



Resilient communities are built upon resilient people. The Resiliency Toolkit seeks to build resilience *across our region's entire population of 13-18 year olds* by giving them important skills and information they need as they transition into adulthood, so they are able to bounce back from whatever life throws at them.

Several years ago the Y's youth work team, who worked one-to-one with vulnerable young people, asked a simple question: **"What if we were able to give ALL young people a similar kind of support to what works so well one-to-one?"** From there we formulated the ambitious goal to find out if such support already existed and whether young people and the wider community wanted it.

We took note of the headlines – youth suicide, binge drinking, bullying, social media addiction, sexual misconduct, stress, poor mental health, etc. We consulted widely and surveyed hundreds of young people. We learned there was a gap in services aimed at prevention rather than treatment. We decided that the most beneficial support for young people required a "top-of-the-cliff" whole population approach based on what THEY said they need. From there we developed the Resiliency Toolkit Programme, which in 2017 was recognised with YMCA New Zealand's "Innovation in a New Programme" Award. In 2018 the programme was named a finalist in the Community Impact category of the South Canterbury Business Excellence Awards.

With the Resiliency Toolkit there is particular focus on preventing rangatahi from becoming 'at risk' through life and resiliency skills developed within the context of five key areas.

1. **Mental Health & Well-being** (Managing Stress, Being in Charge of Emotions, Impulse Control, Mindfulness, Coping Strategies)
2. **Social Media Usage/Safety/Digital Communications Responsibilities** (Safe Communication in the Online World, What is Public/Private Information, Staying in Control of Personal Information, Understanding the Risks)
3. **Healthy Relationships** (Consent, Responsibilities, Diversity, Pornography, What does a healthy relationship look like? Who am I in a relationship? Where are my boundaries?)
4. **Alcohol and Drugs** (Making Better Decisions, Alcohol & Relationships, Rights & Responsibilities, Keeping Safe & Helping Others, Vaping Facts)
5. **Looking After Yourself & Others** (Reaching Out to Others, Working Together, Help-seeking Behaviours, Being an Active By-stander)

Because of the Y's expertise in personal and youth development, we emphasise 'learning by doing'. Our youth development facilitators are focused on unpacking what rangatahi know, giving them supporting information appropriate to their age, and then taking them through hands-on, realistic scenarios where they can put that knowledge into practice – and draw on it in their personal lives.

Also, the Resiliency Toolkit is not delivered as separate modules, but instead all content areas are interwoven because we recognise that one area often affects another. For example, engaging in the online world is increasingly stressful for young people whose frequent use of social media is integral to how they maintain relationships, so scenarios on dealing with online bullies/trolls and being social media savvy are unpacked within the contexts of both stress management and healthy relationships.

Similarly, alcohol/drug use has linkages to sexual behaviour, relationships and stress management, and scenarios are explored within those contexts so that young people begin to see those links more clearly and develop skills for better decision-making and safer behaviours.

Another strength of the Resiliency Toolkit is that it is neither ad hoc nor a ‘once-and-done-event’. We work across years 7-13, forming relationships with both students and schools and providing consistent, best practice information to support skills and positive habits that build year upon year.

The Resiliency Toolkit is the result of a thorough process of consultation and engagement with young people and the agencies/organisations who provide services and/or support to them. Hundreds of young people voiced their needs via comprehensive region-wide biennial Youth Surveys in 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021. Local Youth Sector Network members took note of the survey findings and made recommendations to meet those needs; the Y developed the Resiliency Toolkit in response. Rollout of the Toolkit began in mid-2016 in Timaru District secondary schools and then was introduced into the Ashburton and Mackenzie Districts in 2017 and Waimate District in 2019.

Delivery Framework:

- Toolkit delivery is in up to 6 one-hour classroom sessions, ideally in groups of approximately 25 students.
- The Y’s facilitators coordinate Resiliency Toolkit delivery to correspond where possible with curriculum delivery and to complement delivery by others (e.g. Public Health Nurses).
- The Y’s team works with the secondary schools to adapt the programme to meet the needs of the ākonga, to cover topics that are deemed to be most relevant. In 2020 it was identified that there needed to be more education around vaping and MDMA drug taking, and in 2021 we included information on pornography.

Evaluation:

The following table is the average of our programme evaluations from 2019-2022. Consistently, the results from these evaluations demonstrate that students feel more informed and empowered.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	% Agreed / Strongly Agreed
The facilitators were easy to understand.	55%	45%			100%
The facilitators were able to answer my questions.	47%	53%			100%
I know where to get help or information when I am worried about my sexual, physical or mental health.	49%	49%	2%		98%
I would ask for help if I was worried about my sexual, physical or mental health.	22%	71%	6%	1%	93%
I can describe signs of a healthy friendship or relationship.	39%	56%	4%	1%	95%
I understand the impact that inappropriate drug or alcohol use can have on me or my friends.	59%	39%	2%		98%
I know what I can do to support others who are not OK.	41%	53%	5%	1%	97%
When someone else is being bullied or harmed, I would be confident to help them out safely.	41%	54%	5%		95%
I understand how to keep my social media profile private.	47%	45%	8%		92%

Philanthropic support is invaluable to a home-grown programme like the Resiliency Toolkit, which receives no direct government funding and whose success is heavily reliant on the expertise of our facilitators to deliver an informative, engaging award-winning programme. We must raise approximately \$195,000 each year to keep the Resiliency Toolkit in our region’s schools.