

USING THE SOLUTION FOCUSED APPROACH IN NEW ZEALAND POLICE



KEY OUTCOMES

- ▶ Reduction in child's risk factors for offending (as measured by dynamic YORST scores)
- ▶ Increased referrals of children and whānau to support services in the community
- ▶ Increased completion of Alternative Action plans
- ▶ Increased reparation paid to victims and completion of community work.

A BETTER WAY

- ▶ What if we actually ASKED people what would be helpful for them.....
- ▶ Or figured out what they actually wanted their lives to be like.....
- ▶ OR even more radically, were able to see them as fellow humans, rather than just "offenders"

WHAT DOES THIS INVOLVE?

- ▶ Are there key differences in the application of Solution Focused approaches with young offenders?
- ▶ Do the key concepts of a preferred future, exceptions, and scaling still apply?

THE FRAMEWORK

When We Think About (child's name).....



RISKS/WHAT ARE WE WORRIED ABOUT?

STRENGTHS/WHAT IS WORKING WELL?

QUALITY OF ENGAGEMENT

Working Relationship Scale: On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is you have a relationship with the young person and family/people around them where you can work together, speak about the worries, what's working and what needs to happen (even if you don't both agree) and 0 is we can't even stay in the same room together, where are we?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

THE QUIET ONES

- ▶ Not every child is a natural chatterbox.
- ▶ Some children are very private.
- ▶ Some children and families have very private issues that they don't want to share.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Moving too quickly for the family.
- ▶ Multiple clients.
- ▶ Disagreement over goals.

THE LITTLE PROFESSOR


- ▶ 9 year old boy referred after a serious incident requiring strong police intervention.
- ▶ “He’ll never talk to you – he has never talked to anyone who has tried.”
- ▶ Currently being assessed by CDS – is he “on the spectrum” – what is wrong with him?

DOES IT WORK?

- ▶ A review of all cases from 2010 – 2017 indicated that 89% have not come to further police notice.
- ▶ 9% have come to police notice for very minor incidents.
- ▶ The 2% that have continued to come to police notice are continuing to be exposed to family harm and/or abuse and neglect.

WHAT DO FAMILIES SAY?

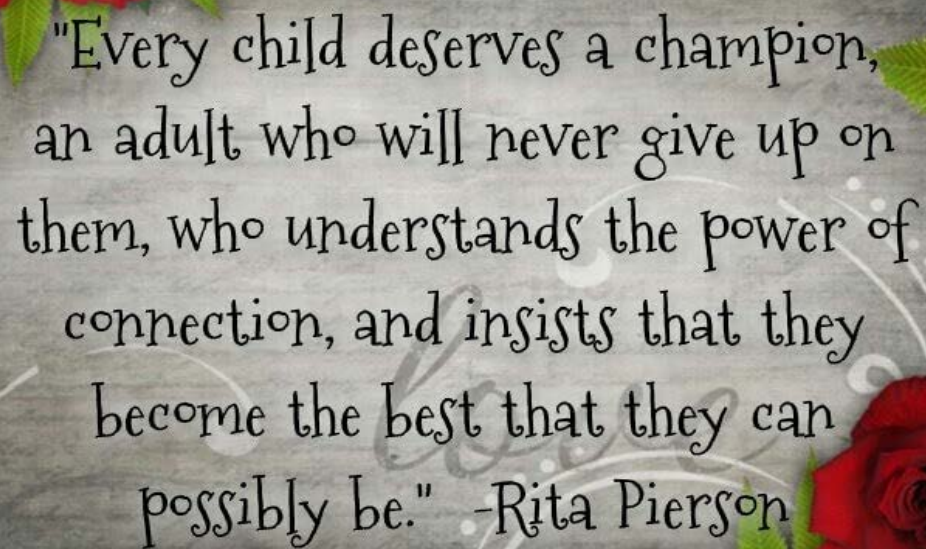
- ▶ “This is a very real approach that I have never experienced before.” M – nana.
- ▶ “This is the first time we have felt empowered and cared for as her mum and dad.” G and A – adoptive parents.
- ▶ “Everyone else has seen me as just a piece of shit and written me and my family off.” G – father.

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- ▶ “This makes us feel like we are actually capable people who have the ability to solve things ourselves.” N and L mum and 14yo son.
 - ▶ “Before you came I felt like the air around me – empty and heavy. But now I feel like the air is full of bubbles, and each bubble is a smiley face.” M aged 9.
 - ▶ “If I was a cat I would be purring.” Q aged 7.

SUMMARY

- ▶ People are people regardless of what setting you meet them in.
- ▶ A solution focused approach is effective with even the most “difficult” cases.
- ▶ This approach helps families have a voice and ensures that voice is heard.
- ▶ It has also helped build positive attitudes towards police.

A CLOSING THOUGHT....



"Every child deserves a champion,
an adult who will never give up on
them, who understands the power of
connection, and insists that they
become the best that they can
possibly be." -Rita Pierson