



**THE COLLABORATIVE TRUST**  
For Research & Training in Youth Health & Development

**EVALUATION OF CROSS ROADS YOUTH WITH A FUTURE  
STAY REAL PROGRAMME**

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THE  
COLLABORATIVE  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

Crossroads Youth with a Future works with young people in the Eastern Suburbs of Christchurch using a programme called Stay Real. This independent evaluation of the Stay Real programme was conducted by The Collaborative for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development for Crossroads Youth with a Future. The main aims of the evaluation were to provide information about what works well about the programme, how the programme might be improved, the impact of the programme on young people and how the programme can best meet the needs of young people in post-earthquake Christchurch.

### Methodology

The evaluation used qualitative methodology which took the form of focus groups and individual interviews to ascertain a variety of participants' views about the programme. Three of the 2015 Stay Real groups were part of the evaluation with young people from these groups taking part in a mid-year and an end of year focus group. In addition interviews were conducted with past Stay Real participants, Whānau/Caregivers of current Stay Real participants, school guidance counsellors, a worker from a local community agency and Stay Real facilitators. The main limitations of the project was the relatively small number of community members and the loss of two of the programme facilitators during the course of the evaluation. These limitations were somewhat mitigated by the consistency found between the data collected from all participants. It should also be noted that the three facilitators who were interviewed had significant experience of the Stay Real programme.

### Findings

#### *Current Stay Real participants*

There was much positive discussion from participants about the range of activities in the programme with some saying that many young people like them would not normally have the opportunity to do activities such as these. Some participants were able to discuss the twelve steps that underpin Stay Real while others talked about more general learnings that they had taken away from the programme. There was considerable discussion about the positive impact of the relationships that participants had developed with each other and the Stay Real Facilitators as highlighted by some participants who described the programme as giving them a sense of Whānau or family. This impact included both learning and support that they had gained from these relationships. Participants gave examples of the ways in which the facilitators fostered a relationship building environment such as creating a safe, open and caring atmosphere. How the facilitators related to the participants was identified as important including being non-judgemental, supportive and keeping young people's confidentiality. Participants gave examples of ways in which the facilitators used the Stay Real groups to challenge them to develop such as learning about the importance of respect, caring for others and staying in school. There were very few ideas for how the programme might be improved or how it might better serve the needs of young people in the post-earthquake environment in Christchurch. Young people commented that the programme should continue to 'keep doing what it does' when asked about how it might be improved.

### *Former Stay Real participants*

Former Stay Real participants reflected positively on the activities they participated in as part of Stay Real and the positive impact of the relationships that they developed on the programme. Two main themes were the support and personal development that they gained from the programme. Some participants gave examples of how they were using learnings from Stay Real such as respecting others and working with others in their current employment and educational settings. A number of participants also commented on how relationships with other young people and Stay Real facilitators continued to be a source of support for them. There were no significant suggestions for how the programme might be improved.

### *Community members*

Community members included Whānau/ family of current Stay Real participants, pastoral care staff from schools involved with the programme and a manager from a local community agency. There was significant positive discussion and support for the programme from community members. The fact that Crossroads Youth with a Future is locally based and that there was a long-term and significant ongoing connection between the programme and the community was highly regarded by a number of community members. An important theme from all community members was the positive impact that the relational nature of the programme had on the young people, particularly the supportive relationships that the facilitators built with young people. Examples given of the impact of these relationships included young people learning life skills that they would not otherwise learn and young people developing more confidence. The genuine commitment of the facilitators to the young people was commented on. Of note was the facilitators being available to support young people outside of programme hours and instances of facilitators supporting the young people's Whānau/family. There were no significant suggestions for how the programme might be improved or for the need for it to develop to address post-earthquake issues. Community members identified that the programme was already providing post-earthquake support as it provided an environment where young people could talk to supportive others about their problems.

### *Programme facilitators*

The facilitators discussed the values and principles that underpin the Stay Real programme. There was a strong emphasis on the importance of building relationships with young people based on care, respect and support while still providing boundaries for them. Facilitators also discussed the benefits that come from young people learning to relate to each other in their Stay Real groups such as developing teamwork skills and learning to care for each other. The facilitators gave examples of the positive impact of the programme on young people's lives such as learning about respect and responsibility and affirmative messages about staying in school. There were very few suggestions for how the programme might be improved. The facilitators noted that the programme was a source of support for young people in the post-earthquake environment and did not identify any ways in which the programme needed to develop to address post-earthquake issues.

### *Conclusion*

This evaluation shows that there is consistent evidence that young people gain significant support and learn valuable life skills through taking part in the Stay Real programme. It is evident that the relational nature of the programme is central to its impact on young



people. Evaluation participants gave many examples of the positive impact of the relationships that young people built with the programme facilitators and with each other. The development of non-judgemental, caring and supportive relationships between the facilitators and the young people was identified as important. Examples were given of how the facilitators used this relationship building to challenge young people to develop new ways of relating to others and themselves. Young people gave many examples of how they had developed such as gaining more respect and understanding for others, learning about the importance of honesty and gratitude and finding new ways of dealing with issues such as anger. Some young people linked this learning to the twelve steps that underpin the programme while others commented on the general learnings that they took away from the programme. No substantial issues for how the programme might be improved were identified, with a number of participants commenting that it should 'keep doing what it is already doing'. There were also no suggestions for how the programme might develop to address post-earthquake issues with many participants saying that it already provides a space where young people can find support for earthquakes related issues. Overall this evaluation provided information that shows that this programme is a valued resource in the community for young people and their Whānau/ families.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE STAY REAL PROGRAMME

Crossroads Youth with a Future is a community agency working with young people and their families in the Eastern Suburbs of Christchurch. A significant focus of the agency involves working with vulnerable young people using the Stay Real programme. This programme facilitates Stay Real groups for young people from two secondary schools and two intermediate schools in the area. Stay Real is based on the Twelve Step programme, adapted for use with young people. Its focus is to develop relationships with the young people to promote healthy development and wellbeing.

Young people take part in the programme over one to two school years. Each Stay Real group consists of six to ten young people who participate in facilitated group work and activities together. Over each school term the groups participate in fortnightly activities for a full school day. In the intervening weeks each group takes part in short group work sessions for one to two hours. Each group also attends a three day, outdoor activity based camp during the year.

Crossroads Youth with a Future has been delivering this programme in the Eastern Suburbs for 17 years. During this time, they have worked with over 500 young people and have received positive feedback about the programme from young people and their Whānau/families, as well as from community stakeholders such as schools and government agencies.

In 2015 the Collaborative Trust for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development (The Collaborative Trust) was commissioned by Crossroads Youth with A Future through funding from the Department of Internal Affairs Community Sector Research Grants fund to conduct an independent evaluation of the Stay Real programme.

The main aims of the evaluation were to provide information about:

- what works well about the programme
- how the programme might be improved
- the impact of the programme on young people
- how the programme can best meet the needs of young people in post-earthquake Christchurch

## 2.0 METHOD

This evaluation was qualitative in nature and designed to capture in-depth data about the experiences of programme participants and the impacts of the programme. These data were gathered through a combination of focus groups and semi-structured interviews. All qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998).

Focus groups were used to gather the perspectives of three groups of young people taking part in the 2015 Stay Real programme. Semi structured interviews were conducted with former Stay Real participants, whānau/ caregivers of current Stay Real participants, facilitators currently involved in delivering the programme, school pastoral care staff from schools involved with the programme and a worker from a local community agency.



## 2.1 CURRENT STAY REAL PARTICIPANTS

The evaluation followed the Stay Real programme over the 2015 school year. Information from young people participating in the 2015 programme was gathered from:

- two Stay Real groups being delivered at two local Secondary Schools
- one Stay Real group being delivered at a local Intermediate School

Each Stay Real group took part in two focus group sessions: one session took place in the middle of the 2015 programme and a follow-up session took place at the end of the 2015 programme. Focus group members were given cameras to take photographs of their experiences of Stay Real in the first four months of the 2015 programme. The evaluator developed these photographs and presented them to each focus group. The young people were invited to choose photos that represented 'what I do in my Stay Real group' and 'what I get out of participating in the programme'. The photos chosen by the young people were used in the first focus group session to help generate discussion about the programme.

### *First focus groups (mid 2015):*

Focus group one had six participants (n=6).

Focus group two had four participants (n=4).

Focus group three had four participants (n=4).

### *Follow-up focus groups (end of 2015):*

Focus group one had four participants (n= 4).

Focus group two had four participants (n=4).

Focus group three had four participants (note: one individual interview also took place for this group) (n=5).

Note: some young people who were unable to take part in the first focus group took part in the follow- up focus group.

## 2.3 OTHER EVALUATION PARTICIPANTS

### *Former Stay Real participants:*

Three interviews took place with past participants of the programme. Two young people took part in each interview (n=6).

### **2.3.1 Whānau/Caregivers of current Stay Real participants:**

Two interviews took place with Whānau/caregivers of current Stay Real participants. Two Whānau/caregivers took part in each interview (n=4).

### **2.3.2 School Pastoral Care staff**

Two pastoral care staff from schools involved with the Stay Real programme took part in a joint interview (n=2).

### **2.3.3 Other participants:**

A worker from a local community agency took part in an interview (n=1).

### **2.3.4 Stay Real Facilitators:**

Four Stay Real facilitators took part in individual interviews (n=4).

## 2.4 ETHICS

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from The New Zealand Ethics Committee. The Collaborative is committed to ethical research and evaluation practice. In line with its ethical guidelines the researchers undertook to ensure at all times that:

- all participation was voluntary
- informed consent was sought and gained from each participant
- the right to privacy and confidentiality was respected for each participant
- the dignity and worth of every individual and the integrity of Whānau/families and the diversity of cultures was respected

All names and identifying details of evaluation participants have been changed to preserve the confidentiality of the participants. Parental consent was gained for all participants under the age of 16 years. This included consent for young people to have their photographs taken for the photography component of the evaluation.

## 2.5 LIMITATIONS

A limitation of the report is the relatively small sample size of community participants which was due to both the scope of the project and difficulty in recruiting two additional community members to take part in the evaluation. It should also be noted that in part some of the community members and past participants were recommended by Crossroads Youth with a Future due to difficulties with recruiting participants. These limitations were somewhat mitigated against by the strong consistency of the data collected by the community participants and past participants with the rest of the data collected.

Another limitation of the evaluation was the loss of two of the programme facilitators during 2015. Three facilitators were able to substantively contribute to the data collected but a fourth had only recently taken on a facilitation role in the programme. This limitation was mitigated by the significant experience that these three facilitators had of the programme.

There were few limitations in relation to the data collected from the current Stay Real participants. There was substantial input in the focus groups from these young people. While not all of the current Stay Real participants agreed to take part in the evaluation those that did contributed significantly to the data collected and a similar number of current participants took part in both the initial and follow-up focus groups. Many current Stay Real participants were also enthusiastic about using the photographs that they had taken of Stay Real activities when discussing their experience of the programme in the first focus group.

## 3.0 FINDINGS

The findings of this study are presented by respondent group. These include:





- Current Stay Real participants
- Former Stay Real participants
- Community members including Whānau/family members, a worker from a local social service agency and pastoral care staff
- Programme facilitators

### 3.1 CURRENT STAY REAL PARTICIPANTS

Three groups of young people who were involved in the 2015 Stay Real programme participated in focus groups to explore their experiences of the programme. Each group took part in one focus group session half way through the programme and a follow up focus group session at the end of the programme. The focus groups explored current participants' perceptions of:

- What they did in the programme
- What worked well about the programme
- The impact of the programme
- The group facilitators
- What could be improved about the programme
- Issues faced by young people in the community
- What they would tell others about the programme
- How the programme might respond in the post-earthquake environment

#### 3.1.1 Issues faced by young people in the community

Participants were asked to reflect on their context, and in particular on issues that impact on young people from the area in which they live. They identified boredom, pressure to become gang affiliated, drugs, alcohol, addiction, teenage pregnancy and disrupted Whānau/family life. A few gave examples of how Whānau/family circumstances led to problems such as a party atmosphere in some homes that encouraged young people to experiment with drugs and alcohol from a young age. These participants discussed the Stay Real programme as an alternative to the life that some young people had grown up in.

“[This is like] a different way to life for them, [they could see] a better life for them.”

“Cos this stuff, it helps us and we all know what goes around here cos we've all grown up into it. But the thing is, when we come here we drift away from it.”

For other participants boredom was a significant issue that the Stay Real programme helped to address in the community.

“They make a difference... some people's lives are boring and they come here and it's like something to look forward to every week.”

#### 3.1.2 What current participants did in the programme

Current participants talked positively about a variety of activities that they did as part of the Stay Real programme. These included hiking, bike riding, ice skating, diving, swimming,

overnight trips away, camps, and visiting places such as Kaikoura and the West Coast and recreational places such as beaches and parks. Other activities involved doing crafts, visiting the SPCA, making photo albums, playing games, listening to music, eating together and 'hanging out together'.

"We do lots of fun things ... then we talk and we go out and do fun things as a group like we go to Hanmer springs, we walk around and ride bikes ... we stayed there for three days."

"... you always eat food on Stay Real, you always go on trips and that. We went to the SPCA."

"And this [photo] is what we do in the van, just chill out listening to music...we all feel comfortable."

Participants described these activities as 'fun' and engaging. They also noted that it is 'good' that the activities are free. Being able to choose whether they took part in activities or not was identified as important. Some said that young people such as themselves would not normally be able to do activities like these.

"Like we go see heaps of stuff that we probably wouldn't have done without the group. If it was just our home, we probably would have just stayed at home..."

Alongside these activities participants discussed the group work as a significant part of the programme. This included both formal group work activities based on the twelve step learnings that underpin the programme and informal discussion about these twelve steps throughout the programme.

"Cos the groups, [it's] not just about going out...and doing things... It's also about learning those things... like learning to respect yourself and things like that."

"We have steps...each step will be like a word and we have to describe the word as best we can and then...it depends on what step it is, like if it's about responsibility we play games about responsibility ...it's pretty cool, we do responsibility, caring and being there for people... you don't really do [each word as a step], they change it to a conversation that sort of thing, so it's like what it means to me and what it means to other people..."

A number of participants were able to identify specific aspects of the twelve step programme that they were taught through Stay Real. The most common things that these participants associated with the twelve steps were respect, responsibility, caring for others, perseverance, honesty and self-control. One participant gave an example of how the facilitators helped young people to apply these steps by making them applicable to their everyday lives.



“Just like finding ways to help people cos there is some [people] that are real quiet and there is some [people] that have heaps of anger. So it’s just finding ways to help them to ...start to reach out for - for help and stuff. We’ll talk about steps, like we will pick a step and we’ll take it further...and we will use what we have said into stuff that we have to do.”

Rather than talking about the specific steps of the programme other participants were more likely to discuss general things that they had learnt such as strategies to deal with anger, why it’s important to stay at school and the benefits of persevering in situations. A few participants identified the serenity prayer as an important part of the twelve step component of the programme.

“[The serenity prayer is] explaining that not everything’s bad cos after something’s happened you now have the courage to know what to do if it happens again.”

### **3.1.3 What worked well in the programme**

Current participants talked about characteristics of the Stay Real programme that contributed to its positive impact on them. While the ‘fun activities’ were a significant drawcard of the programme, participants identified the relationships they had built with each other and the facilitators as having the most impact on them in the programme. They acknowledged the avenue that the activities created for the development of these relationships and the benefits they gained from them. Participants expand on these themes in the following sections of the report which address:

- (i) Personal development
- (ii) Learning and support through positive relationships
- (iii) Positive impacts of the programme on Whānau/family and school
- (iv) Increased confidence through taking part in activities
- (v) How the programme might impact participants in the future
- (vi) The significance of the programme facilitators

#### **3.1.3.1 Personal development**

When asked specifically about what they had learnt from taking part in the Stay Real programme participants identified:

- Respecting and caring for others
- Taking responsibility and developing more self-control
- Sharing with others
- Respecting other people’s confidentiality
- Dealing with issues such as ‘feeling down’, anger and substance abuse
- Gratitude
- Increased confidence
- Perseverance
- The importance of honesty



- Teamwork

“Be respectful and be grateful about what you get and can do.”

“Like respect [and] responsibilities. Like heaps aye, like love and all of that [and] behaviour.”

“If you’re happy then make other people happy, if someone’s sad I go and help them and then it makes me feel like a better person.”

“Helps us control ourselves.”

“We might be getting real low, like drinking and then you’ll come here and you’ll not drink for another three weeks, just cos you don’t feel like drinking no more.”

“One of the big things is respect definitely and others are like how to take care of people ... and if somebody has a problem they can talk to you and you won’t tell someone else...”

Confidence, like confidence is up and the way I look at other people now.”

“Knowing kind of what it’s like for other people now, like putting yourself in their shoes.”

“We can achieve, if we put our mind to it we can achieve.”

“Be kind to others and as much as you possibly can be there for someone. That’s why Stay Real’s here. It says in the name, you ‘stay for others’ and... ‘for real’ is kind of be real if something bad happened, talk about it and move on. It’s like moving on from the past. That’s what I thought about Stay Real.”

Some participants talked about finding new ways to deal with issues such as anger and frustration.

“...but for me it’s helped cos I used to hit my brother quite a bit when I got angry with him and now that’s gone down...so that’s helped a lot with it.”

“Some of it’s to build our confidence up and to I guess make us a better person at things like it teaches us to control our anger and things like that as well and to respect other people, so I guess that’s the point of it.”

Another important theme was the positive impact of learning how to work as part of a team.



“Sometimes when we go kayaking and we have to look at the kayaks and they weigh more than just one person ... It’s like equality so you’re not being treated lower than everybody else but it’s showing that you should treat everybody at the same level. Together everybody achieves more.”

“Cos you’re in groups and it brings you closer cos you have to trust each other, like in bowling cos you had to be there for other people even if they didn’t get one bowl you would be like ‘well-done you tried your best’.”

### ***3.1.3.2 Learning and support through positive relationships***

One of the most significant themes was the positive impact of the relationships that current participants developed with other young people in the programme and the programme facilitators. Examples included:

- Support that comes from being part of the group
- Having a place to talk to others about their lives
- Making new friends
- Improved relationship skills
- Stay Real as representing Whānau/family

#### ***3.1.3.2.1 Support that comes from being part of the group***

Many participants identified their Stay Real group as a source of support and discussed the benefits of this support such as having people to talk to about problems they were facing and having people that they could relate to.

“We do stuff together...Everyone’s always there for each other and listens when you’ve got problems.”

Taking part in various activities together such as outdoor activities and group work was identified as important for relationship building.

“I like this photo cos you can see how everyone is always together, you play games and you talk about your problems and anything else you want to talk about. I like coming here because you can be open instead of keeping it inside.”

Reasons identified by participants for why the group was supportive included that it was a caring and ‘happy place’ and it was a place where they could ‘be themselves’.

“I like this photo cos when you’re on Stay Real it’s a happy environment and you can be yourself... I felt cool...”

“It makes you feel loved and comfortable.”



A few participants said that people in their group did not always 'get on' well together and that this impacted on how well the group worked at times.

### ***3.1.3.2.2 Having a place to talk about their lives***

A number of participants talked more specifically about the positive impact of being able to talk about problems in their lives with supportive others.

"I say stuff here that I didn't want my parents to know."

"Yeah, you can actually say stuff here, not having to keep it [in]. So it doesn't get so bad..."

This included an affirmative realisation that other people experienced similar issues to them.

"The cool thing is that you can be there for each other so you can have someone who is going through the same pain as you are and then you can sort things out together and get better...you aren't the only person that's got issues."

### ***3.1.3.2.3 Making new friends***

Some participants discussed the positive impact of making new friends through the Stay Real programme.

"It kind of makes me feel less lonely cos you know the other people are the same cos...you know you always relate to each other."

"It's nice to have friends around here...when I first came here I didn't have many friends...now we pretty much all hang together."

"For me what helps at school is us being closer, knowing people more...It's like that person at school that you know you trust."

### ***3.1.3.2.4 Improved relationship skills***

Participants gave many examples of what they had learnt about themselves and about relating to others as part of the programme. These included trusting other people, the importance of listening to others, asking for help, 'putting yourself in other people's shoes' and contributing to supporting other people.

"You shouldn't keep things to yourself, you should trust people. Tell them what happens and stuff in your life."

"It makes me a better person, cos you're helping someone else you're being a bigger person by helping them."



“It’s helped me share my feelings instead of hiding it in. It’s helped me to help myself feel better. I know that people trust in me, like they are there for me and I can trust them to keep my secret. And it’s pretty good cos we all care for each other, even if you don’t like the person, you learn to be there for the person...”

### ***3.1.3.2.5 Stay Real as representing Whānau/family***

The significance of the relationships that participants built as part of the programme is reflected in a number of participants who used the term Whānau or family when describing the impact of the Stay Real programme on them.

“...And this photo it resembles family cos we are like all family here no matter what you are.”

“...this [photo] you can see all of us actually doing things that we want to do, we can just be ourselves and we want to do it...this is like being a family.”

“...for some people it just feels like another home.”

“...we learn about each other. Instead of us just talking about ourselves...you listen to the other people, like who else is in the group. If they have something to say, you pay attention to them and you listen to what they have to say and then you help them out...it’s pretty much like a family.”

One young person reflected on how participation in the programme had given them something that they had missed out on in their Whānau/family circumstances growing up.

“The way that we have been brought up here [in Stay Real] is just like the way that we’ve always wanted to be brought up.”

### ***3.1.3.3 Positive impacts of Stay Real on Whānau/family and school***

Participants talked about the benefits of taking part in the Stay Real programme on their home and school life. This included some who said that they now ‘get on better with their parents’, a few who said that it has improved their relationships with friends at school and one current participant who said that they are now more understanding of others and had become ‘less of a bully’.

“Yes, cos normally when I go home and someone’s talking I just butt in, but now I wait until they are finished.”

“To learn respect and ...they help you deal with issues at home.”

“You appreciate your family more.”



Participants gave other examples of the impact of the programme on their schooling. These included a facilitator who helped participants to come up with strategies to relate better with teachers at school, participants who said that they now related better to other young people at school and two participants who connected taking part in the programme with the realisation that staying in school would help them to gain employment and a better income in the future.

“Cos we always tell [the facilitator] about our day before we came [to Stay Real] and [they will come] up with a solution for all of us so we can just get through the day [at school] without getting in [trouble].”

“To get a job...to get better education...And just don't be a drop out and don't end up being in debt when you're older and... you've got to pay rent and stay at school so you can get a better job and more money.”

A few participants commented that the programme helped them to attend school such as one young person who reflected on the positive impact of the programme facilitators encouraging them to go to school.

“It makes me want to go to school...cos it will be Monday and I'll be like, ahh school again, get up, get dressed and I'll be late to school again, and then I will come to this and [the facilitators] will be like, 'why don't you want to go to school?' and [they] will tell us a good reason why to go to school and a story that has to do with school, and [I will think], ohh sweet, I will go to school. It just makes us want to go to school sometimes.”

#### ***3.1.3.4 Increased confidence through taking part in activities***

A few participants commented that taking part in activities such as outdoor adventure activities had increased their confidence. Support and encouragement from the facilitators was an important factor in this confidence building.

“He gets us out of our confidence zone.”

“You won't be too confident to do it and like, nah just do it, and he will convince us to do it and we will do it and then we will want to do it again [and it feels] good.”

#### ***3.1.3.5 How Stay Real might impact on participants in the future***

Current participants discussed what they would take away from the Stay Real programme and more specifically what they thought might be beneficial for them in the future. When reflecting on this they talked about the importance of being caring towards others, perseverance, honesty and respect, gratitude, taking opportunities as they arise, learning to let go of things that cannot be changed, self-control, strategies to deal with anger, being more accepting of difference in others and 'being yourself.'





“Never give up, just keep trying...Go 100 per cent.”

“Honesty, respect, most of the stuff they talk about is basically stuff we can use in our future...”

“Like opportunities, to take my opportunities and to change the things that I can and leave the things that I cannot.”

“Sometimes I give up. When all it is, is that you think you should give up. Now I realise that you [just] feel like giving up but really you shouldn’t give up and just try harder.”

“Controlling my anger and listening to others cos I just used to blow up at other people.”

“Respect and gratitude cos that’s one of the biggest things in life, just understanding what there is and how you should do things.”

“And we’ve kind of accepted that everybody’s different...”

“It’s like people say you should be like me when you’re really unique and yourself and so you shouldn’t be like someone [else] you should just settle as yourself... I want to be myself not follow everyone else.”

“I guess being at Stay Real, it would help us with things like jobs and stuff like the way you look at other people like you understand things more.

### ***3.1.3.6 The importance of the programme facilitators***

The importance of the relationships that participants developed with the programme facilitators was a significant theme. Participants discussed these relationships in terms of practical and emotional support, learning new skills and developing strategies to deal with issues such as anger, school attendance and frustration with caregivers/parents/teachers.

Participants reflected on what it was about the way that the facilitators related to them that had a positive impact. This included:

- Keeping their confidentiality
- Being friendly and ‘nice’
- Listening
- Being non-judgmental
- Giving young people the choice about whether to participate in activities
- Being genuine
- Being caring and supportive
- Taking part in activities with the young people
- Not treating the young people like children
- Using humour
- Being positive



- Treating everyone in the group the same way
- Being reliable

“I guess the way they act around us, being friendly to us instead of just acting like adults.”

“Like they don’t talk down to us and stuff, they are on our level.”

“They kind of do everything, like they listen to us and accept how we feel about things.”

“They are kind and generous, they are there for us, they do everything for us, they go out of their way to go and buy us food...”

“They promised us they would keep us confidential. Like if we don’t want them to tell our parents they won’t...”

“It’s like [the facilitator] takes the time to listen and talk to you about it.

“We’ve all got a problem, which we all talk about ...they don’t put you down they don’t make you feel uncomfortable.”

“...counsellors talk down to you like children and it’s just like you have these stupid problems but they actually talk to you like a friend, they understand.”

“They told us their stories...it makes you relate to them better and trust them better.”

“... [The facilitators] involve themselves into what we are doing...”

“They are funny...always laughing...playing jokes on you. You just laugh at [them].”

“I just love [the facilitator]...The thing about it is that [they] tell a story from [their] heart and it’s like pretty mean stories too. [They] don’t have to [try and relate to us] they do relate.”

“It’s like a good environment...positive stuff there’s no negativity like ‘you should have done this you’re bad, you shouldn’t be coming here’ it’s ‘oh you’ve done a dumb thing but we forgive you’.”

“People that try and put us down... other people saying we are not good enough [for Stay Real] but we are all the same. [The facilitators] treat us like their own kids, they don’t judge us like that. They don’t treat anyone better than anyone else... treat us all the same.”

“They never let us down, we always do something fun, like if something isn’t open then we do something else.”

Some participants were particularly positive when discussing the Project Director of the service who also takes on a facilitation role in the programme. This was attributed by these participants to his long-standing presence in the community, his strong commitment to young people and his significant connections within their community. Examples included a number of participants who said that this facilitator is ‘there for young people whenever they need it’ and some who identified this person as a ‘parental figure’.

“[The Director] is like one of us. [He] puts it in perspective where we... [he doesn’t] control us ... it’s our choice whether we want to listen or not and basically we all listen cos [he] is like another parent to us.”

“[He is] like a second grandparent, [he] always tell us - if we need anything to ask.”

“[The Director] tells us they are here to keep people off the streets. Any of us could ring them like early hours of the morning and you need a ride home, they will always be there.”

“[The Director] told us if you ever need me any hours of the day or night just ring me...And I’ll come to you.”

Other facilitators were also identified as being like parental figures and as creating a sense of family in the programme.

“A counsellor gets paid to counsel and talk about people’s problems but with [the facilitators] they will just talk to you and listen and [they] treat us like they are our mother sometimes... they are like an understanding mother so it’s easier than talking to someone that gets paid to sit there and listen to you.”

“I reckon they made you feel like family.”

The way that the facilitators set up and ran the groups to support the development of trusting relationships within each Stay Real group was also seen as a key aspect of the programme. This included the facilitators establishing group rules and a culture that valued caring for each other, sharing with others, constructive feedback, teamwork and a strong emphasis on confidentiality and respect for what each person contributed in the group. This was reflected in a number of participants reciting a group rule that they identified as very important:

“What you see here, what you hear here, let it stay here.”

“When we first come here we say what we hear here stays here. It doesn’t leave this room. [The facilitators] make it safe, they just make it really safe.”

Some participants commented on personal development that took place for them through taking part in activities with the facilitators. An example given was how the facilitators used activities to teach about values such as ‘how to get along with others’ and respect.

“...you learn stuff by having fun...like respect and sharing and how to treat others.”

“Some of the kids in this area don’t actually get taught respect and this kind of is the place where you can get taught respect by going out and having fun and that and then understanding that you should respect what you’ve been given instead of wanting to disrespect the leaders and stuff.”

Another aspect of the programme that was identified as being important is the effort that facilitators put into creating a relaxed and calm atmosphere in the programme. One young person highlighted this by comparing the Stay Real programme to the more stressful atmosphere that they experienced at school.

“Half days are pretty cool aye, we just stay here [and chill] before we have to go back to school and do another angry day of school.”

### **3.1.4 What could be improved about Stay Real?**

Current participants had very few suggestions for how the programme could be improved. A number of them specifically said that this was because they did not believe that the programme needed to be improved while others said that ‘they could not think of anything’ that could be improved.

“I don’t reckon they need to do nothing...leave it the same as it is.”

“It’s been this way forever and it should stay this way...cos this is the way that we like it.”

“Nah, we like it the way it is.”

Those who did have some suggestions for improvement identified the following:

- At times the group activities could be better organised
- Starting the Stay Real groups earlier so there is more time to talk
- Very occasionally the facilitators need to be more consistent in showing empathy and understanding
- Improved planning to ensure that the groups are not cancelled
- The programme should be expanded to primary schools and other high schools in the Eastern suburbs
- One young person wanted less talking on the days in which they did group work

“The organisation... maybe they should come a bit earlier...then we have longer to talk.”



“Coming and sorting things out and sometimes they will forget stuff.”

“A little bit less talking on the half days. Maybe get out there... go for a walk. I would like it a bit better if we could go out more.”

“Sometimes it get cancelled [and that’s] disappointing.”

“It would be good if it went to [the new High School] cos I’m going there next year and I still need help with my anger issues.”

### 3.1.5 What would current participants tell others about Stay Real?

Participants’ thoughts on what they would tell other young people about the Stay Real programme further highlighted the positive impact of the programme on them. These reflections included advising young people to take part in the programme because:

- They would build relationships with other young people and the facilitators
- They would gain support
- They would experience teamwork
- It’s fun
- It would make them feel ‘happy’
- They would get to experience many different activities
- They would learn new things
- It’s a valuable opportunity

“Come, cos everyone’s there for you.”

“It’s a great course and everyday you come back with a smile on your face cos it’s just so happy...”

“I’d tell them straight away, yes it’s a brilliant thing ,it’s a good idea how they create this. If I wasn’t coming here I would be this grumpy angry person...”

“I said that we talk about how everyone’s week’s been and talk about how we are and learn something new.”

“I would say that it’s...really to help if you don’t really respect very much, it will help with that, or that if you don’t understand that you should grant everything or be happy with what you’ve got instead of wanting more.”

“We’d tell them to go, like it’s a good opportunity.”

### 3.1.6 How Stay Real might respond in the post-earthquake environment

The majority of current participants believed that the programme did not need to be developed to address post-earthquake issues for young people in the area. Some commented that what would be most beneficial would be for the Stay Real programme to ‘continue to do what it is already doing’ to help support young people in the post-earthquake environment. There were no suggestions for how the programme might be improved to address post-earthquake issues in the community.



### 3.1.7 Summary Current Participants

Current Stay Real participants positively discussed the range of activities that they participated in as part of the Stay Real programme saying they were ‘fun’ and engaging. Some participants were able to discuss specific components of the twelve step programme that underpins Stay Real while others talked about more general things that they had learnt on the programme. A significant theme in relation to what worked well about the programme was the learning and support that participants gained from developing relationships with other young people in their Stay Real groups and with the programme facilitators. Participants identified the ways in which the facilitators created a safe, open and caring environment in the Stay Real groups to foster these relationships. There were very few ideas for how the programme might be improved and no suggestions for how it might be developed to address post-earthquake issues. Discussion about what current participants would tell other young people about the programme reiterated the positive impact that the programme had on them.

## 3.2 PAST PARTICIPANTS OF STAY REAL

Six young people who had been participants of the Stay Real programme took part in interviews to explore their perceptions of the programme. Participants indicated that they had taken part in the programme in the previous two to five years. These young people reflected on the programme’s impact on their personal development, the significance of the programme facilitators, and how the programme might be improved.

### 3.2.1 The impact of Stay Real

Past participants discussed what they remembered about the Stay Real programme and reflected on its impact on them. The main aspects of the programme that they talked about were:

- the activities that they took part in
- the personal development that took place for them
- the relationships that they formed with other young people in their Stay Real group
- the relationships that they formed with the Stay Real facilitators

#### 3.2.1.1 Activities

Past participants described their experience of Stay Real as ‘fun’ and ‘challenging in a positive way’. For some their most positive memories of the programme were the opportunities they had to take part in activities such as outdoor activities, day trips, overnight camps and crafts. Some talked about how the activities created opportunities to learn and share with others about their lives.

“You’d go and do stuff but you would also end up talking about things at the same time.”

“Just getting to know each other better, had a lot of fun [at camp and] stayed up late, just girly time.”

When asked directly about what they remembered learning from the twelve step programme past participants said that they were unable to recall specific details. Yet their reflections on the programme’s impact reveal that they did learn about important

components of the twelve step programme such as responsibility, respect and perseverance. Some were also able to recall that they recited the serenity prayer but did not reflect further. Some of these young people also discussed the importance of confidentiality in the Stay Real groups with one saying that they remembered the phrase “what you hear here, what you say here, let it stay here.”

### **3.2.1.2 Personal Development**

Reflections about how the Stay Real programme had helped them in their personal development included:

- learning to be a role model
- considering other people
- gratitude
- helping and giving to others
- positivity
- learning from and moving on from mistakes
- improved self confidence
- responsibility
- being open minded
- learning to relate better to other people

“How to be sort of a good role model.”

“If you’ve got something and someone needs it more than you do, you’ve got to be able to maybe sacrifice something for someone else...in order to make yourself a better person too.”

“Be happy about things, be positive, there’s always another way and you’re not perfect but you can change from your mistakes, that’s what [the facilitators] always talked about -that no one’s really perfect but you can change from your mistakes.”

“It gives [young people] confidence...cos me personally, my self-esteem is quite low, it just helped me get out there more.”

“Responsibility and being confident in who you are.”

“Being open minded in different situations and how to cope under difficult situations.”

“I just learnt to treat people as you want to be treated...”

“Getting closer to people who we didn’t think we would get along with.”

### **3.2.1.3 Positive peer relationships**

Much of the discussion about the impact of the Stay Real programme centred on the positive impact of relationships formed with the other young people in their Stay Real group and with the programme facilitators. This included increased support and learning from others.



“Just hanging out talking about everything, getting it off our chest...getting to understand each other better.”

“[Relating to each other as a group] was actually quite helpful cos we could talk about the problems we were having at school and no one else could go back and say anything at school.”

“It’s like a little family, they’re like brothers and sisters in the group. It’s quite nice just having a different little family...there’s no judging or anything and do no harm with words or actions...You’re not allowed to pick on each other...treat people as you want to be treated.”

Some past participants said that these relationships were, and continued to be, the most valuable parts of the programme for them.

“I think mine [the main impact of the programme] would be being a caring...young [person]. Just looking out for all my friends and stuff. I think just a lot of different lessons...I guess taking away relationships that I’ve made with people here. The people here are some of the best friends I have now...even still having bonds with some of the youth leaders, it’s just relationships and just keeping around positive people...”

One person said that their parents had noticed the positive impact that Stay Real had on their life.

“...I think my parents sort of chilled out more after I started hanging out with, you know, people from here... they were like ‘oh yeah this is actually a pretty cool place’ cos... in [this area] it’s like whoa it’s...lots of gang violence...And when I brought my parents here they were like ‘this is a really cool place to be’ and you know they were happy for me to come here...they definitely saw it as a positive influence.”

Another said that the programme had provided a space away from the ‘drama’ of some of the less positive relationships in their life.

“And you’re happy about yourself...you can just get away from the drama.”

#### **3.2.1.4 Whānau/family and school life**

Some past participants gave examples of the impact that the Stay Real programme had on their home and school life, including helping them to develop strategies to deal with anger and negative relationships, as well as developing more self-confidence.

“It made me behave better. I was really really naughty and I’m good now...It just tells you, it teaches you not to be angry and there’s other options, you





don't have to punch someone, there are better ways...it helped me at home and school. I wasn't really good at home, I had some problems, me and my mum didn't get on and would always fight and now we don't."

"I never really used to go to school and when I came onto the programme my attendance and behaviour started getting better...just having something fun to do just to clear my mind...and just gave me a break from all the dramas at school...I finally realised that it doesn't matter what people think about me as long as I think positive about me...just talking with [the facilitators]."

"And [it] helped sort out...our problems at school as well...we would talk about what was going on and how we could solve it and that."

"How to relieve stress and that... if we were stressed [the facilitators] told us just to ask our teachers to go outside for a bit...to go for a walk or read a book, not just take it out on the next person that got on your nerves."

"Stressful things at home, we could take what we learned at Stay Real and take it home and use their strategies at home...I wasn't talking to my mum for a bit and after Stay Real for a few weeks I started talking to her and actually getting along with her...just understanding where she's coming from [better]...getting along with my brothers, not fighting all the time."

"It was a great experience through Stay Real, making more friends, hanging out at school, learning not to react to people that get on your last nerve...learning not to react."

### ***3.2.1.5 Former participants' current employment and education situation***

Only some past participants reflected on how the Stay Real programme had impacted on their current employment and education situation. These young people gave examples of how what they had learnt on the programme was helping them in their current circumstances. This included finding ways to get on better with an employer and a tutor and remembering to respect the needs of different people. Learning not to over-react in stressful situations and towards other people was a particularly valuable lesson that these young people took away from Stay Real.

"Yeah, learning not to react in bad situations...being civil with people who you don't get along with instead of reacting... I don't like my boss per se, but I still have to work with [them]. Just bite my tongue when people get on my nerves or try and get a reaction out of me. Bite your tongue, keep your head down, do your work."

"Learning to deal with people's different needs... cos where I work a lot of people have different needs...and I've just got to understand that they've got different needs and start respecting them and just cope...just respect for other people's needs."

“And getting on with people even if you don’t like them cos you’re not going to like a lot of people in life but you have to work with them and stuff... I don’t like some people on my course but I still have to get along with them to get qualifications from it... Just if I get angry, walk off and then five minutes come back and talk with the tutor and tell [them] before I walk off so [they] can deal with it.”

Two past participants also commented that the programme had helped them better prepare for the ‘real world’.

“Cos it helps them [young people] in the real world when they get to it...cos kids just think that they know everything but then they go to Stay Real and they learn more to respect, it actually opens your eyes to half the stuff that’s going on in the world that they don’t know about.”

Lastly the significance of the programme for some past participants was underscored when they commented that funders should keep supporting the Stay Real programme as it is a valuable resource for young people from their area.

“This is an opportunity for kids on the Eastside to get out and do things that they may never get the chance to do in their life, like I would never go kayaking or, you know, go to Easter camp. Give our kids an opportunity like this...I think that after I came here I found who I really am...”

“Keep funding it cos the kids need it.”

### ***3.2.1.6 The importance of the programme facilitators***

Past participants discussed the positive ways in which the facilitators worked with them as a significant part of the Stay Real programme. This included the facilitators:

- Being non-judgemental and accepting
- Being understanding, supportive and inclusive
- Being organised
- Giving advice and showing care
- Using humour
- Being relaxed
- Being fun
- Giving them options
- Not forcing them to do things that they didn’t want to do

“I just think they weren’t judgemental I guess, and you could just say something and they would understand even though they might not have been in that situation...or they’d try to understand.”



“They are nice and caring and they weren’t mean...and they were really supportive.”

“They would give us advice and stuff...and talk to us whenever we needed to talk to them, they were there for us.”

“...it is fun, it’s good, it helps you...the leaders are good for talking and supporting you.”

“Everyone listened to them cos there’s good leaders...cos they are nice and caring and fun and not yelling at you.”

“[The facilitator] was always cool, calm and collected...the other [facilitator] had their moments but would come back and apologise.”

“They always made us laugh even if we were down...by doing something silly...they just chilled. They’d always ask us where we’d want to go and take us to those places.”

“Gave us an option not just saying ‘we are going to go here and we are going to go here’...they didn’t force you to do things you didn’t want to do.”

For some, the Stay Real programme and facilitators continued to be a source of support.

“Just debriefs...helping and supporting you even if you’ve left school.”

“We’ve got their numbers and [they] said whenever you’re going through a tough time and need to talk just call and come over.”

“Yeah [the facilitator] has helped me quite a bit, like when I was looking for a job...[they] got me into a course and when I finished course [they] were looking with me for a job... [They] helped me write up my CV and that.”

“[The facilitator] helped me with options and courses and that.”

“Cos you know that you’ve [still] got that support if you need it...and they know what you’re like already and your bad days...and you can relate to them cos they’ve helped you in the past.”

### **3.2.2 How the programme might be improved**

While most past participants did not identify any ways in which the programme might be improved, a few suggestions that were discussed included:

- Having the programme available during all of the high school years
- Having the Stay Real group two times a week



- Ensuring that people show up to the groups
- At times relationships could get tense between young people and this needs to be well managed
- More camps and options for activities to do as part of the programme

### 3.2.3 Summary – Former Participants

The main aspects of the programme that past participants recalled were the activities that they participated in, the personal development that took place for them and the relationships that they developed in their Stay Real groups with other young people and the programme facilitators. Past participants reflected on the positive impact that these relationships had on them, such as learning from others and gaining support. For some, these relationships continued to be an important source of support in their lives. There were very few suggestions for how the programme might be improved.

### 3.3 COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Evaluation participants from the community included four Whānau/family members of current Stay Real participants, a worker from a local social service agency and two pastoral care workers from high schools involved with the programme. These participants discussed:

- What works well about the programme
- The impact of the programme
- What could be improved about the programme
- The importance of the programme for the community
- How the programme might respond in the post-earthquake environment

#### 3.3.1 What works well about Stay Real?

Community members discussed what worked well about the Stay Real programme. A number of them gave examples of hearing young people who had taken part in the programme talking positively about it.

“When [the young people] do talk about this place they talk with enthusiasm...with good words, good outcomes plus their body language changes...like they can be themselves here basically.”

“Last year the kids went to a community garden and helped out and then cooked food and ate it, the kids really raved about that...”

“I love it, I think it’s wonderful, [the young person] always looks forward to Stay Real...”

“They love it, they absolutely love it. They really enjoy the activities but they also enjoy the groups as well...I think for some of them it’s a different way of doing things and they enjoy that and for some of them it’s an opportunity...”

Community members observed the impact of Stay Real on its participants and identified a number of reasons why they thought the programme was successful. These included:



- (i) The programme is locally based and has been embedded in the community for a long time
- (ii) It provides opportunities for young people to learn skills they wouldn't otherwise learn.
- (iii) It is based on positive relationship-building between the facilitators and the young people
- (iv) The facilitators are available for the young people outside programme hours including weekends and school holidays, and also beyond the completion of the programme. Facilitators can provide broad support for the young people such as attending Family Group Conferences and school meetings
- (v) It works with young people's Whānau/family while also providing an avenue for young people to interact with adults who are not part of their Whānau/family.

### ***3.3.1.1 Locally based and of long-standing in the community.***

One community member commented that the long standing relationship that the Stay Real programme had with the community was one of its greatest strengths as a number of other programmes had come into the community and imposed their own ideas about what the community needed, or they had not stayed. They also noted that the Stay Real programme worked with young people that 'other agencies had given up on.'

"It's been a long relationship and in my opinion it's been a very positive relationship...the advantage being that Stay Real works with kids that other agencies give up on and they are there for the long haul...this is not a programme where you have to have ticked a number of boxes to apply for funding and stuff like that...we still have to apply for funding but that's not where their heads are at...their heads are about working in our community and they actually work in our community and actually know our community, they are not fly by nighters which unfortunately our community has had a lot of...it's also based on the needs of the community rather than an agency coming in and telling the community what they need."

Discussion about the importance of the Stay Real programme for the Eastern Suburbs areas in which it is delivered led community members to talk about some of the issues that impact on young people from these areas. The issues that they identified included alcohol, drugs, violence in families, neglect, gangs, a lack of parenting skills, truancy, lack of engagement at school, negative interactions with peers, suspensions, a lack of emotional support, low social skills, parents in jail and a lack of fathers. While these are significant issues that affect some young people, community members noted that these are not representative of the community as a whole. One community member commented that while they are a deprived community, many Whānau/family in the area work hard to provide for their children and often what is needed is support.

"We're a deprived community... so there's a struggle with generational stuff, there's a struggle with a lack of money... you know people are disadvantaged

before they are born sometimes... but with support I've seen people in here with the lowest amount of income, (our average household income in [this area] is \$18,000) that manage to the cent. They are just treading water but they still support their children. They love them, they have them at school, they are working hard, they are working night shifts ... [and] people [are] making ends meet but the kids are home alone...[and] kids might get into mischief... and that's why participation in community and community stuff is so important."

### ***3.3.1.2 Young people learning skills and developing confidence***

The outdoor activities were identified as particularly popular for the young people taking part in Stay Real. A number of community members said that the programme is important as many of the young people involved would not get a chance to take part in these activities otherwise.

"...quite often they talk about the groups they have, like going on an adventure."

"A lot of kids probably wouldn't get the chance to [do the outdoor activities]. [The young person] really appreciates it."

"Half the kids here wouldn't even get to do half the stuff that they do here..."

"They're learning different skills in different settings... you're learning about safety, you're learning about teamwork, you're looking after each other... you're getting life skills... some practical living skills and some adventure. Some of these children wouldn't get what we grew up with, you know, going camping and adventurous stuff..."

There was comment about the opportunity to develop mentoring and leadership skills:

"The kids mentor the younger kids coming through, they awhi [embrace/support] the younger ones so they are looking after the younger ones...it's not someone you just met, it's someone you've been brought up with...a lot of the younger ones have gone on and become youth leaders...and some of them have gone on to work for Corrections and with Youth Aid."

There was also comment about the personal development of participants, particularly learning new skills and improved confidence and self-esteem.

"... [After Stay Real the young person is] just vibrant and positive ... I've just noticed [they] can tell anything to [the facilitator] if things are bothering [them] and...they always have a talk [in the group] before they go out."

"For [the young person] it's really good because [they] aren't a school person...life hasn't always been easy... [They] haven't picked up a lot of social skills... [They] can't stand school [but they] get up and come here."



“I think it’s a confidence building thing for [the young people]...”

“Free to be themselves... [The young person] has leader skills now from coming out of here, they all have.”

“For [the young person] it was more attitudinal things when they talk about the respect and those sort of things... [The young person] found that helpful.”

“For self-esteem ... especially when they achieve something they didn’t think they were capable of doing, but as far as mental health with extra support in place, that definitely adds to it.”

“Yeah trust, respect, care and [the young person talks about learning skills such as] don’t mock the ones that are lagging behind, always wait or you help them out...things like that.”

### ***3.3.1.3 Building positive relationships.***

The relationships that young people built with each other and the programme facilitators were identified as a successful element of the programme. These relationships were seen as an important avenue for the young people to share about their lives and gain support.

“When the kids are out on the programme they have that relationship with the facilitators...”

“I think that the most successful part of the programme apart from the outdoor, the kayaking and the camps...is the group discussions because [the young person] is such a closed book...”

The positive impact for the young people of relating to other young people on the programme was identified. This included making friends and the support that comes from interacting with people who have experienced similar issues.

“They’ve got to know each other, the kids, and they’re pretty close.”

“...they do the steps they learn about...and I think [they] will probably be around in the group mixing with some of those kids... who’ve probably been through some of the same stuff...”

“I think it’s good for them because they know that they’re on that same level where they can talk about things and know it’s not going to go anywhere else. I think that’s important for the kids.”

“They meet a lot more friends other than their own friends, from other areas, and have good relationships with them.”



### ***3.3.1.4 Support beyond the formal programme***

Community members identified the value of the facilitators being available to support the young people outside the formal programme hours, saying that this is what made the programme different from some of the other programmes in the area.

“I like it because it’s not just in school, it’s in the weekends, after school, holidays.”

“Kids who need that connection and engagement...it’s a solid base and it’s a place that they can keep going back to...kids can just drop in...when the café’s open it’s even better...”

“Anything to do for the kids they’ll do it.”

“...it’s a 24/7 programme in the true sense of the word and it goes on and it goes on, it’s extremely [relational]... [The facilitator] is there and the other people are there as well, so it’s important...”

“It also works with the kids during the holidays...other programmes don’t run term time programmes but is that when our kids really need that support...”

One community member noted that while the strength of this kind of commitment varies depending on whom the facilitators are this support is a central part of the programme.

“It varies a little bit with the leaders, but the fact [is] that they are available out of the Stay Real programme and when [the young people] get in trouble they can get [support].”

“The facilitators were at a Family Group Conference and that was really powerful to have that wrap-around thing. Because the young person had the relationship with the youth workers and so it became a more comfortable place to be.”

### ***3.3.1.5 Relationship with Whānau/family***

Community members noted the importance of the programme interacting with young people’s Whānau/family or caregivers.

“It’s about the relationship building, it’s not only with the kids, it’s with the families...”

Some also observed that the programme provides an avenue for young people to interact with adults apart from their parents and caregivers. This is important as sometimes young people don’t want to interact with their Whānau/family or caregivers.

“Mainly having someone to talk to other than [parents] because they find it hard to talk to [parents]...”

“And it’s out of home too. I think too, you know, home’s important but I think it’s one thing for them just for them...”





“Because...teenagers don’t want to go out with [family]...teenagers don’t go out and have one on one with their [caregivers]...”

“Unfortunately...a lot of children grow up with a lot of let downs in their lives, disappointments, and these sort of things here are the last sort of things you want to take away from them because it’s something that they do have...”

### 3.3.2 The importance of the programme facilitators

There was significant discussion from community members about the positive impact arising from the way the programme facilitators worked with the young people. This included the facilitators:

- Being non-judgemental
- Demonstrating genuine care for the young people
- Showing that they are committed to the young people
- Creating structure and routine for the young people
- Setting boundaries
- Being humorous and fun
- Gaining the respect of the young people

“...there’s a genuine passion to support children to succeed... and to have the skill around teamwork and giving them tools and skills to maybe make better decisions, maybe take a different direction than the other one, you know, for a better choice...developing them... role modelling... [The staff] have a passion to want the children to succeed...”

“[The facilitator] is really light-hearted and it’s really important to have that...that stuff’s important.”

“Anything to do for the kids they’ll do it.”

“You can tell by the interactions between the leaders and [the young people] of the mutual respect between them.”

“[The] line in the sand is ‘muck up, step up and move on [with the programme]’ ...and the kids know the boundaries [and the facilitators] will follow up on [things] if there’s been an issue.”

Community members recognised the importance, for the development and delivery of the programme, of the Project Director, who is also a Stay Real facilitator. His long term commitment to the young people and the community was valued by community members. This was illustrated by a community member who discussed this person’s significant ongoing and long term support for the young people.

“When they need them...say there was a situation that went down on a Saturday the kids would know that they could ring [the Director] and he would be there. He has married them, he’s buried them.”



Community members also commented that the Project Director gains the respect of the young people and their families, interacts with the young people 'where they are at', is a strong male role model and works very hard to keep the young people on the programme.

"[He works with the young people] where they are at rather than where he would like them to be."

"[He] is wonderful... for the youth, the kids, they've got mad respect for him."

"...and [he] doesn't judge them. If [he] knows they've played up and they know they've done wrong and stuff and [he] is still 'well are you coming round or not' you know 'come on'..."

"And other kids who [the Director] has worked with though the hard times with their families...there's a real emphasis on, yes you mucked up, forgiveness. He has a lot higher tolerance than I do...he has got that whole relationship thing which is huge to him and it does help keeping the kids engaged. It also keeps the kids focussed in education because he cares really strongly about the kids being at school and also that you don't have to use your fists to sort things out... and it gives them another way of dealing with things..."

Discussion about this facilitator led to observations from some community members about the need to ensure that the programme continues to have male facilitators as role models for the young people, as they noted that 'a lack of fathers' is an issue in the area.

"Especially children that haven't got fathers...going through these teenage years there's a lot of pressure on them trying to find themselves, trying to find who they are, and this helps...there's still all that other stuff going on and emotions and all that stuff - what's the coolest thing...the in thing at the moment. ... And a lot of these [young people] need as many of these good men role models as possible..."

It is evident from the community members that a significant part of the connection between Crossroads Youth with a Future and the community is due to the Project Director's long term commitment to establishing and maintaining relationships with the community.

### **3.3.3 The impact of the programme**

Overall, as the above discussion indicates, the community members identified that Stay Real has a positive impact on young people who face significant challenges. These impacts included:

- The benefit of young people being given opportunities to open up and talk to others about their lives
- Young people developing teamwork and leadership skills
- Developing social skills through being part of a group
- Building confidence and self-esteem

- Developing a more positive attitude

For some young people, this personal development had had a noticeable impact on their engagement with schooling. Some community members observed that participation in Stay Real was a motivation for some young people to attend school.

“With Stay Real they look forward to [going].”

“...with some of the [young people who are] truants, they all turn up for the Stay Real but they might not turn up [to school] for the other days of the week, so it’s certainly got appeal for the kids.”

“I think if [the young people] didn’t go on [Stay Real] we would see more problems...in terms of being less engaged at school.”

Some community members talked about the positive benefit of Stay Real as an alternative for young people to some of the other more negative pathways that they were exposed to in their lives.

“So this is an opportunity for [them], having that in [their] lives. It’s showing the kids it’s important that they have that balance even though that other stuff’s going on, they’ve still got this balance.”

“I know a boy and there’s gang affiliations, it’s ingrained in him... but if he didn’t have this who knows...it’s just showing them the other side. It’s really important.”

“Just seeing that other side you know their purpose is not just, you know, showing what [gang] colour you are... I think that’s quite important [having a programme like this] especially around here.”

One community member noted that taking part in positive activities in their community, which is affected by issues such as poverty, impacted on young people’s sense of self.

“It changes their outlook really in this area... a poverty area. They’re kind of not trapped...they walk with a bit of a dance in their step, head up high.”

### **3.3.4 What could be improved about the programme?**

There were no strong recommendations from community members about how the Stay Real programme might be improved. Suggestions for improvement that were identified included:

- Having activities such as outdoor activities every week instead of two weekly
- Changing each two weekly half day to a full day
- Increasing the scope of the programme to include more young people and facilitators



- More reciprocal feedback between the schools and the programme about how each young person is going on the programme and how issues at school may be affecting their participation

“It would be great if they could take more on, help more people but they would have to have more workers. It would be great because they could help more kids. There’s still a lot of kids out there not doing the programme, but they are there.”

### 3.3.5 How Stay Real might respond in the post-earthquake environment

Community members discussed the significant impact of the earthquakes on young people. This included ongoing issues such as delays in emotional development, impact on learning, the need for stable housing, and stress on Whānau/families such as pressure from high rents.

“They are definitely [struggling more]. I noticed that people my age and older...it turns your whole world upside down ...I find it hard still to deal with it...”

“For a number of our students at that time... not sure where they are going to live...insecure homes...it’s settled down a lot but there’s still some that have got some...stresses.”

“The ongoing post-earthquake issues are social emotional immaturity. [It’s] extremely noticeable...Some of the behaviours we are having... you would expect at primary school. The ability to deal with conflict...peer interactions and stuff like that, I believe have regressed...so that social emotional development I believe is impaired. It’s kind of it’s stalled.”

“There’s still a lot of stuff going on for people psychologically. People are still dealing with a lot of stress... the kids would be feeling that too, some of their behaviours would indicate that...”

Community members did not identify any ways in which the programme might be developed to address post-earthquake issues. Comments centred on the programme continuing ‘to do what it is already doing’ in providing social and emotional support for the young people. It was noted that the Crossroads Youth with a Future provided support to the community as a whole during the earthquakes.

“I think the programme covered all that through the earthquake and post-earthquake. They did a great job really, they opened up to the wider community plus the kids.”

“A place they could come and talk freely, you know, get some counselling, you could look at it like counselling...couldn’t talk to [other adults] but could come here and talk freely about their experiences and getting heard...They could come here and release it.”

“Keep doing what they are doing... [The young people need to] practice some of those skills about - hang on, let’s stop and think about this - and... equipping the kids with more tools to, you know, carry on from there...”

### 3.3.6 Summary – Community Members

Community members discussed reasons why the Stay Real programme is successful including that it is locally based, support is available for young people outside of the programme hours and, where possible, it works with young people’s Whānau/family. Community members commented on the relationship-based nature of the programme giving examples of the positive impact of these relationships on participants. The facilitators were seen as a vital component of the programme, particularly in relation to the relationship building that they did with participants. The Project Director was recognised as an important part of the development of the programme and as having established a significant on-going connection with the community and with programme participants. There were no strong recommendations for how the programme might be improved. Community members recognised that young people had been significantly impacted by the earthquakes but they did not identify any ways in which the programme could be developed to address the post-earthquake environment except by continuing to provide support for young people in the area.

## 3.4 THE PROGRAMME FACILITATORS

Four Stay Real facilitators took part in individual interviews as part of the evaluation. One of the facilitators is also the director of the programme and has been central in its development from its inception. Two other facilitators had significant experience of the programme over a number of years while one facilitator had only recently joined the facilitation team. The main questions that the programme facilitators discussed were:

- Issues faced by participants
- The practices and values that underpin the programme
- The impact of the programme on the young people
- What could be improved about the programme
- How the programme might respond in the post-earthquake environment

### 3.4.1 Issues faced by the young people

The facilitators said that the young people they work with often have significant issues in their lives that create barriers to them succeeding. These included truancy, negative peer pressure, drugs, alcohol, violence and stressful home lives.

“We work with at risk youth so in my group I can see that there’s a lot of youth struggling with school, struggling to attend school... and just not enjoying school really.”

“I think peer pressure, trying to be older than you actually are, trying to be kind of cool, I think [in] the poorer areas it hurts the youth as well not having lunch and stuff to take to school is really... depressing, influences, you know

the wrong influences...and you know the adults in their life...it's just trying to find a way to turn that around for them..."

"Some of them come from broken homes, lack of fathers is huge, just life in general for a lot of them...a lot of them struggle in the education system as well..."

The significance of the barriers that young people face was illustrated by one facilitator who commented that some young people 'did not make it through.'

"There's a lot of barriers for them...over here we've got a memorial wall [for] some of the kids we've worked with, they just lost their lives, and so there is a lot of barriers out there... There is a lot of barriers out there and sad to say that some kids don't get to see adulthood, they don't grow up because whatever [challenge] they've come up [against] has just been too much."

### **3.4.2 The practices and values that underpin the programme**

When asked about the practices and values that underpin the Stay Real programme the facilitators identified a number of important themes. Many of these centred on how they build relationships with participants and then use this relationship building to support these young people to develop. Facilitators identified the following as important components of this relationship building:

- 'Unconditional love' and care
- Supporting young people to make decisions for themselves
- Being non-judgmental
- Being available to support the young people outside of normal programme hours
- Building connections with the young people by being open about their own life stories
- Engaging with the young people through taking part in group activities and spending time with them
- Creating a safe place and welcoming environment for the young people

"...just spending time with them doing activities that they are not normally involved in, really, spending time with them, letting them know that we are there for them..."

"...just giving them confidence and telling them life stories, because I've kind of come from their background so it's easy to relate...I think it's helping and just being open with them..."

"I see the best for the kids... and just working with them to get there to whatever that may be for the kid, for each different child because it's all different. Each child is different. Basically...I just want the best for them, that's why I'm here."

"Well it would have to be the unconditional love - just having the door open all the time just respect, respect for the kids... listen to them ..."



“Unconditional love, no matter what they do, they know that...that’s what I encourage in them, that’s where we start [when something goes wrong], ‘so what?’, five minutes later it’s a new beginning, one second later it’s a new beginning, the choice is yours...”

“And it’s good to just be there to help and support them in decision making sort of letting them decide for themselves...”

“...just being honest about your life experiences to them. It really helps. You have to really open up to relate to them and depending on the person [it can take a while to build their trust].”

“It’s a safe place for them to come to sit down and have a talk to us and you know quite often the kids from Aranui come to us and sit down and they just talk about their day, you know, what’s happening and what’s going on in their life, and if we can be there for them, just to do that...”

“It’s a place for the young people to come and learn positive skills, have a safe place for them to come.”

“I find this place really open, all walks of life come in here and I just find it really inviting, really open, they’ll never turn anyone away. We try and make it a stable environment for the children...”

“Providing a stable environment for these young people, yeah, just giving them time and knowing that we are here for them...”

“And then there’s other things that they can do like the drop-in centre... knowing that there’s somewhere that they can come...”

The Project Director stressed that it is important that they have ‘no ultimatums’ with the young people. He connected this to showing ‘unconditional love’ which helps the facilitators to build relationships with the young people that are non-judgemental and built on trust. He expanded on this saying that ‘no ultimatums’ does not mean ‘no consequences’ for the young people but is a reflection of the significant effort that the facilitators make to keep the young people involved with the programme, even when other people may have ‘given up on them’.

“...we don’t say ‘do this or else.’ There are consequences but not ultimatums for the young people...really building a bond of trust...”

“The principles that guide [this programme]... I have unconditional love, I have no ultimatums and nobody gets kicked off, they choose to leave... no matter how hard it gets, none of my staff or me are allowed to say ‘I’ve had enough of you, you’re gone’. That is not an option, [we’ve got to] figure it out... what’s a better way of doing this...”

“...it was like there was a category of young people that they put in the too-hard basket... a guy from [another social agency] described it me one day –





‘the school has a bottom line, they cross that line they’re out of the school, we have a bottom line, they don’t perform, they are kicked out. You [Stay Real] don’t have a bottom line’...”

One facilitator noted that they are not just there to be ‘friends’ with the young people and that at times they took on more of a parental role. An example given was ensuring that the young people ‘had good boundaries’ which the facilitator said ‘the young people were sometimes missing at home.’

### **3.4.2.1 Relationship-building**

When asked what was most successful about the programme, the importance of relationships was emphasised by the facilitators.

“I think it’s the relationship...the relationship between the leaders and the kids, and the kids and each other. So the relationships, so a place where they can be trusted where they can learn to trust, a place where they can put their trust, so they can trust someone...the respect part of well, there’s lots of things that come from there... relationships and trust.”

“Forming long-term relationships with all the young people, them knowing that we are always going to be here for them even when the programme’s finished, just knowing that we are here...”

The overall theme of the importance of relationship building in the programme was underscored by the Project Director who commented that the most valuable part of the programme is not found in its individual components but in its use as a tool for relationship building and engaging with participants. Facilitators observed that how they supported positive development in participants through this relationship building was the most important part of Stay Real.

“...the programme itself is ... no different than any other programme under the sun. The programme is a tool to connect with the young person and when you make your connection...it’s what you do then... so the tool is so we can engage with the young person.”

Facilitators gave examples of how they used relationship building with the young people to support their development. This included using group activities to teach young people about issues such as perseverance, respect for others, commitment and caring for others.

“So if a boy is disrespecting a girl, that is an opportunity to teach them [that] you don’t disrespect girls or their language...so it’s a good time to integrate the Stay Real groups and teach them about those behaviours and for the kids to sort of get it themselves.”

The facilitators commented that the relationships that participants built with each other were an important component of support, learning and development on the programme. This is reflected in the emphasis that the facilitators gave to team building within the Stay



Real groups. An important part of this is a focus on creating a safe place and opportunities for the young people to share in their Stay Real group and learn from each other with support from the facilitators.

“You see the relationships...relationship building, I think, is really good, having that relationship where they can talk to the leaders, talk to the kids, to each other.”

“[Working in groups] helps them work together as a group as a team working together and sort of respecting each other and learning [about] respecting themselves. You get lots of those positive attitudes like that, things like that.”

“What makes a huge difference to the young people...is we meet, so the talking bit to me is the most important part. They begin to trust for the first time in their life...and then we become a team. I say “do you trust here?” and they say “nah”. So I say “what you see here, what you do here, let it stay here”. So we really work on that and when we do the outdoor activities any of the activities we do involves the step we have just spoken of.

One facilitator gave an example of how participants learnt to support each other through assisting a fellow participant who was physically impaired to take part in a kayaking activity:

“By the end of that day the kids had got that kid onto a double kayak and the strongest kid had paddled for him.”

The Project Director described the Whānau/ family atmosphere that they endeavour to create in the Stay Real groups.

“What the programme is, in a sentence is, unconditional love...there’s no judgment and we become more like a family, like a Whānau, and journey life together. I learn as much from them as they learn from me so we are journeying together...”

In this he acknowledged that the facilitators took on a strongly relational rather than ‘expert’ role in which they sought to journey alongside the young people to provide skills and support. He also noted that they gained assistance from appropriate experts such as counsellors for the young people when necessary.

“...the programme is developed as family, it’s developed as: I am not the leader, I’m not a counsellor, I don’t try to be. If something comes up that needs experts then I go to the school counsellor and we are a support for the young person and the family, and the professionals take over, so we don’t try to fix things but just journey with them and give them some skills.”

For some young people this support and relationship continued for many years after they had left the Stay Real programme.

“...and it doesn’t finish ...the young people who I had in 1998, some of them I still have contact with today...I have been able to remain engaged and my team in [their] lives...I still have all these regular contacts with lots of them...”

The Project Director gave examples of how he had continued to be involved in the lives of young people who had been part of the programme. This included visiting young people in prison, celebrating life events such as weddings and birthdays, helping them with family and personal issues and attending significant family events such as funerals.

Where possible the facilitators also build connections with the young people's Whānau / family. At times this connection includes the facilitators offering support to the young people's Whānau / family.

"Not only do we work with the youth but we extend our arm to the families as well where possible, and it can change. I've noticed parents ringing to ask for advice about their child or just to get some help ...parents of the youth that have been on this programme in the previous years are still coming here to ask advice and help..."

"So we don't just work with the young person... we have communication with the parents and they actually come and see me, they talk to me, they'll ring me. [If] things aren't going well they'll ring me. So the Stay Real programme is for the young person and for the family as well. Once they're engaged it's 24-7."

### **3.4.3 The impact of the Stay Real programme on the young people**

The facilitators discussed their perception of the impact that the Stay Real had on its participants including:

- The opportunity and development that comes for young people participating in new activities
- Young people learning about values such as respect and responsibility and issues such as drugs
- Young people having an opportunity to talk about their lives and gain support
- Young people hearing positive messages such as the importance of staying in school
- Stay Real is an motivation for some young people to attend school

"We have one that we are working with...that has pretty much not been out and done anything so pretty much everything we have done [for example,] Hanmer, she has never done it, bowling [likewise]."

"[The group discussion] gets them thinking about things...I can think of a time that I did a discussion on using synthetics...and six months later the boys brought it up and that just reminded me that they actually are listening to what we are actually talking about."

"...It's about them being able to overcome and achieve...It's like we did a [programme] step on overcoming and we were going mountain bike riding... we went bike riding but because of [the drugs that young people use] they run out of puff...[ a young person found it difficult to complete the bike track]... but the next time we did it, we got quarter the way round the track and the [young person] said 'we conked out here last time but this time I'm feeling good' and we got round the whole two and half hour

bike ride and we got back to the trailer and as I looked back as [the young person] came back ...she didn't say 'I' she said 'we made it'... and then she said 'I didn't think I could.' And I said "that's a natural high, you can get it any time you want, and it's safer than synthetics [drugs]."

"I think it's kind of the end of the road, like at school they are struggling, the [young people] that we work with, I can see that they're struggling and...Stay Real is a place that they can come where it's not necessarily a classroom environment but they are still learning life stuff here... it's kind of a release away from school where they can come and say this is what's happening, this is why I don't like school, and we can try and work around those things...one of the [young people] is quite bad in attendance but coming here is kind of opening up why it's good to be in school and stay in school...we are putting time and effort into getting these young people into school trying to keep them in school trying to get the best out of them."

"I think quite a lot, just having someone there that's not an authority figure in their life, because a lot of the youth we work with have trouble with that kind of stuff and just having someone there to listen to them... a lot of the [young people] that we work with sometimes their only attendance at school is coming to here."

"[Young people] quite often miss school but they make sure they are there for Stay Real..."

"Having people with positive influences in your life can really help...their attendance [at school] is quite low but the majority of them show up to this group."

One facilitator noted that change often happens over time so it is sometimes hard to fully assess the impact of the programme while the young people are participating in it.

"I've seen a lot of changes in the kids, good changes, I've seen a lot of good changes ...it sometimes doesn't happen overnight it may be later on down the track for some kids."

Facilitators also gave a number of examples of seeing young people who had been part of the Stay Real programme who are now succeeding in their lives. One facilitator commented that it's 'good to think' that they have contributed to the young people going on to succeed such as gaining employment.

"And we quite often have messages coming through on Facebook about kids who started Stay Real way back, about how it helped."

"...and the good changes it's really good to see...when you've seen the kids that have changed, it's really good, it's awesome. They just come up to you and say hi hello...and also just doing well at jobs, when you hear they've got jobs... When you first get a child they've got a lot of things going on for them, then later on in life, when they're adults and you see them working... it's really good in employment and also in the community as well, and for me it's really cool...if we had a part to play... it's just really good to see, it's like far out, choice."



“...the kids have got so much up against them and so, you know, and we just want to be there for them and help them get through that...and [Stay Real] does have an impact because now you’ve seen kids getting married, you know, they’ve grown up and they are getting married [and] been employed, having families of their own, raising families and also celebrating their birthdays. There’s a lot of barriers out there, but [for us] to be there for them and get them through that and get past that.”

#### **3.4.4 What could be improved about the programme?**

There were very few suggestions from the facilitators for how the Stay Real programme might be improved. Ideas included:

- Possibly more communication between the schools and the facilitators
- More funding to allow the programme to be developed and expanded, particularly so more staff might be employed

One facilitator commented that one of the strengths of Stay Real is the ability for the facilitators to adapt the programme meaning that they could adjust the programme as it was delivered to meet the needs of specific young people and Stay Real groups.

“I think I wouldn’t really change anything because I see that the way the programme is run is working well with the kids. But also, as you’re going along you’re learning, you’re just learning to adapt your stuff...if it changes it’s on the spot things, like day to day things, because you’re on the spot with the young people...in [each] situation because it’s always different and the basic one is, as long as you’re there for the kids and putting the kids first and that the programme does work, so I wouldn’t change anything.”

#### **3.4.5 How Stay Real might respond in the post-earthquake environment**

The facilitators did not identify any significant ways in which the programme should be developed to address post-earthquakes issues. The facilitators said that the earthquakes had had a significant and on-going impact on the young people and the community, but noted that the programme already addresses issues associated with this such as helping participants to find positive ways to deal with stress and creating a safe space to talk about their experiences and issues.

“I suppose just a few things - ask the kids... just what do they think, just let them talk about that stuff.”

“Within the programme it’s about dealing with what’s in your face, so with the earthquakes the kids came to me anyway... in this community, the [young people] are gypsies so when the earthquake hit they just packed up and went and now they are back again. But all the emotional stuff that goes with that... it needs to come out, it comes out now. In different ways, the kids will talk to me about [the earthquakes]... ‘How did it affect you...?’ and that’s how we cope...”

“One of the steps on the programme that we are actually doing is situated around stress and, you know, it’s just getting the young people talking about their feelings...”



### **3.4.6 Summary - Facilitators**

When reflecting about the values and principles that underpin the programme facilitators highlighted relationship building alongside the need to create a safe and caring environment with boundaries as a central component of Stay Real. Facilitators gave examples of the positive impacts of the programme on young people including learning about respect, responsibility and messages such as the importance of staying in school. It was evident that the facilitators were committed to the young people on the programme and worked hard to keep them on the programme. There were no significant recommendations for how the programme might be improved or might better respond in the post-earthquake environment.



#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Across the data collected in this evaluation there is consistent evidence that Stay Real is a programme in which young people gain significant support and learn valuable life skills. All of the different groups of people who took part in the evaluation offered consistent feedback about what underpins how the programme works and its impact on young people. A significant theme is the relational nature of the programme and what underpins this such as the importance that facilitator's place on creating safe, open, supportive and caring environments for the young people. Young people gave many examples of the learnings and support that they gained from the relationships that they developed with each other in their Stay Real groups as well as the relationships that they developed with the facilitators. There were many rich, and at times emotive quotes, from young people about the impact of these relationships on them. This is encapsulated in a number of young people describing Stay Real like Whānau/ family. The strength of the connection that some of the current participants had with Stay Real was also reflected in the enthusiasm with which they discussed the photographs that they had taken of their experiences of the programme.

The facilitators reflected on how relationship building is a central part of the programme and talked about the importance of creating environments that foster relationships as an avenue for young people to develop life skills and learn to relate more positively to others. Both the young people who took part in the evaluation and community members underscore this in their comments about the impact of the facilitators developing non-judgemental, caring and supportive relationships with young people. Examples were also given of how the facilitators created boundaries for the young people and used the opportunities that the programme provided to challenge young people to develop. This included facilitators using outdoor activities to teach young people about teamwork and young people reflecting on how they had learnt to relate better to others through taking part in both group discussions and activities.

Some young people linked their experience of Stay Real to the twelve steps that underpin the programme while others discussed the more general learnings that they took away from the programme. There are a significant number of examples in the evaluation from both past and current Stay Real participants of times in which they were challenged to develop new ways of relating to others and themselves through the programme. These included young people reflecting on learning about respecting and caring for others, taking responsibility, finding new ways to deal with issues such as anger, the importance of staying in school and about values such as perseverance honesty, gratitude. It is also notable that two of the past participants were able to give concrete examples of how they had taken what they had learnt through Stay Real into their current employment and educational situations.

The data about how the programme might be improved was relatively consistent across the different groups of people who took part in the evaluation. There was no feedback that identified any substantial issues with the programme that need to be addressed with a number of participants saying that it 'should continue to keep doing what it is already doing' and some suggestions that the programme be better resourced so it can be expanded. This is not to say that suggestions for improvement were insignificant but none of the feedback indicated that participants had any major concerns about how the programme is being delivered. One suggestion for improvement from both the facilitators and community



members was the need for at times better communication between the schools and the programme facilitators. While some participants said that they could not think of any ways in which the programme might develop to address post-earthquake issues others reflected that in continuing to offer a supportive space for young people the programme is already addressing post-earthquake issues.

The programme director was acknowledged by many participants as a significant strength of the programme both in its development since its inception and in maintaining strong ongoing connections with the local community. In particular a number of young people and community members held him in high regard because of the significant commitment that he has shown to the young people that he works with and to the wider community. It is evident that some of the programme's effectiveness appears to rest on its director which while being a significant strength of the programme may also impact on its effectiveness in the future if the director leaves or reduces his involvement with it. All of the facilitators talked about the importance of fostering positive and supportive relationships with the young people indicating that there is a shared understanding of the values and principles that underpin the programme.

Overall this evaluation gathered significant information about how the Stay Real programme works and its effectiveness. The substantial support for the programme from across the different people who took part in the evaluation indicates that it is seen as a valuable resource in the community for young people and their Whānau/ families.



## 5.0 REFERENCES

Boyatzis, R. E. [1998]. Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

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