

# Nothing About Me Without Me

The Inclusion of Student Voice

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# WHY INCLUDE STUDENT VOICE

- Legislative requirements
- Ethical concerns
- Cultural imperatives
- Clinical/Educational effectiveness

# LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC)**
  - All children have the right to protection from discrimination on any grounds
  - The best interests of the child should be the primary consideration in all matters affecting the child
  - Children have the rights to life, survival and development
  - All children have the right to an opinion and for that opinion to be heard in all contexts

## Article 12

“States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”



# HOW ARE WE DOING?

The most recent review of New Zealand's implementation of UNCROC in February this year provides recommendations on how New Zealand can do a better job for its children. The following extract is taken from this report:

**“The Committee notes with regret that the views of children are not adequately respected within the family, in schools and in the community.** The Committee also regrets that there are no means by which children can express their views in the public domain, that the State party does not systematically take into consideration children’s views when formulating laws and policies that may affect them and that their right to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings is not sufficiently respected.

The Committee recommends that the State party, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention...Promote, facilitate and implement, in legislation as well as in practice, within the family, schools and the community as well as in institutions and in administrative and judicial proceedings, the principle of respect for the views of the child.”

**UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, released 4 February  
2011, Geneva**

# ETHICAL CONCERNS: NZPSS CODE OF ETHICS

- Article 2.3 recognises the need for clients to actively participate in decisions that affect their welfare.
- The NZ Psychological Society Code of Ethics also states:  
“Psychologists should discriminate between the needs and the wishes of children/young persons: wishes should be heard, understood and taken into account within the context of their needs, general welfare and wider social environment”

# CULTURAL IMPERATIVES

- Mana Motuhake
  - Ka Hikitea “Maori achieving success as Maori”
- Te Kotahitanga
  - Educational achievement of Maori students will be improved... “when educators create learning contexts within their classroom; where power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence; where culture counts; where learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals; where participants are connected to one another through the establishment of a common vision for what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes. We termed this pedagogy a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations.” Russell Bishop



# CLINICAL/EDUCATIONAL RATIONALE

- Student engagement is recognised as a cornerstone for student achievement
- Clinical literature suggests that students are more committed to decisions and treatment plans when they feel that they have been a part of this process

# CLINICAL/EDUCATIONAL RATIONALE

- Many of the treatment goals we set for students include skill based learnings such as problem solving, communication and negotiation strategies – skills that can be learned and implemented through participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of plans
- We know that young people who are able to plan ahead, set and reach goals have better general life outcomes. Being able to participate increases self efficacy and self determination

# GUIDELINES FOR ENCOURAGING STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- Preparation
  - Nominate an adult to spend time with the student preparing for the service planning meeting.
  - Meet with the student to help them set goals and priorities for intervention
  - Assist the student to develop an appropriate method to present these at the meeting – this may be a digital story, written information or a verbal presentation by either the student or a nominated advocate.
  - Prepare school and family for encouraging and supporting student participation. This should include rationale for student participation as well as setting ground rules to ensure the student's psychological and emotional safety in the planning meeting

# GUIDELINES FOR ENCOURAGING STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- Plan development
  - Ensure there is a clear agenda for the planning meeting and that appropriate support is in place for the student to attend and participate.
  - Ensure that there is a clear rationale for the exclusion of any student led ideas and that there is clear evidence of how student led components of the plan will be followed up
  - Involve the student in the development of outcome measures
  - Provide the student with a copy of the agreed upon plan that is at a level they can understand
  - Allow the student to have a debrief/review of the planning meeting with their advocate and provide feedback as to how much they felt listened to and supported

# GUIDELINES FOR ENCOURAGING STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- Implementation
  - Involve the student in the ongoing implementation of the plan
  - Ensure the student has access to provide feedback on the implementation of the plan and on any amendments or revisions
- Review
  - Involve the student in the review of the plan
  - Provide both formal and informal opportunities for the student to participate in the evaluation of the service they have participated in
  - Provide feedback to the student both on their individual progress and the progress of the plan in its entirety
  - Ask the student for comments, revisions and reflections and include these as part of the overall learning and evaluation of the plan

# GUIDELINES FOR ENCOURAGING STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- Consideration of developmental level of child
  - All of these considerations need to be influenced by the ability and capacity of the child to be involved. This will be an individual judgement and creativity may be required to ensure that student voice is heard remembering that .... “(Children) have the right to have (their) views heard, considered and taken seriously in a way that is appropriate given (their) age and ability, especially when decisions are being made that affect (them).” – Children’s Commissioner



# DURING MEETINGS

## I CAN'T

## STAND

## IT WHEN:

- 1** No one asks ME what I think about things.
- 2** People talk about me like I am not there.
- 3** People “therapize.”
- 4** There are surprises, like things we didn’t plan to talk about, or people I didn’t know would be there.
- 5** Decisions about MY life are made without my input.
- 6** Meetings go on a long time, but we don’t seem to get anywhere.
- 7** The focus is on my problems and what I did wrong.
- 8** We don’t talk about the things that I want to talk about. The plan is supposed to be about ME, but none of it is really about the things I think are most important.

This flyer was developed based on the work of the Achieve My Plan (AMP!) youth advisory group, Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures, Portland State University.

[www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/proj-3-amp.shtml](http://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/proj-3-amp.shtml)



# USING TECHNOLOGY TO ENCOURAGE STUDENT VOICE

- Digital Storytelling -  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-4MgishN9Q>
  - storycenter.org
- Blogs
- Email



## AN EXAMPLE.....

- “Blair”. A Year 8 student accepted into IBS wraparound. Blair has a dx of ASD and is particularly interested in fossils and dinosaurs. The psychologist working with him knew that face to face communication would be difficult.....this is the e mail chain.....

From: Blair [mailto:@gmail.com]  
Sent: Tuesday, 19 April 2011 12:01 p.m.  
To: Matt  
Subject: Answer 1 \*Urgent\*

1. What is your view of the world?

A. I hate the fact that Birds are the only Dinosaurs around today. I also don't like how the economy makes things so expensive. I wish I could still get an Oreodon skull for \$50, but today the rock bottom price is \$400!

From: Blair@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, 19 April 2011 6:06 p.m.

To: Sami

Subject: Re:

Here are some more answers:

2. What is your self concept?

A. I think of myself as a lucky child with a great future. I'm pretty good at writing, I struggle with any times tables not in the 1X, 5X and 10X category and all divided equations. All people in my family think of me as one of the best in the bunch.

3. What would you like to be doing in:

**5 years:** I'll be in high school so I'll be doing as much work as I could

**10 years:** I'll have just entered University so I would be studying to be a Vertebrate Palaeontologist.

**15 years:** I'll have almost finished my University run. After it was finished I would finally be ready for the field.

**20 years:** I would be a Palaeontologist in the field, mostly in the USA, Morocco, China and Brazil. The least important specimens would be put in my private fossil collection.

**And what will you need to learn to be able to do this?**

A. I would need to get a degree in Geology and probably Biology as well.

**4. What do you do for leisure time, recreation?**

A. I go outside, have fresh air, and think about stuff.

**5. What do you want to be able to do in the future?**

A. Be a Vertebrate Palaeontologist.

6. If you had a choice of what you want and need for high school what would you ask for?

A. I would need teachers who put up with autistic teenagers and some good books to research on my interests. Not cheap, low quality books like those I see in (school). I need quality, serious, expensive, up to date books. I would also like, although it's not needed, fossils that I could prepare myself to learn preparation.

# RESOURCES

- AMP (Achieve my Plan) RTC Oregon  
[www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu](http://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu)
- Youth Guide to Treatment and Treatment Planning: A Better Life – Children's Mental Health Network  
[www.cmhnetwork.org](http://www.cmhnetwork.org)
- Children's Commissioner [www.occ.org.nz](http://www.occ.org.nz)