fighting or other anti-social activities, which result in them going back to the justice system (Herz et al., 2010). Consequently, the lack of engagement with school and truancy increases the risk of anti-social behaviour. Serious offenders are

often disengaged from educational programmes, about 1000 to 300 youth appearing in the Youth Court are disengaged from schooling and education (Becroft, 2009a).

Furthermore a few of the young people expressed school as precipitating factor and location for their previous offending. Also the participants when asked if they would go back to school chose rather to do correspondence schooling and explained that they were too old to go back to school. Often due to sporadic schooling YJ youth are not at the age-appropriate academic level and likely to be behind in their education (Sullivan, 2004). This could possibly be why YJ youth do not want to return to main stream schooling and prefer to do correspondence courses. However, all young people were open to furthering their education some lacked the appropriate support to facilitate that connection. One youth participant talked about the possibility of going to an alternative education course being disrupted by of her social worker, while some other young people attending an alternative education provider found support among their tutors. To successfully function in school and transition with positive outcomes YJ young people need to be re-engaged with schools and encouraged to pursue further education.

A key finding in the current research is the positive attitude both youth and professionals maintained towards education. At the time of the research all eight youth participants were either involved in school or intended to pursue further education. All professionals from the research identified education and school engagement as factors that promote success in transitions from the juvenile justice system (Becroft, 2009a). Attaining educational qualifications is not only a positive outcome in its own right, but is also beneficial in enhancing success in employment (Osgood et al., 2010). According to international research young people who are engaged in school are less likely to reoffend, and of those youth who reoffend the nature of the crime for which they are arrested are less serious than for youth who do not attend school (Blomberg, Bales, Mann, Piquero, & Berk, 2011). Therefore providing YJ youth with opportunities to gain academic and vocational skills during YJ transitions can enhance their possibility of gaining employment post-YJ.

One of the professionals describe incarcerated youth as a “captive audience”, and urged YJ organisations to consider the time in custody as an opportunity to re-engage young people in school and in other positive activities. He also stated that often YJ youth have been disengaged from education for a long time and as school is mandatory within YJ

facilities, they are once again given the chance to re-engage. Often mainstream schools are unwilling to take on or do not have the resources to support these young people, but at YJ facilities staff and teachers are much more equipped to support them effectively as student numbers are lower than main stream classrooms and young people can receive individual attention. Bottrell and Armstrong therefore suggest that the YJ system itself provides reintegration (in general) to some young people as a “last chance to access skills and credentials” (2007, p. 366). Also research suggests that youth with more educational attainment during incarceration and presumably stronger school attachment were significantly more likely to return to school following release (Blomberg et al., 2011). It can be argued that mandatory school attendance facilitates the opportunity for some young people to gain educational achievements and have a positive attitude towards school, therefore increasing their likelihood of returning to educational providers during their transition from YJ (Blomberg et al., 2011). To further support YJ youth, teachers and tutors working in schools should also be trained to incorporate the principles of the YDSA, and endeavour to include youth within all their discussions. Therefore a positive attitude, engagement in school and educational achievements can positively influence young people and prevent recidivism.

Despite all young people being involved in education during their transition, none of the youth participants were employed at the time of the research. There were varying reasons for this, some of the participants were in the process of completing an FGC plan and were unable to pursue employment due to their extensive plans. However a few of the older youth relayed experiences of working low-paying jobs for short amount of time and either being fired or taken advantage of. However, most of the young people had goals to attain future employment in their fields of interest. In addition disrupted schooling, YJ involvement and low attainment of skills can significantly affect employment opportunities (Bottrell & Armstrong, 2007). According to Bottrell and Armstrong “educational qualifications underpin a new meritocratic context that personalises and legitimates the social exclusion of those who are marginalised in the job market” (2007, p. 358). Thus gaining qualifications can enable the young person to navigate and engage successfully within their social environment, and thereby gaining a sense of belonging. In order to increase the opportunities for YJ youth to gain employment with fewer barriers during their transition education providers will need to include within their curriculums technical and vocational training and skills development. In addition they should also collaborate and link with employers and

community members so as to involve YJ youth in paid or voluntary job work experiences during their transition.

Often not being employed is seen as a risk factor for delinquency, in contrast the current research found no evidence to state that being unemployed increased recidivism. Interestingly most of the professional participants highlighted being employed as part of a successful transition, yet despite not having a job six out of the eight youth participants had successfully managed to stop offending. However a few of the youth participants had worked short-term jobs but were unable to retain them, while others had difficulties with gaining employment. Through employment young people can achieve relative stability in their lives, which can reduce the effects of risk factors such as financial struggles and low self-sufficiency (Barry, 2010). According to Barry (2010) young people find it difficult to attain meaningful employment, due to their low educational qualifications and limited knowledge of how to navigate through the job market. Therefore, there is a need for providing young people with vocational training and real work place experience. In addition individualised programmes that help young people gain skills needed for entering the job market such as employment knowledge on how to write a resume, attend job interviews, and answer interview questions should be included in schools and YJ facilities.

One of the participants identified a “Job House” within her perfect neighbourhood, and was unable to identify any service within New Zealand that provided such support. It highlights a need for increased youth awareness on accessing educational and employment support in the community. For instance, in the USA there are ‘One-stop Centers’, which serve as a single point of contact for youth seeking employment, they are exclusively focused on supporting young people (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Youth-friendly initiatives such as the One Stop Centre could be beneficial as it would lessen the fear of seeking help and encourage youth participation.

Currently in New Zealand there has been a strategic shift, which is in the process of materialising into policy changes. The MSD released a “Statement of Intent 2012-2015” outlining the changes that will be implemented to support and empower communities and young people. The report identifies four main priorities and one of those is “Delivering better public services”. Within the public sector the Ministry’s key focus, identified as five specific government themes are: reducing long-term welfare

dependency, boosting skills and employment, supporting vulnerable children, reducing crime, improving interaction with Government (Ministry of Social Development, 2012). Within the 'Boosting skills and employment' section the Government intends to have more young people in education, training, or work, and subsequently increasing their positive contributions to their communities. These outcomes are set to be achieved by encouraging disengaged youth to gain school leaving qualifications rather than being on the benefit. In order to achieve this young people will be linked with specialist service providers who will provide intensive and individualised support towards their goals. In addition it also provides young people with obligations to undertake budgeting and if they are parents, participate in parenting courses (Ministry of Social Development, 2012). To ensure the outcomes of the new strategised changes are met regular evaluations, youth input and participation in decision making will be required. Furthermore outcomes based research will be required to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes, which will also increase knowledge on YJ youth within the field of education.

Apart from connecting to education and employment settings, the YDSA also highlights the need for young people to be involved in their community (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). The findings highlighted community involvement through sport and church as protective factors both by youth and professional participants. Being connected to one's community through sports, cultural groups or church groups enable young people to participate, be involved and build relationships. Through these interactions young people are able to learn skills and appropriate social behaviour, and exercise autonomy, which contribute towards their resilience (Osgood et al., 2010). The youth participants talked about being involved in sporting activities and one young person recommended it as a positive way to stay away from crime:

Recommend y.p's to do activities as in sport programme [sic] (Participant F, Concept Map 11).

This young person was involved in a community touch rugby team through which he was able to attain strong positive friendships. It was an important aspect in his post-YJ life because he strongly believed that being involved in something he liked helped him gain good peers who keep him away from crime.

Other young people attributed being involved in church as contributing towards their change in attitude towards their offending. One of the youth participants who was involved in church talked about being happy, because he was able to be among “great people” and make friends who were a positive influence for him. The young person also talked about how being involved in church helped him change the way he lived, and that as a result he was in the process of renouncing his former life of drugs, fighting and alcohol (refer to Concept Map 1, Participant A). From these accounts it is evident that being connected to one’s community can act as a protective factor that can reduce the effects of risks on young people. Therefore there needs to be increased opportunities for YJ youth to enhance their engagement with community groups depending on their personal interests, as it can build their self-confidence and a sense of identity and belonging to their communities. Furthermore, community groups need to be encouraged by government and other agencies that work with YJ youth to include them within their activities.

The following table, *Table: 5.1: Aim 1: Opportunities to establish positive connections* presents the key points and recommendations on action that need to be taken to achieve Aim 1 of the YDSA in the social environments that affect YJ youth.

Table: 5.1: Aim 1: Opportunities to establish positive connections

Goals → Social Settings ↓ Environment	Goal 1: Strengths based approach	Goal 2: Quality Relationships	Goal 3: Youth Participation	Goal 4: An informed approach
Young people Peers	Encouraging and providing young people opportunities to connect with adult mentors and prosocial peers.	Peer coaching and mentoring between older and younger youth. Providing youth with skilled and trained mentors as outlined in the Statement of intent 2012 - 2015 (Ministry of Social Development, 2012)	Encouraging YJ youth to express their views positively and providing them with skills development to increase their participation within YJ, schools and the community.	Young people and their mentors collaborate to develop frameworks to guide and evaluate youth participation.
Families/ Whānau	Encouraging the active involvement and support of family and whānau during the FGC meeting and transition process.	Improve opportunities for family education and parenting skills development for parents of YJ youth. Providing families with support such as a family Social Worker.	Encourage families to involve youth in decision making during the FGC and entire transition process.	Promote the development of information regarding FGCs in different languages (especially those cultures highly represented in YJ).
Schools/ Tertiary Education institutions & training provider	Encourage schools with YJ youth to incorporate the PYD and strengths-based approach. Promoting active career development and vocational training (such as career counselling, life skills, social skill	Training teachers and tutors in using positive youth development approach. Encouraging teachers to be mentors and key support people to YJ youth.	Involving young people and teachers to have a partnership approach, where YJ youth are able to exercise autonomy and provide feedback over their own educational plans.	Including youth participation and vocational skills training as part of the teaching curriculum.

	development) within mainstream and alternative education school.			
Workplaces	Encouraging a collaborative approach between employers and schools with YJ youth. To provide work place experience during their transitions.	Providing YJ youth with employment co-ordinators who are trained in using the PYD approach, to better support and guide young people during their transitions.	Encouraging young people to voice their opinions on work place experiences and provide constructive feedback on working conditions.	Providing young people career preparation and employment support prior to and during their transitions (which is an aspect of the Statement of Intent 2012-2015).
Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Voluntary organisations</i> • <i>Sports and recreation groups</i> • <i>Church</i> • <i>Neighbourhood</i> • <i>Ethnic groups</i> 	Promoting the PYD approach among community organisations and groups. Thus YJ young people can be recognised by their strengths and talents, without the fear of exclusion or stigmatisation.	Raising the awareness within communities about attitudes towards youth, and encouraging community leaders to involve YJ youth in sport, recreation, cultural and church and spiritual activities.	Encouraging YJ youth to input into community organisations especially on aspects that affect them directly during their transitions.	Providing information and skilled support for communities and organisations willing to work alongside YJ youth.

YDSA Aim 2: Government policy and practice reflect a PYD approach

The second aim of the YDSA encourages central government and local government to incorporate the PYD approach within their practice and policies. While working within a PYD approach outlined in the YDSA the government can design policies and practice guidelines with a holistic perspective (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007).

A recommended change in the service provision of support for transitioning YJ youth was extended service provision and gradual termination of formal support services from the life of the young person. Often marginalised youth get limited support from family and community networks and therefore experience many disadvantages due to abrupt termination of formal support networks (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2003). In contrast to the accelerated transition to independence of state cared for youth, most young people in general due to educational and job market demands still live at home until their early 20s and even after continue to receive social, emotional and often financial support (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2003). International research has acknowledged that abrupt transitions to independence for youth upon reaching age of exit can have a detrimental impact on them (Abrams et al., 2007). In New Zealand the CYPF Act (1989) identifies young people as those aged below eighteen years, and as many government and non-government organisations follow the guidelines set in the legislation, which is the age at which they often cease to be involved in the lives of young people. Insisting young people to transition directly from dependence on the state or “substitute parents” to self-sufficiency is too great an expectation to place on those who not long before were a ward of the state (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2003). Therefore, the key factor is providing young people the option of extended support which can help provide young people with solutions and guidance if they encounter problems regarding school, work and housing (Abrams et al., 2007). Propp et al. (2003) refers to this as interdependent living, where young people develop through connecting and collaborating with others, and by exercising autonomy. Both Ward (2000) and Leoni (2007) suggest extending the time frame for State support for care-leavers up to the age of twenty one, due to the similarities in the populations this recommendation can also be replicated for youth transitioning from YJ. In addition long-term follow up also can provide evidence of the relationship between service delivery and recidivism rates related to YJ programming, which can subsequently contribute as evaluations and evidence based practice (Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008).

A key concern for some of the youth participants was their financial struggles during and after their transition from YJ. Some of the youth participants who were doing well in either education or in the community still cited financial problems, which exacerbated the struggles faced during their stressful transitions. Berzin (2010) states that often these young people go undetected but may indeed require assistance to ensure they are successful in their transition. The young people in the research stated needing support during and post transition for basic everyday tasks such as acquiring drivers licence, suitable accommodation, and accessing social and financial support to ensure they successfully completed their plans. Economic factors often result due to low educational achievement, and low job prospects and can drive the young people back into offending as a way to support them and their families (Berzin, 2010). Therefore state and policy makers need to rethink how to support youth who are from less privileged backgrounds and identify economic self-sufficiency as an important aspect within after-care and post-YJ.

A few of the young participants stressed the need for economic transportation options as a recommendation within their 'perfect neighbourhoods'. Illustrations of public transport such as buses, trams and vans were included. One of the participants talked about the struggles she faced navigating between the different services she had to attend to complete her FGC plan. Her financial struggles were further exacerbated by organising transport to and from these services as she lived a considerable distance away. In New Zealand children aged five to fifteen years can travel on the child fare, and youth aged sixteen to nineteen who are engaged in full-time secondary school can also travel on the child fare with a school student ID. In addition youth who are undertaking study at training or tertiary institutes receive discounted tertiary student travel fares (MAXX Auckland Transport, n.d.). However young people who are not engaged in full-time study or unemployed do not receive travel discounts. As previously mentioned a significant number of YJ youth are disengaged from education and often are unemployed and thus do not qualify for travel discounts. It is recommended that YJ youth be provided with options for economic transportation. This would enable them to successfully connect with various organisations as outlined in their FGC plan and not be restrained by their finances.

A possible suggestion is the free travel initiative in London for children under the age of eighteen (Transport for London). The free bus travel initiative in London provides

children between the age of five to ten free travel on buses, trams and trains, while those ages eleven to fifteen get free travel on buses and trams. The group aged sixteen to eighteen can also be eligible for free travel if they are involved in full time study. The three groups are required to carry a “Zip Oyster photo card” that contains their information and category of travel (Transport for London). Such an initiative can possibly alleviate some of the financial struggles faced by YJ youth during their transitions.

The recent Government report (Ministry of Social Development, 2012) sets out guidelines for supporting young people who are either on the benefit or are at risk of going on the benefit by encouraging them to engage in employment or education in return for the financial support. It also provides youth with a “Youth Service Provider” who will mentor and support them with money management and decision making to have successful independent living situations. Further assistance and child care requirements are placed on teen parents to ensure parents can connect with education, while their children experience quality childcare and early childhood education. The “Independent Youth Benefit” has now been reformed as the “Youth Payment and the Youth Parent Payment”. This initiative reflects a PYD approach, where young people are provided opportunities to connect with their communities and also build capacity to effectively support themselves and their families, through education and employment. Moreover, this initiative also provides young people with skilled adult support, who can assist them during their transition to independent living and self-sufficiency.

A few of the young people identified having supportive social workers, mentors and tutors from school. The youth expressed how these professionals supported them by engaging them in community activities, providing supervision, and guidance where needed. These not only were appreciated by the young person but also contributed to encouraging successful transitions especially among previously incarcerated youth. Young people not only feel cared for but having reliable adults can reduce the feeling of abandonment and the stress related with transitioning from YJ (Becroft, 2009c). On-going positive relationship with professionals such as social workers and mentors can enable youth to overcome adversities during and after their transitions (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2003).

However, a majority of the participants talked about unhelpful social workers and YJ professionals, inadequate time for transition preparation and the lack of specialised and individualised service provision. The interviews and workshops revealed inconsistent practice among YJ professionals, especially among those responsible for transition planning. Thus, to effectively support YJ youth, there needs to be specific YJ transition guidelines and policies that guide the practice of social workers and transition coordinators. There is a need for the evaluation of current transition and FGC protocols and procedures to ensure YJ professionals have consistent practice. According to Maxwell et al. (2004) young people should be sufficiently prepared, adequately supported during their transition phase, participate in the preparation of their transition plan, and be involved in the decision making process and not be tokenised or excluded. Involving young people in all stages of the decision-making process is identified by the YDSA as best-practice (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). One of the intended outcomes within the Government's strategic changes for 2012-2015 (Ministry of Social Development, 2012) is the availability of more opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills and positively contribute to their communities. This will ensure youth involvement in decision-making processes locally, regionally and nationally.

Professional participants also recommended YJ professionals to spend adequate time to familiarise themselves with the young person's family and their family dynamics. The familiarisation with the family would enable professionals to make informed decisions regarding interventions and support needed for the young person and their family, therefore catering to the young people's individualised needs.

During the interviews a few professionals revealed that social workers and youth workers often get burnt out due to work load and stress. This could possibly contribute to certain YJ professionals and social workers being described as "unhelpful" by the participants. To prevent stress and burn out the participants recommended professional development and support for YJ professionals and social workers to ensure they provide good practice towards youth. In addition these support systems would also support and protect the professionals. Nelson et al. recommends on-going professional development system that provide "a climate of support, coaching and mentoring are likely to reduce stress and burnout and increase capacity and job satisfaction" (2010, p. 78). As previously mentioned relatability to professionals was a major factor that encouraged

young people to trust and build rapport with them. For instance, despite previously having bad experiences one youth participant was willing to connect with and accept help from her mentor and the Police officer who helped her during her programme. Therefore it is recommended that professionals working with youth take the time to get to know the young person and their family backgrounds, and explore appropriate grounds to connect with them. This encourages better working relationship between professionals and young people with less power imbalances.

Participants acknowledged a collaboration of multiple services such as healthcare, dental, counselling, mental health services, education, sport and cultural programmes being provided while young people were involved in YJ and specifically in YJ facilities, but this service provision was not replicated when they were in the community during or after their transition. There needs to be a collaborative and holistic wrap-around model of service provision to young people regardless of their YJ status. Moreover services must employ an individualised holistic wrap around service model to effectively address the individualised needs of transitioning YJ youth (Bullis, Yovanoof, Mueller, & Havel, 2002).

The Youth Offending Strategy recognises the importance of inter-agency collaboration and encourages closer working relationships among the Police, CYF, Education and Health, which are the four core agencies responsible for the well being of YJ youth (Ministry of Justice, 2002). Inter-agency collaboration can improve communication, information sharing and prevent duplication of services, between organisations and ultimately this will positively influence young people by providing well assessed and integrated interventions to support them during their transitions (Osgood et al., 2010). However a question that can be further explored through research is whether young people return to YJ in need of these services, and the wrap-around service provision they receive when in YJ facilities, and if so how can we provide them with these services outside of YJ.

The following table, *Table 5.2: Aim 2: Government policy and practice reflect a PYD approach* will provide recommendations on how the government can improve the transition process for YJ youth.

Table 5.2: Aim 2: Government policy and practice reflect a PYD approach

Goals → Social Environment Settings ↓	Goal 1: Strengths based approach	Goal 2: Quality Relationships	Goal 3: Youth Participation	Goal 4: An informed approach
Government/ Local Government/ Decision Making	Promoting and ensuring that PYD principles are incorporated into policies and standard procedures of YJ such as during FGCs.	Ensuring that according to the Statement of Intent better working environments and consistent practice are implemented when working with YJ youth	Encourage YJ youth participation through youth councils or advisory groups to evaluate current policies that affect them	Evaluating and reviewing current protocols regarding FGC & youth transition practices and developing a specific policy for YJ youth transitions
Government Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health sector • Education sector • Social services sector • Justice sector 	Developing a collaborated and coordinated approach to service provision to youth as recommended by the Youth offending Strategy. Recognising the needs for YJ youth and providing specialised services to support them during their transition (An intended action in the Statement of Intent 2012 -2012 (Ministry of Social Development, 2012)).	Providing a professional development system for social workers, youth workers health professionals, and youth justice and education providers to effectively manage their work load and stress, such as supervision.	Encouraging YJ youth to be involved in all levels of the service provision, and encourage regular consultation of service providers with the youth.	Regular evaluations and reviews on effectiveness of service provision to YJ youth.

YDSA Aim 3: Access to youth development opportunities

A key protective factor identified by the YJ professionals was the young people's motivation to change and their ability to envision and set goals for the future. They talked about vision as a key ingredient in creating successful transitions for YJ youth. All young people involved in the research had a vision for the future and goals to either achieve positive outcomes or ways to avoid negative outcomes. The goals of the young people included educational achievement, employment and career and a keen desire to stay away from the justice system. Most of the young people had a positive attitude towards desisting from crime, and this was a significant driving force during their transitions. Despite negative experiences and circumstance some of YJ youth participants were able to achieve a level of self-sufficiency, and some were able to achieve more substantial success, such as graduating from high school. Moreover with the lack of adequate support during YJ youth transitions, often personal resources become more important to produce successful outcomes (Berzin, 2010). Therefore youth who are able to maintain protective factors and traits related to resilience during their transition can achieve successful outcomes despite adversities. (Berzin, 2010)

In a study conducted with YJ youth with disabilities, several participants who were able to formulate positive goals and structure ways to achieve them were reported to have successfully attained them during transition (Hagner, Malloy, Mazzone, & Cormier, 2008). Providing opportunities for goal setting within schools and community settings and being encouraged to envision a positive life can positively influence YJ youth during their transitions. This in turn will provide hope where once there might have been none and inspire change. Moreover, government initiatives such as the "Prime Ministers Youth Programme" can particularly benefit YJ youth as it rewards and fosters achievement made by youth aged fourteen to seventeen who have overcome adversity (Ministry of Social Development, 2012). This could be one possible incentive for YJ youth, where their positive contributions and achievements are recognised.

The CYPF Act (1989) reinforces the importance of youth participation and input during FGCs. All of the youth in the research stated having an FGC at some stage in their YJ experience. Almost all the professional participants of the research stated that young people were provided with opportunities to input during their FGCs and their transition planning. The professionals also stated that young people were provided with adequate preparation on their transition plan prior to their FGCs. However in contrast to the

professionals' opinions some young people specified their lack of input and preparation during their FGC planning process. Moreover, one young person who was presented with the opportunity to speak during the FGC expressed being extremely overwhelmed with emotion and was unable to contribute. This highlights a lack of appropriate youth participation within YJ processes. From the research it was identified that often adults made the decisions for the young people who were expected to adhere despite their personal choices. A similar lack in youth participation, and preparation was identified in the study conducted by Maxwell et al (2004). Maxwell et al also stated that professionals involved in the FGC effectively "shut out" the young person during these proceedings. This was also described in the current research. One young person stated just accepting the decision made by the professionals as they had suggested it would lead to early release from YJ. This young person may have had goals and aspirations but these were sidelined for the promise of "freedom". These practices hinder positive youth development. Conversely it creates a state of "learned helplessness" among YJ adolescents, and does not allow them to exercise autonomy. Maxwell et al recommends that:

There should be good preparation before the conference and at the conference, the young person should feel supported, understand what is happening, participate in the conference and not feel stigmatised or excluded. A conference that generates feeling of remorse, of being able to repair harm and of being forgiven, and encourages the young offender to form the intention not to reoffend, is likely to reduce the chance of further offending (2004, p. 291).

Young people are more likely to be allowed to participate and input into the planning of their transitions if they have formulated a pro-active approach towards attaining positive goals. Similar to findings in a study by Kashiwabara et al (2007) the current research noticed that although the professionals agreed that youth participation and input is essential, often they themselves limit youth autonomy providing reasons such as organisational pressures, professional protocol and young people's lack of ability to envision future possibilities. When asked what key areas could young people be supported in during their transition one of the professional participants discussed the importance of young people knowing their possibilities for the future:

I think the young person having a good say into what's happening next, more often than not they cannot because they don't know what they want. They don't know what is possible (Participant 5).

Therefore in order to facilitate positive transitions young people need to be provided with tools to formulate goals and ways to attain them. Young people taking an active role in creating their own success can contribute towards building their resilience.

During the interviews with the professionals one of the aspects mentioned specifically in regards to youth transition were the inadequate planning of FGC or discharge meetings due to time constraints. This was attributed to the uncertainty of YJ placement and young people's rapidly changing legal and custody statuses. According to the CYPF Act (1989) the specified statutory time frames to convene a police-referred FGC is twenty one days, while a Youth Court referred conference is ten working days. Maxwell et al (2004) stated that in a small percentage of cases these time frames to organise FGCs were not met. It was suggested that these time frames were unsatisfactory, and were extended due to extreme workloads and the importance of organising appropriate people to attend. To conduct FGCs according to the CYPF Act (1989) there needs to be standardisation of practice for organising FGCs, the importance for allowing sufficient preparation time, and improved staffing levels within CYF.

The research findings identified that seven out of the eight young people included drugs or alcohol as an influence prior to YJ involvement and during their transitions. Some of the youth explained that they were offending to maintain their drug habits or had offended due to being under the influence. Only one of the youth participants did not include substance abuse as an influence, however, he did acknowledge its prevalence among YJ youth and, therefore included a 'quit line' as one of his recommendations. This highlighted an important risk factor related to offending among New Zealand youth. Research has shown that young people who use illicit drugs are more likely to commit crimes (Becroft, 2009a). As previously stated in the literature review (Chapter 2), a large percentage of young people appearing in the New Zealand Youth Court have drug and alcohol dependency, which is often connected to their offending. This is clearly problematic, and would undoubtedly continue to affect them during their transitions.

Despite the prevalence and the literature that correlates substance abuse and offending, most of the young people in the research were not provided with drug and alcohol services during their transitions. On the other hand the one young person who was provided with drug and alcohol services refused to participate because she thought she

did not need it. It can be argued that young people often do not comprehend the severity of the problem or lack motivation to change. In general research has reported that adolescents are less motivated to engage and remain in drug and alcohol services compared to adults (Clair et al., 2011). Often when young people are motivated to engage it is due to external motivating factors such as FGC or court mandates and pressure from family (Clair et al., 2011). The study reported that young people were more likely to be substance abusers if their peers were engaged in such behaviour. Therefore assessing young people's motivation to change before their transition and then assigning them to first receive "motivational enhancement intervention" and then a drug and alcohol rehabilitation would increase engagement and retention within these services (Clair et al., 2011, p. 679).

According to the Statement of Intent the government intend to reduce youth crime by addressing the difficulties faced by youth offenders and their families such as "unemployment, limited ability for parents and families to provide appropriate support and inter-generational problems" (Ministry of Social Development, 2012, p. 36). The government also intend to provide more effective programmes to support YJ youth, and improve service delivery and outcomes for existing programmes such as Fresh Start (mentoring) programmes. Moreover, the report (Ministry of Social Development, 2012) identifies that 'Supervision with Activity' Court orders have been effective, and therefore more youth with those Court orders will remain in the community and be involved in a range of support systems during their transition.

Furthermore, individualised plans will be developed at FGCs and the Youth Courts that will identify the needs presented by the young person. Thus during transition they will be supported with services that target their specific needs be it mentoring, drug and alcohol or family support. The government assures that professionals working with YJ youth will implement evidence based practice and interventions to reduce the risk of reoffending (Ministry of Social Development, 2012). Most importantly, the Government intends to work with YJ youth to build transition plans to ensure young people successfully engage in work, education or training (Ministry of Social Development, 2012). Finally to ensure outcome achievement, short-term and long-term progress will be measured against performance measures. These new Government initiatives will be a positive step towards ensuring successful transitions of YJ youth.

A recommendation provided by one of the youth participants was to create an “X-YJ youth advisory group”, which would educate and inform young people about how to desist from crime through life experiences shared by ex-youth offenders. The participant explained that YJ youth were more likely to connect with people who share similar life experiences as they would prove more relatable than some formal professional relationships. Sullivan (2004) also recommends the use of community advisory groups as initiatives to plan ‘after care’ for youth from the YJ system. The groups would require stable mentors and support to keep the advisory groups sustainable, and ensure commitment among its members. Furthermore clear pathways need to be created for youth to progress within the group. For instance, older members of the group should be provided with the tools to take up leadership positions within the group after a certain amount of involvement and commitment. Moreover, the partnership approach between the community and young people will provide opportunities for youth participation, sharing of knowledge, and could even break down barriers between youth and adults within the community.

The recommendations on ways to effectively provide YJ youth with youth development opportunities is provided in the following goals framework, *Table 5.3: Aim 3: Access to youth development opportunities*.

Table 5.3: Aim 3: Access to youth development opportunities

Goals → Social Environment Settings ↓	Goal 1: Strengths based approach	Goal 2: Quality Relationships	Goal 3: Youth Participation	Goal 4: An informed approach
Schools	Encouraging schools and teachers to provide young people opportunities to recognise their strengths and abilities, and motivate them to envision a positive future.	Training schools to adopt the PYD approach when working with YJ youth.	Providing YJ youth with opportunities for goal setting and ways to achieve them.	Inform young people of initiatives such as the Prime Ministers Youth Programme through which their achievements can be celebrated and their efforts can be rewarded.
Government funded/non-government agencies youth development programmes/ Government provision Local service	Focusing on enhancing strengths of youth within their FGC process, and creating safe environments for their participation	Ensuring FGC and their planned interventions are delivered by well trained and culturally appropriate professionals, according to the PYD approach	Provide young people with opportunities to be involved in their FGC and have input on the programmes and services they would need to access as part of their transition plan	Developing best practice for conducting FGC for YJ youth. Provide youth with the FGC guidelines prior to their FGC to inform them of the process
Communities • Sports • Church • Cultural	Promoting youth led initiatives such as an ex-YJ youth advisory group that educate and inform young people about ways to positively desist from crime and prevent re-offending through sharing their experiences	MSD and MYD provide mentors and leadership training to support the YJ youth advisory group within their communities	Encouraging and supporting YJ youth to input into practice and evaluation. Creating pathways to advance through their community involvement, and advisory groups.	Providing young people information on how to access and be involved in community activities and programmes during their transition. Providing YJ youth information on how to participate in advisory groups.

Section 2

Limitations

The following section discusses some of the limitations of the research. The topics covered are as follows: sample size, time constraints, and challenges faced due to the use of a new data collection tool.

The sample size for this research was small and limited to participants of Auckland, New Zealand. Only eight youth and five professionals were involved in the research. After reviewing the information provided the researcher would have preferred a larger sample of both youth and professionals. The research could possibly have had differing views on YJ transitions if participants from other parts of the country were included. For instance, youth recommendations on necessary aspects for YJ transitions could possibly have generated differing ideas if youth from rural areas were included.

In addition recruiting female participants posed as a difficulty, with only two young women agreeing to participate. The rest of the youth participants were made up of six young males. The difficulty could possibly stem from lower rates in female involvement in YJ, and in community organisations post-YJ. Though there were many similarities in transition experiences between the female and male youth participants, the differences were also noticeable. The young women chose to describe their lives according to specific ages, while the male youth participants described their lives in stages. A larger sample size could have produced more comparable differences between male and female YJ youth, though it was not the intention of this study to investigate the gender differences in YJ transitions and their outcomes.

The use of PAR approach is fairly new within youth research, and therefore presented a few methodological limitations. Specifically the data collection technique, concept mapping though an effective tool to engage and increase youth participation proved challenging during the workshops. The researcher initially used magazines as creative tools for the first couple of workshops, but it proved to be a distraction for participants as they spent the time reading, instead of focusing on the mapping workshop. Therefore in subsequent workshops magazines were not included. During data collection due to time constraints the researcher was unable to ask the participants to do a final overall explanation of their written and illustrative work. This would have provided the youth participants an opportunity to reflect on their work, explain the meanings of their

symbolic representations, provide reasons behind their particular choices of colour and any final comments. This information could have also helped the researcher during data analysis by eliminating any ambiguity in the meaning of their illustrative work. Therefore, future researchers should include this vital part in the data collection process when using concept maps as a research method with children and young people, to accurately gauge the meanings they place on their illustrations.

Overall despite these limitations, the sample of participants involved in the research proved to be an appropriate size for a qualitative research within the context of a Master's thesis. Moreover, the information provided by these participants has been vividly informative and contributed to the knowledge on the experiences of youth from the justice system in New Zealand.

CHAPTER 6

Recommendations

The aim of the research was to understand the transitions of young people from the YJ system, and identify factors that influence this process. The first part of this chapter will provide a summary of findings to highlight the results and discussion points found in the previous two chapters. The rest of the chapter will address three topics which are fundamental to this research. The first topic being discussed is incorporating a PYD approach when working with YJ youth, and the recommendations will be based on the findings of this research and the researcher's own views. The second topic will discuss the importance of youth participation within their social environments, and some recommendations around this. The third topic will consider the use of PAR research approach within the current research and provide recommendations on using such an approach in future projects involving young people.

Summary of Findings

From the research it was identified that youth transitioning from YJ in New Zealand encounter many factors that either hinder or encourage positive transition outcomes. The youth participants were involved in a concept mapping workshop while the professionals were interviewed. The concept mapping method is based on PAR methodology, and is a research tool that encourages youth participation and engagement while recognising the creative forms of communication among marginalised youth. The workshops and the interviews focused on the risk and protective factors that affect YJ youth and the recommendations towards improving the YJ transition process.

The participants of this research identified several factors that influence youth criminal behaviour and continue to affect them during their YJ transitions. The participants identified family, peer groups, negative school experiences and substance abuse as risk factors that encouraged youth offending. In addition the participants identified protective factors such as being engaged in the community either through school or sports, having future goals, being self-reliant, resilient and having a strong support system. These factors enabled young people to desist from their past offending despite their above mentioned adversities. Furthermore participants identified services and processes within YJ transitions that were working well and those that were not, and recommendations were provided.

The recommendations made as a result of the research focus on the need to provide YJ youth with stable family and living situations, increased family support and education, improved and extended service provision, opportunities for personal goal setting and motivation, and supportive professional systems to increase their probability for successful outcomes. In addition most of the participants advocated for greater support in the form of stable, consistent and caring adults within the young person's family and friends or through professionals. Recommendations also highlighted the need to engage YJ youth in school and the community through sport and church, in order to motivate change and develop positive peer groups.

Some of the participants clearly highlighted the lack of input for youth and their families within YJ transition proceedings. This often left young people unaware of their transition plans or the support they were provided, and consequently the youth were unmotivated about their transition. As a result recommendations for increased involvement and input for YJ youth and their families during FGCs and transition planning were made by both sets of participants. Interestingly there was a lack of formal support networks identified by most of the youth participants within their 'perfect neighbourhoods'. However, when professional support was included, the young people were often alienated or isolated from them. Certain young people mentioned professional support during their YJ involved. However, as they discussed their transition phase and post-YJ experiences lesser professional support networks were identified. Therefore, the most important recommendation among the participants was providing consistent professional support to youth during and after their transition from YJ. Moreover, the YDSA framework was used to frame the recommendations of the research to provide a strengths-based, youth-focused approach on improving the YJ transition process for young people and enabling them to develop successfully through partnership and support.

Incorporating the PYD approach

The PYD approach recognises the strengths and resources within young people and discourages identifying them as problems or risks (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007). The YDSA is based on the PYD approach. It informs government, families and communities on ways to support youth to develop skills and competencies needed to participate in society positively (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). From the findings of the research it is evident that there is still a need for the PYD approach to be

incorporated into YJ transition practice and procedures. The current research highlighted that within the YJ system young people are considered from a problem-focused approach. This approach is inclined to identify and address the risks and concerns YJ present and often overlooks their strengths and competencies.

Although none of the participants referred to specific approaches or frameworks, their recommendations for strengthening family and community ties, increasing youth participation and being provided with opportunities to develop autonomy and build capacity are recognised in the YDSA as important aims for achieving positive youth development (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). Incorporating the YDSA framework when working with YJ youth will provide them the best possible opportunities and be valued and supported to develop positively without the fear of being marginalised. The goals framework was used to frame the recommendations to improve YJ transitions as it provides a clear picture of the various social environments locally, regionally and nationally that influence youth and how to specifically target and support their needs within each setting (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007).

The best predictors for successful outcomes among the youth in this research points to the relationships they formed during their transitions, and the quality of these relationships determined whether they were able to achieve positive outcomes. Therefore the YJ system needs to re-examine the goals and methodologies from a youth centred development perspective to facilitate successful transitions of youth into autonomous adults. Incorporating a PYD approach within YJ services can encourage an increase in youth specific services where adults and young people are partners in their development. Moreover the goals framework within the YDSA is categorised by specific goals that encourage recognising young people's strengths, developing quality relationships, increasing youth participation opportunities, and good information for positive youth development. Therefore while working with YJ youth if these goals are consistently implemented it will increase the probability of successful YJ transitions.

Most importantly regular evaluations need to be carried out within government and non-government services that encounter YJ youth to ensure their approach is strongly rooted within the principles of YDSA. While setting the findings within the YDSA framework it was noted by the researcher that there is a need to develop specific transition guidelines for professionals working with youth within each YJ setting be it residential,

or community based. Therefore to ensure sustained evidence-based practice there needs to be regular evaluation and further research to understand the benefits of working within the YDSA framework, and how it can be beneficial for marginalised youth.

Youth Participation

The participants of the research highlighted the need for youth participation during transition proceedings. The young people felt strongly about their lack of opinion during their transition proceedings. While the professionals agreed there was a need for youth participation they were sceptical and doubtful of the ability of young people to make the right choices. According to the YDSA young people need to be provided with opportunities to participate and engage in order to be autonomous (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). For YJ youth providing this within their transition planning and FGC can potentially increase their commitment to completing their plans successfully. One of the professionals stated that YJ youth have often been labelled as failures and therefore develop a negative self-image. Including young people in social discussions increases their opportunities to build rapport with their community and to exercise autonomy through demonstrating their skills and abilities (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007). Moreover “involved youth build not only their individual capacity but also the community’s capacity to respond to change” (Ministry of Youth Development, 2007, p. 23). By embracing youth input services can gain a better understanding and clearer picture of the reasons for youth engagement within services. This can provide vital feedback regarding their service, the delivery and outcomes. In addition there is a need for long-term follow up to evaluate programme goals, effectiveness and continued engagement of youth within services. This is particularly vital for health and mental health providers, and drug and alcohol prevention services because continuation of engagement can reduce risk taking behaviours among YJ youth.

Youth participation can also occur through evaluation of services. Young people involved in YJ programmes should be regularly provided with opportunities to feedback to organisers on positive and negative aspects of the programme. Furthermore YJ youth need to be included in solving the problems identified, and designing activities to increase youth engagement in services. Outcomes based evaluations can also be carried out to identify whether youth needs have been met, and how service provision can be improved. Further research should involve a larger group of YJ youth and follow their

progress until early adulthood to understand the best possible service components that successfully prevent recidivism.

PAR Methodology

As previously mentioned suggestions from senior academics and the researcher's interest in innovative research methodologies led to incorporating the PAR approach within the current research. The PAR approach encourages the involvement of those directly affected by the problem being investigated, as they "possess expert knowledge derived from everyday participation in the contexts under investigation and their direct engagement with the issues under study" (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009, p. 23). PAR research with youth is best situated within the social contexts in which they live and learn. In addition the PAR approach provides youth with the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the project, and there is commitment to research and learning ways to intervene and transform knowledge and practice to improve the lives of these young people (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009). Moreover, this approach recognises and appreciates the diverse competencies and abilities of youth, and thus encourages the use of various mediums to communicate information. As a result this enables full participation of young people regardless of their academic skill level. The current research incorporated the use of a concept mapping tool, which provided young people the freedom to express themselves through verbal, written and pictorial means.

The dominant belief within research is that academia is "the task of the elite" (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009, p. 7). Young people have largely contributed to raw data but have been considered unqualified to interpret the data (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009). This exclusion is intensified for youth leaving statutory care as they are often described as low academic achievers, with multiple problems, which can create doubts about their intellectual capability (Maxwell et al., 2004; Ward, 2000). In addition academics have previously devalued non-academic knowledge, which further isolates young people from social research. However, contrary to that belief, the participants of this current research were capable of constructive feedback and evaluation. The lived experiences of the youth participants provided valuable insight into the perceptions and knowledge of YJ youth. Although some of their information was provided through non-traditional mediums, their recommendations were relevant, insightful and extremely informative. Often adults and youth have differing ideas on the delivery of services and the relevance and appeal of the content. Therefore, youth input in service and programme planning

can ensure the development of efficacious and specialised interventions that young people would engage in.

Research involving youth should try to incorporate non-traditional research methodologies to encourage youth participation. The PAR approach recognises the various forms of communication among youth and encourages young people to participate and provide information in ways they feel most comfortable. Moreover at the end of the mapping workshops several of the youth participants stated that they had expected the research to be boring but were surprised it was interesting and fun. Therefore providing youth with PAR projects will reduce the negative stereotypes of research work, and could possibly encourage more young people to be involved in research and provide feedback without restrictions. Possible future research studies could explore the difference in artistic expression between non-YJ and YJ youth, and the variations in 'perfect neighbourhood' designs using the PAR approach. In New Zealand there are projects that have included youth through methods such as 'Photo voice' and community mapping. However these methods need to be included in academic research with YJ youth, which can encourage their input on YJ policies and practices in New Zealand. The PAR approach not only fosters youth participation but it also appreciates their contributions.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings and the researcher's views the recommendations for further research have been divided into three topics: Incorporating YDSA framework within YJ transitions, increasing YJ youth participation and input and using PAR methodologies in youth research. These three areas are suggestions to increase YJ youth involvement within society. The YDSA framework is important as it places the young person at the centre, while providing them with supportive networks that will build their capacity and allow for healthy youth development. It is recommended that more youth services incorporate the YDSA framework when working with youth transitioning from the YJ system. Although some organisations already use PYD approach there is a need for others to recognise the potential and benefits of this approach. Thus more research and evaluation is required to better understand the benefits of using the YDSA framework against other service models in regards to YJ youth.

Aligned with the principles of the YDSA is the recommendation for an increase in youth participation within the justice sector. Through participation young people can express themselves and subsequently be recognised for their skills and abilities, which can build their capacity and self-efficacy. The use of PAR approach is to encourage youth participation within academic research realms, where young people are recognised as partners and involved in all aspects of research. The PAR methodology provides marginalised youth an opportunity to express themselves and provide feedback on issues that affect their lives, while simultaneously experiencing and learning in non-traditional settings. YJ youth often face multiple challenges during their transitions, but if society can recognise their strengths, treat them as an important part of the community and provide them opportunities to voice their opinions, then they can get closer towards achieving successful outcomes.

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GLOSSARY

Acronyms

CYPF Act	Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989
CYF	Child, Youth and Family Services
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
MYD	Ministry of Youth Development
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PYD	Positive Youth Development approach
PYDA	Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa framework
YDSA	Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa

Māori words

Word	Meaning
Aotearoa	New Zealand
Hapū	Sub- tribe
Iwi	Tribe
Māori	Indigenous peoples of New Zealand
Marae	Traditional Māori meeting place
Rangatahi	Youth
Tikanga	Cultural Values and beliefs
Whānau	Family
Whānaungatanga	Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection

APPENDIX A: YOUTH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet: Youth Participants



Date Information Sheet Produced:

20th January 2011

Project Title

Understanding juvenile transitions from the justice system

An Invitation

My name is Angela Joseph, and I would like to invite you to take part in a research study of young people involved in the youth justice system in New Zealand.

Research is about finding out information that helps us all understand why things happen. It is often used to try and make things better.

The research will also help me to complete my Masters of Arts degree at AUT.

Taking part is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time before I finish collecting the information, like doing the mapping exercise.

Taking part or not taking part is not going to make a difference to you or the organisation where you are based.

What is the purpose of this research?

The main purpose of the research is to understand what programmes and services young people use when they are involved in the youth justice system. Your experience can help me understand that. Also, you might have some suggestions about how things can be improved/ made better.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been invited to participate because you have been involved in the youth justice system, in the past. So you know what happens and you might have some ideas about what should happen and what helps to not go back again.

What will happen in this research?

You will be given some information about the research and then asked if you want to take part. If you do, the person giving you the information will ask you to give consent. Giving consent is saying 'yes' you're going to take part. That person will get you to sign a form saying you're going to take part. You can take this form to your parents and

guardians and discuss it with them before you sign. Within one to two weeks after signing the consent, you will take part in a session where you will spend some time drawing a map (in words or symbols or pictures) about what happened when you entered and then left the justice system.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Some of the stuff that comes up in the session might make you angry or sad.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If during the sessions you get angry or sad, I have provided you with some telephone numbers to contact counsellors from Youthline or Lifeline at the end of this information sheet. Youthline provide a free phone and text counselling service. You can also talk about these things with your youth workers.

What are the benefits?

This is your chance to voice your opinions on aspects that have previously affected your life and can create public awareness of life for a young person in youth justice. I can include some of your ideas in my thesis and a summary of what I find out will be forwarded to Youth Justice and MSD. It could contribute to making some changes in the way things are done when young people are involved in the YJ system. It can also encourage improvement in how things are done, which can directly affect those that are involved and future generations who may be involved in the youth justice system.

How will my privacy be protected?

Nobody will be identified by name so no one will know you took part.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

It is not going to cost you anything to take part except your time – about 1 hour.

What long do I have to consider this invitation?

About two weeks. If you say yes on the day you got the information about the research, then you still have two weeks before the mapping session. Turning up to the mapping session is your final consent.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

You've got to sign a consent form – a form that says you want to take part. You might get it from the person who gave you the information about the research or you might decide to get in contact with me to get the form or you might just turn up to the mapping session (because you heard it from one of the others). Whatever, you have to sign that form before you take part in the mapping.

Before you got any information, your youth organisation must also give permission for the research to take place.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you want a copy of what I found out, I can give you one and I'm planning to have a session with all of you who took part, to tell you what I found out and what I'm going to do with the information.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

If you have any issues/problems about the research (not about juvenile justice) contact the Project Supervisor, **Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan**, jkeelan@unitec.ac.nz or phone on 09 815 4321.

You can also contact **Dr Rosemary Godbold**, rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 6902. She's the Executive Secretary of the committee that gave permission for the research to take place.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Angela Joseph, contact Email: pqh6683@aut.ac.nz

Mobile no: 021 043 0675

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan, jkeelan@unitec.ac.nz,

Telephone no: 09 815 4321

Counselling Contact Details:

Lifeline: Telephone No: 09 5222 999

Website: www.lifeline.org.nz

Youthline: Telephone No: 0800 37 66 33

Free Text: 234

Website: www.youthline.co.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 8th of December, 2011, AUTEK Reference number 11/69.

APPENDIX B: PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet: Professionals



Date Information Sheet Produced:

20th January 2011

Project Title

Understanding juvenile transitions from the justice system.

An Invitation

My name is Angela Joseph, and I would like to invite you to take part in a research study of young people transitioning from the youth justice system in New Zealand. The research will contribute to completing my Masters of Arts degree from AUT. Participation in this research is voluntary and at any time prior to the completion of data collection you may withdraw if you wish.

What is the purpose of this research?

The main purpose of this qualitative study is to further understand the transition process of youth from the New Zealand juvenile justice system, and provide recommendations on transition services and programmes they can access.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been invited to participate because you have been involved in the youth justice system, and have experienced the transition process from the juvenile justice system into the community. You have been invited because you would be able to give first-hand information on transition procedures, and services.

What will happen in this research?

You will be part of a focus group and interested professional youth justice workers such as youth workers, and transition co-ordinators will be interviewed. I will provide you with information about the research topic. After the focus group and interviews the information will be analysed and recommendations will be made based on your suggestions and experiences, and will be provided to the organisation at the end of the research.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Though highly unlikely I am aware that the interviews may cause some distress due to the nature of the topic, especially when talking about negative or personal experiences of the transition process. Due to this there is a risk that participation in the research will be affected.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If you experience some discomfort or unease due to the interviews, contact details for counselling services such as Youthline and Lifeline are provided at the end of this document. The research is anonymous and your name and the name of the organisation will not be mentioned in the research. Instead each person involved will receive a participant number.

Also, you do not have to answer questions if you do not want to and doing so will not put you at a disadvantage.

What are the benefits?

The benefits of this study are once it is completed recommendations for improvement, and information on what is and has been successful in the transition process of young people from the justice system can be provided to the organisation where the research has taken place, and also to MSD. Also it can encourage more public awareness on the current processes that youth go through in the youth justice system.

How will my privacy be protected?

The names or any personal data of the participants that may be involuntarily offered will only be accessed by the researcher and her supervisor, and will not be mentioned anywhere in the thesis.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Your time (1 Hour maximum) will be required for participating in the research project.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

As participation is voluntary I hope you will consider my invitation to be involved in this exciting research. Also if at any time before the completion of the data collection (focus group/ interview process) you feel the need to withdraw you may do so. If there are further questions about the research please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you would like to participate you would need to sign a consent form, and in case of minors you will need the consent of a parent/ guardian. To obtain these consent forms contact me on my details provided below.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes. A copy of the summary of findings will be provided to all participants who wish to receive feedback. In addition, a special session will be held with the youth participants to provide them with additional verbal feedback. A copy of the complete thesis will be available online once it is submitted and examined.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, **Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan** on her details provided below.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Dr Rosemary Godbold, rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 6902.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**Researcher Contact Details:**

Angela Joseph: Contact Email: pqh6683@aut.ac.nz

Mobile: 021 043 0675

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan: Email: jkeelan@unitec.ac.nz,

Telephone no: 09 815 4321

Contact details for counselling options:

Lifeline: Telephone No: 09 5222 999

Website: www.lifeline.org.nz

Youthline: Telephone No: 0800 37 66 33

Free Text: 234

Website: www.youthline.co.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 8th of December, 2011. AUTECH Reference number 11/69.

APPENDIX C: PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet: (Parents/Guardians)



Date Information Sheet Produced:

20th January 2011

Project Title

Understanding juvenile transitions from the justice system.

An Invitation

My name is Angela Joseph and I invite your child to take part in a research study of young people transitioning from the justice system into the community in New Zealand. The research will contribute to achieving my Masters of Arts degree from AUT. Participation in this research is voluntary and at any time prior to the completion of data collection you may wish you withdraw. In case of conflict of interest your child can choose to participate or not, and this will neither advantage nor disadvantage them.

What is the purpose of this research?

The main purpose of this qualitative study is to better understand the transition process of youth from the New Zealand juvenile justice system, and provide recommendations on transition services and programmes they can access.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

Your child has been invited to participate because they have previously been involved with youth justice system and will be able to give first-hand information on transition procedures, and services.

What will happen in this research?

Young people who have previously been involved with the justice system and have transitioned into school/work programmes will be part of a focus group. Interested professional youth justice workers such as social workers, youth workers, and transition co-ordinators will be interviewed separately. Before the information gathering session, I will provide them with information about the research topic. Also, after the data has been collected and analysed, recommendations will be made based on their suggestions and experiences and these will be provided to the organisation at the end of the research.

What are the discomforts and risks?

I am aware that the interviews and focus may cause some distress due to nature of the topic, especially when talking about negative or personal experiences of the transition process. Due to this there is a risk that participation in the research will be affected.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If your child or ward experiences some discomfort or unease due to the interviews, contact details for counsellors will be available, and their youth workers will be contacted to provide support. AUT provides an online service, while Youth Line (0800 37 66 33 or free text 234) and Lifeline (09 5222 999) have a counselling service which they provide either through the phone or face to face. This study is anonymous and the names of the participants will NOT be mentioned in the research, as each person involved will receive a participant number. Also if certain questions are invasive or too difficult to answer participants may choose not to answer them.

What are the benefits?

Recommendations for improvement and information on what is and has been successful in the transition process of young people from the justice system can be provided. This can directly affect some young people that are already in the justice system, or make way for better service for future generations.

How will my privacy be protected?

The names or personal data of the participants will only be accessed by the researcher and the supervisor, but will not be mentioned anywhere in the thesis.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs to you but your child/ward will give up about one hour of their time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

As participation is voluntary I hope you will consider my invitation for your child/ward to be involved in this exciting research. Also if at any time before the completion of the data collection (focus group/ interview process) you feel the need to withdraw your child/ward you may do so. If there are further questions about the research please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you, and making arrangements to meet.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you would like your child to participate you would need to sign a consent form. To obtain these consent forms contact me on my details provided below.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes. A summary report will be provided to the all participants who wish to receive feedback.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, **Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan**, jkeelan@unitec.ac.nz or phone on 09 815 4321.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Dr Rosemary Godbold, rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 6902.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**Researcher Contact Details:**

Angela Joseph, contact Email: pqh6683@aut.ac.nz

Mobile: 021 043 0675

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan: Email: jkeelan@unitec.ac.nz,

Telephone no: 09 815 4321

Counselling options***Contact details:***

Lifeline: Telephone No: 09 5222 999

Website: www.lifeline.org.nz

Youthline: Telephone No: 0800 37 66 33

Free Text: 234

Website: www.youthline.co.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 8th of December 2011, AUTECH Reference number 11/69.

APPENDIX D: YOUTH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Youth participant

Consent Form



Project title: *Understanding juvenile transitions from the Justice System*

Project Supervisor: *Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan*

Researcher: *Angela Joseph*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 20. 01. 2011.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the mapping workshop is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the mapping workshop and that it will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, the relevant information about myself including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's Name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee 8th December 2011 AUTEK Reference number Ethics Application Number 11/69

APPENDIX E: YOUTH PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM

Assent Form



Project title: *Understanding Juvenile transitions from the justice system into the community*

Project Supervisor: *Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan*

Researcher: *Angela Joseph*

- ☐ I have read and understood the sheet telling me what will happen in this study and why it is important.
- ☐ I have been able to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that while the information is being collected, I can stop being part of this study whenever I want and that it is perfectly ok for me to do this.
- ☐ If I stop being part of the research, I understand that all information about me, including the recordings or any part of them that include me, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.

Participant's signature:

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Participant's name:

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Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

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.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 8th of December, 2011. AUTEK Reference number: Ethics Application Number 11/69

APPENDIX F: PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Professionals Consent Form



Project title: *Understanding Juvenile transitions from the Justice System*

Project Supervisor: *Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan*

Researcher: *Angela Joseph*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 20th January 2011.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's Name:

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Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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.....

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 8th December 2011. AUTEK Reference number Ethics Application Number 11/69.

APPENDIX G: PARENT/ GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Parent/Guardian Consent Form



Project title: *Understanding juvenile transitions from the Youth Justice System*

Project Supervisor: *Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan*

Researcher: *Angela Joseph*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 20th January 2011.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the mapping workshop and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw my child/children and/or myself or any information that we have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If my child/children and/or I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to my child/children taking part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Child/children's name :

.....

Parent/Guardian's signature:

.....

Parent/Guardian's name:

.....

Parent/Guardian's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 8th December 2011, AUTEK Reference number Ethics Application Number 11/69.

APPENDIX H: THEMES EXPLORED DURING CONCEPT MAPPING WORKSHOPS

PART 1

Map out/Draw/ Write about your youth justice life

- A timeline of your youth justice life.
- You can either draw or write names, places, type of services and things you saw and people you met during the time when you were in YJ.
- Include the types of people involved (e.g. social worker and case worker)
- Discuss your plan for after YJ.
- Talk about your culture and about any cultural things mentioned or cultural leaders or mentors that attended your FGC.
- Write or draw what you remember of how it was after you left YJ like going to course, school, drug and alcohol programme and work.
- Include your personal relationships – people you met (family, friends, social workers, and teachers)
- Talk about the things that helped you stay on track and the people that helped you.
- The stuff you were involved in like school, course, drug and alcohol programmes or cultural programmes (for example staying in a Marae).

PART 2

Map out leaving Youth Justice to go to your perfect positive neighbourhood.

- Draw or write about who and what you would put in a community to help YJ youth
- Include the people you want in your neighbourhood
- Include services you like, ideas about programmes
- Include your shops, services, programmes, youth centres
- Include the types of support you want (Money, adult support, more programmes)

APPENDIX I: GUIDING QUESTIONS USED FOR INTERVIEWS

Professionals and community members:

1. What is your professional background and role in the youth justice setting?
2. What are the policies and procedures that exist with youth transitioning out of the justice system?
3. When does a transition plan get drafted up?
4. Who is involved in planning the transition plan or FGC? Are youth involved and given a choice?
5. What support services and people are available to youth while in the justice system?
6. What are the services available to transitioning youth?
7. What steps are carried out to assist the young person with the planning of the transition?
8. What services can be included in the planning and/or transition process?
9. Are family, whānau, hapū and iwi or other appropriate cultural groups involved in the planning and the transition process?
10. How are they involved?
11. What are some things young people struggle with during and after their transition from YJ?
12. How can we support them to reduce the effects of these negative factors?
13. What or who would be ideal support for these young people?

Recommendations:

14. How do you define a successful transition?
15. What factors contribute to a successful transition and what factors be it within the person or their community that hinder this success?
16. How can preparation of the young people be improved?
17. Would you recommend providing key support members to transitioning youth in the community? If so who, and what sort of role would they play?
18. What cultural aspects do you think can be incorporated into the transition plan?
19. How do you think the transition process of youth from YJ system can be improved on the whole?

APPENDIX J: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Confidentiality Agreement



Project title: *Understanding the transition of juveniles from the justice system.*

Project Supervisor: *Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan*

Researcher: *Angela Joseph*

- ☐ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ☐ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☐ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature:

.....

Transcriber's name:

.....

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Dr. Teorongonui Josie Keelan, jkeelan@unitec.ac.nz,

Telephone no: 09 815 4321

.....

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 8th December 2011, AUTEK Reference number 11/69.

APPENDIX K: AUTECH ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH)

To: Teorongonui Josie Keelan
From: **Dr Rosemary Godbold** Executive Secretary, AUTECH
Date: 8 December 2011
Subject: Ethics Application Number 11/69 **Understanding juvenile transitions from the justice system.**

Dear Teorongonui Josie

Thank you for your request for approval of amendments to your ethics application. I am pleased to advise that I have approved a minor amendment to your ethics application allowing an expansion of the recruitment criteria. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2 of AUTECH's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTECH's meeting on 23 January 2012.

I remind you that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTECH:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 16 May 2014;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 16 May 2014 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTECH is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTECH approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTECH grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact me by email at ethics@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 6902.

On behalf of AUTECH and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rosemary Godbold
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee