

Behavioural Intervention: Action Imperatives

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*Te Whare Wānanga
o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*



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Selected recent New Zealand initiatives to address severe behavioural challenges:

- ***MOE-supported evidence reviews of effective intervention (Church, 2003; Meyer & Evans, 2006)***
- ***Behavioural Service & Specialist Standards developed & disseminated 2006-2007***
- ***National Professional Learning & Development delivered to more than 500 specialist GSE, RTLB, early interventionists 2007-2008***
- ***Ongoing training delivered on-line 2009+***
- ***Validated interventions adapted for evidence-based trials: Incredible Years, MST, Triple P, SCERTS, etc***

MOE Behaviour Evidence Review Symposium Auckland 2007 (two years ago!)

Based on the evidence, we concluded:

- To be effective, behavioural intervention must be embedded in multi-faceted, holistic programmes such as MST and PBS
- Skills replacement is essential, but must occur in context and with mediator support
- Involvement of peers, whānau, and EC/school staff are critical along with expert support
- Culturally responsive models are available commensurate with Māori and other values
- Restorative justice approach needs to be fundamental approach to school discipline



How do school policies and approaches reflect *Restorative Justice*?

Ages 5-7: Understand feelings of self/others, develop empathy, bond with others

Ages 7-9: Understand belonging, learn to listen, trust, speak truthfully, respect others

Ages 10-11: Develop peacemaking skills, solve problems in groups

Ages 12-14: Engage in restorative conversations that separate problem from person

Ages 15-17: Facilitate communication between those who harm and are harmed, restore dignity to all, remove blame and humiliation

Which of the above do adult carers model and reflect in their educational and personal interactions with children?

(Adapted from Cavanagh, 2007)

What did we recommend in 2007?

1. Ending the practice of exclusion and sending children home, and replacing it with in-school alternatives (“not achieved”)
2. Implementation of National Randomised Control Trial (RCT) to validate effective early intervention (“partially met”)
3. Commitment to evidence-based professional development (“achieved” for specialists, “not achieved” for educationalists)



An Urgent Imperative for Action:

It is delusional and deceptive to consider out-of-school suspension as “intervention”: **These punishments cause harm**

Primary school-age children *belong in* and *need* school: **Out-of-school suspension is unacceptable and unforgivable**

These children must *never* be excluded: **If we exclude and reject, what does this communicate about them, about us, and about rights and responsibilities in a democratic society?**

What next? A proper research trial of educative, in-school suspension in primary schools

