



Thinking good and feeling good-

A project to support student wellbeing and build in-house capacity for future intervention within a local college

Mandy Cyprus-Slater
Educational Psychologist

New Zealand Government

Two strands in the spotlight...

- Elements of an effective intervention to support student wellbeing.
- Elements involved when building capacity in the school.



mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

The origins of our group...

June 2020: Discussions between MoE and College staff about their Post-Lockdown Recovery Plan highlighted concerns about some year 9 and 10 students.

Concerns included:

- Increased levels of anxiety
- Self management issues
- Students returning to college but not engaging

More males than females identified...but less support available locally for females!

Support requested from the Educational Psychologist (EP).

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Support requirements:

- Ready to be delivered within weeks (ideally for the start of T3 2020)
- Financially viable
- Least intrusive for the participants
- Derived from an appropriate theory and research base.
- Constructed in a way that would be replicable in-house for future cohorts if necessary (hence building capacity in school)

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

The model

Initial road map for 8 group sessions.

- SENCO, Counsellor, EP - discussion arriving at collaborative vision and possibilities
- Collaborative draft by EP and SENCo.
- Weekly delivery EP and SENCo
- Weekly brief reflection and review of plan

Eventually ran for 10 sessions with 9 girls.

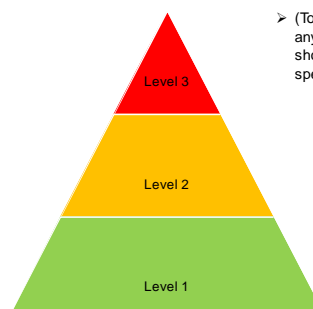
SENCo ran the final session solo.

Final event was planned by the participants and SENCo to mark the end of year and sessions.

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Aims



➤ (To become aware of any participants who should be referred for specialist services.)

➤ For the participants to be able to engage positively in school, expressing less anxiety, less emotional dysregulation and distress.

➤ To increase capacity in the college for supporting and responding to this type of need in future.

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Theoretical foundations

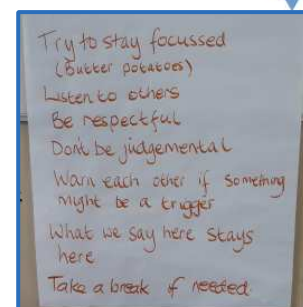
Cognitive Behaviour Therapy	Paul Stallard "Think Good Feel Good"
Brain Science	Dan Siegal
Attachment theory	Heather Geddes; Bennathan, Boxall and Colley
Positive Psychology	Martin Seligman
Trauma Informed Practices	TBRI - Karyn Purvis

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Established values...

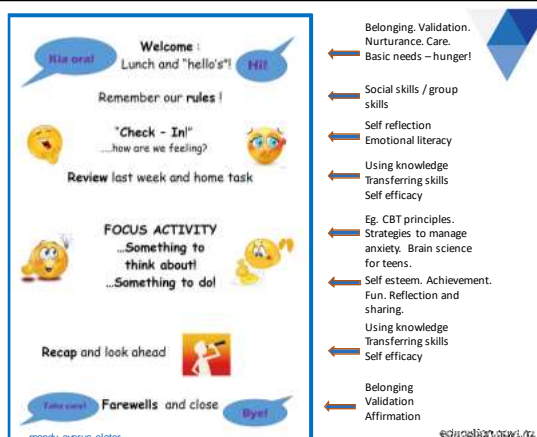
- **Respect**
- **Care**
- **SAFETY**
- **Belonging**
- **Worth**
- **FUN**



...agreed group rules

mandy cyprus-slater

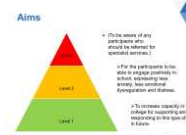
education.govt.nz



mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Outcomes

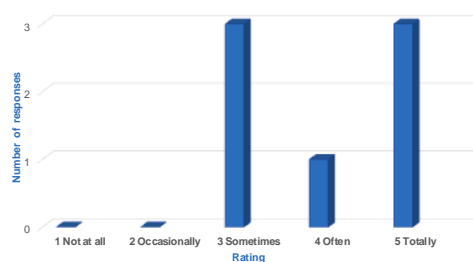


- One participant identified as requiring further involvement from other agencies.
- Participants reported benefits from the sessions (more to follow ...)
Attendance continued well after the second lockdown.
Less reports of emotional dysregulation.
Volunteers as mentors for 2021.
- SENCo was already planning a group for 2021 (to be run with a colleague and involving mentors).
Plans to roll out a group for boys too!

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Did you find the group helpful?



Responses available from 7/9

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Feedback : What was most useful?

Time to express worries and feelings (talking and/or writing)

- "Talking about the stuff. Taught me a bit - just everything."
- "Being listened to."
- "Writing about past experiences on the large paper...it was anonymous."
- "...big piece of paper, wrote about worries and got ideas out."
- "Talking about my feelings - got easier throughout the time...and it was helpful to know what I was thinking"

Friendship / belonging

- "Cool making new friends."
- "Meeting new people who share the same feelings as you."
- "Nice to be with people so you can make friends. Now I have anime friends."
- "I just found more friends that actually took notice of me"

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Relief from academic pressures

"A day with a break to give me a boost."

"Didn't have to do school work. Its hard and I am far behind."

"Time out of class."

"Timing it late (in the year) was good - more stressful at the end of the year."

....and which "taught" content?

"..the brain science"

"Tips on anxiety felt helpful at that time"

The processes were more important than the content??

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Some elements of capacity building -

- Sharing and developing the vision together; collaborative content development and ongoing review
- Identifying and building on existing system strengths (existing supports / relationships / stated values)
- Building relationships and recognising and working with individual strengths and interests
- Remaining Strength and Solution Focussed
- Modelling e.g. explanations, content delivery and group work protocols ...
- Supporting the identification of new opportunities within systems to embed and build the work
- Ongoing liaison with managers / promotion of the project

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Summary points...

Effective interventions for adolescent girls...

- Provide safe space to express feelings within a positive context of feeling valued, understood and accepted.
- Focus on the PROCESS and RELATIONSHIPS

The role of EP as "capacity builder"...

- EPs can play an important role in helping schools identify needs and appropriately measure / feasible responses.
- The EP can provide professional support in assessing possible risk and ensuring quality of provision.
- Schools can provide a very effective response to many perceived needs, with appropriate support to recognise and mobilise this... perhaps more than they realise.

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

References:

- Bennathan, M., Boxall, M., and Colley, D., (2018) *Boxall Profile for Young People – Assessment and Intervention at Secondary Stage*. The Nurture Group Network Limited, London.
- Geddes, Heather., (2006) *Attachment in the Classroom*. Worth.
- Perry, Andrea (Ed)., (2009) *Teenagers and Attachment*. Worth.
- Purvis, Karyn. (2019) *TBRI and Trauma Informed Classrooms* Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, Texas.
- Seligman, Martin., (2012) *Flourish (A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being)* Atria Books
- Siegal, Dan., (2018) *The Adolescent Brain* YouTube film see: <https://youtu.be/001u50Ec5eY>
- Stallard, Paul., (2002). *Think Good Feel Good*. John Wiley and Sons Ltd. UK

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Thanks to....

- Ministry colleagues - who thought to consult and involve me
- SENCO
- Principal
- Especially the girls themselves ☺

.....and to you for listening

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

We **shape** an **education** system that delivers
equitable and **excellent outcomes**
He mea **tārai** e mātou te **mātauranga**
kia **rangatira** ai, kia **mana taurite** ai ōna **huanga**

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHURU O TE MĀTAURANGA
education.govt.nz

New Zealand Government

Some unused slides with additional information

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

The college

380 Students, Years 9 to 13

58% Pakeha; 28% Maori; 6% Pacific; 5% Asian; 3% Other

Students come from local area, as well as wider surrounding rural and coastal areas.

Strong links to the community.

Decile 4 School.

ERO 2019 states: "Respectful and positive relationships between teachers and students are evident." A culture of care and respect is openly talked about.

Data from ERO 2019 and educationcounts.govt.nz July 2020

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Participants

- Year 9 and 10 female students (nine in total)
- All showing dysregulation and raised emotional responses - emotional outbursts around college, some also expressing anxiety.
- Some girls previously identified as having particular needs (e.g. experienced trauma, attachment issues, ADHD, dyslexia, executive function difficulties.)
- Some, but not all, had accessed counselling or other outside agency support previously, although none were known to the current EP.
- None were considered to be at a level of severity warranting immediate referral to mental health services or OT. (Not "Level 3")
- A careful process of inviting the girls and providing information at the outset ensured they all gave informed consent to being involved.

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz

Participant engagement and introduction

- Students identified from staff expressions of concern, internal incident records and the participants themselves seeking support (...visits to counsellor, talking with SENCo, Dean etc)
- Students invited to information session with Psychologist and SENCo. Opportunity to ask questions. 1:1 conversation with SENCo. Invited to "sign up" their consent to involvement. (9 out of an original 10 offered opted in)
- Information sent to parents and offer of further information available. Only one set of parents requested a conversation with SENCo for more details.
- Sessions started one week later at a set time every week.
- A rule of "No Boys" was quickly established as important by the girls.

(Unexpectedly we had a second Covid Lockdown after session 2 – preventing sessions for a further 3 weeks. All participants returned.)

mandy cyprus-slater

education.govt.nz