

FLYING UNDER THE RADAR – a look at Travellers, an innovative, youth friendly New Zealand resilience programme easing the transition of vulnerable students into secondary school.

DESCRIPTION

A paper introducing Travellers, a successful New Zealand resilience programme targeting vulnerable young people in their first year of secondary school, particularly those who may be “flying under the radar”. It runs in 97 NZ secondary colleges, one in Queensland, Australia and in Denmark, through the Centre for Suicide Research.

ABSTRACT

Travellers is a psycho-educational, interpersonal and cognitive behavioural small group programme that supports young people to process and manage life’s toughest experiences.

This paper will engage participants as it explores the Travellers programme and its innovative online student survey tool and associated data. It will also outline the theoretical framework of the programme and the eight facilitated/structured sessions that assist students in year 9 (12 – 14 year olds) to develop the resilience skills and strategies needed to beat the odds, to manage their life change experiences and to make a successful transition to and connection with their new secondary school. It will also look at ways the programme keeps flexible to address building healthy relationships, positive cultural differences, tough times already experienced and positive pathways to mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being.

Student and facilitator feedback on the programme will also be shared, as well as some of the practical resources and elements that have been especially effective.

Travellers is a New Zealand, Ministry of Health funded programme (www.travellers.org.nz) developed by Skylight, a not for profit Trust widely respected for effectively supporting children, young people and their families through life’s toughest situations.

BIOGRAPHY OF PRESENTER

Phil Smith is currently the National Manager of the Travellers programme, based at Skylight’s Centre in Wellington. (www.skylight.org.nz) He has a comprehensive background in secondary teaching and senior school leadership, and in working with students learning at a distance and online, including vulnerable students unable to attend a local school for health or psychosocial reasons. As former President of NZPPTA, Phil has been actively involved in working towards systemic change in education to facilitate greater student and staff resilience. He has a passion to see young people assisted to more confidently face life’s challenges.

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