

# Hear Us, and Protect Our Mana

Amy Lavini, Head of Halls - Manawatū

## Tertiary Student Voice – The Conversation

### Kōrero Mātauranga

In 2018, the Government undertook a broad review of the NZ education system through a range of conversations relating to many aspects of the sector.

Conversations covered areas such as Early Learning, Māori and Pasifika Education, NCEA, Tomorrow's Schools, and Tertiary Student Voice.

Of the Tertiary Student Voice conversation, the following was reported:

- *As part of the Kōrero Mātauranga, we have heard from students, whānau, educators and communities about the importance of student voice to students and providers.*
- *We also heard there are pockets of good practice in our tertiary system where student voice is listened to and incorporated. But there is also room for improvement.*

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/tertiary-student-voice/>

## Tertiary Student Voice – The Goal

*The Government wants to foster a democratic approach to student voice within providers and across the sector. This means we need to shift towards an education system where all students have their voice valued, listened and responded to and are empowered to be strong advocates for their own and others' educational journeys.*

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/TES/Tertiary-Student-Voice-Discussion-Paper2.pdf>

## The Goal – In Relation to Individuals

- An education system where all students have their voice valued, listened and responded to
- An education system where all students are empowered to be strong advocates for their own ~~and others'~~ educational journeys.

# Hear Us, and Protect Our Mana

## Background

- Experience with the NZ Police:
  - Watch House Assistant
  - Youth Worker – ‘Youth At Risk’
- Master’s Thesis:  
*A Youth Perspective: Collaboration for Youth development in Aotearoa NZ, 2011*
- Student Services within the Tertiary Sector
  - Students/behaviours ‘of concern’ and a pastoral care network

# Student Voice and The Youth Perspective

## The Goal - 2019

All students have their voice valued, listened and responded to. They are empowered to be strong advocates for their own journey.

## The Youth Perspective - 2011

The two over-arching concerns that youth involved with services in New Zealand were, that of not being heard and treated with respect, and that of being labelled or treated as a problem.

## Their Voice

*The good parts have been some of the caring, trusting, and supportive people I have come in contact with. The bad parts are when people don't listen or trust me. Sometimes people disregard my say in decisions affecting my life. One of my social workers tried to run my entire life. – Lay, 2000, cited in Lavini, 2011*

*I didn't really like talking to them coz they were different people that came into something that they don't even know about. – Jess, Lavini 2011*

Annoying. Just everyone else is saying something, mum's there, she's saying something, you don't agree with it and then you talk back and nothing you say matters really. Waste of time.  
– Alex, Lavini 2011

## Valuing the Student as the Key Stakeholder

As was true of the youth sector in **2011**, many within the student services sector feel under-resourced, over-worked, or simply lacking the necessary systems and structures. This presents challenges to being able to put the time we would like to with each student who may need our support.

However, in breaking down Lay's (**2000**) statement, we find some simple solutions:

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## Valuing the Student as the Key Stake-Holder

*The good parts have been some of the **caring, trusting, and supportive** people I have come in contact with. The bad parts are when people don't **listen** or **trust** me. Sometimes people disregard my say in decisions affecting my life. One of my social workers tried to run my entire life.*

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**They don't want us taking over (or taking it all upon ourselves)!**

Putting all the complex issues of time, case/work loads, and processes aside simply looking at this statement does make the short-term solution appear very straight-forward – show that you care, trust in the young person's potential and self-awareness and support them (not directing them) to achieve their goals.

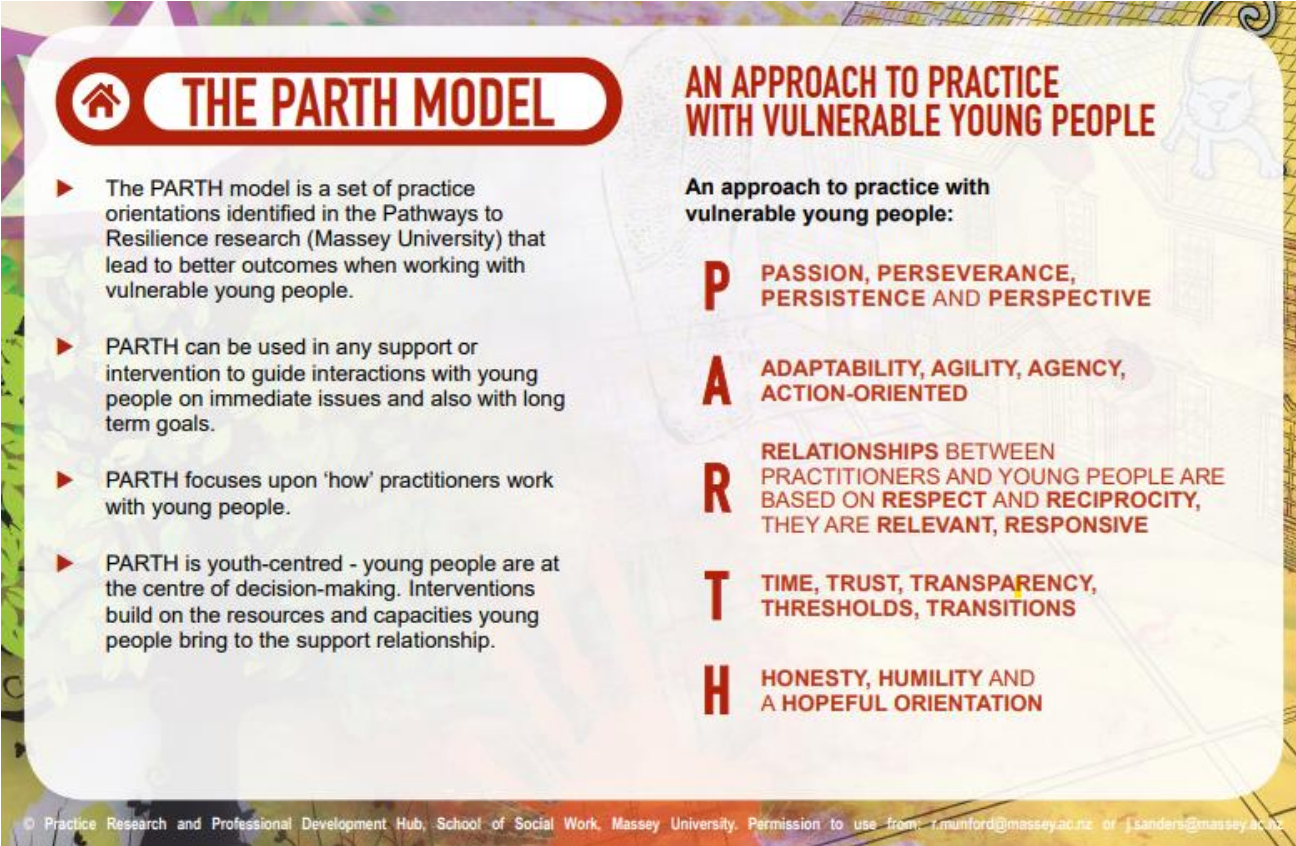
It is just as much about building rapport as it is having the systems in place.

## When We Build Rapport, We Learn to Protect Mana

*Mana is the authority we inherit at birth and we accrue over our lifetime. It determines the right of a young person to have agency in their lives and the decisions that affect them. Enhancing the mana of young people means recognising what is right with them, as well as the reality of their world. Young people are supported to have a voice, work to their strengths and step into leadership.*

<https://arataiohi.org.nz/resources/training-and-resources/mana-taiohi/>

## Protecting Mana with The PARTH Model



The infographic features a background illustration of a traditional Māori whare (house) with a tiki on the roof. A red banner at the top left contains a house icon and the title 'THE PARTH MODEL'. The text is organized into two columns: a list of four bullet points on the left and a vertical list of five 'P' words on the right, each followed by its corresponding values. A small white tiki icon is positioned in the upper right corner of the infographic.

### THE PARTH MODEL

- ▶ The PARTH model is a set of practice orientations identified in the Pathways to Resilience research (Massey University) that lead to better outcomes when working with vulnerable young people.
- ▶ PARTH can be used in any support or intervention to guide interactions with young people on immediate issues and also with long term goals.
- ▶ PARTH focuses upon 'how' practitioners work with young people.
- ▶ PARTH is youth-centred - young people are at the centre of decision-making. Interventions build on the resources and capacities young people bring to the support relationship.

### AN APPROACH TO PRACTICE WITH VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

An approach to practice with vulnerable young people:

- P** PASSION, PERSEVERANCE, PERSISTENCE AND PERSPECTIVE
- A** ADAPTABILITY, AGILITY, AGENCY, ACTION-ORIENTED
- R** RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRACTITIONERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BASED ON RESPECT AND RECIPROCITY, THEY ARE RELEVANT, RESPONSIVE
- T** TIME, TRUST, TRANSPARENCY, THRESHOLDS, TRANSITIONS
- H** HONESTY, HUMILITY AND A HOPEFUL ORIENTATION

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[http://www.youthsay.co.nz/massey/learning/departments/centres-research/resilience-research/resilience-research\\_home.cfm](http://www.youthsay.co.nz/massey/learning/departments/centres-research/resilience-research/resilience-research_home.cfm)

## When We Build Rapport, We Learn to Protect Mana

### *CASE STUDIES:*

- 1. An opportunity seized and succeeded – Nik*
  - The student-led care/welfare plan*
- 2. An attempted but missed opportunity – Suzy*
  - Complex needs meets an even more complex structure*

## Effective Structures & Systems Support Mana-Protecting Practice

Suzy's story highlights the limitations of individuals within a service applying mana-protecting approaches to build rapport and empower the student to direct their own journey, verses the approach being taken by all within a service or organisation.

At Massey, developing the organisational approach is an ongoing endeavour. Under the Massey Cares strategy, professionals within the University are continually working to refine our processes for supporting students displaying behaviours of concern or requiring more complex support systems.

While it is still a work in progress, there is growing recognition of the need for both effective systems and structures, as well as clear mana-protecting values to guide the approach.

## Beware of the Checkbox Approach... ‘The Bureaucratic Effect’

The current environment is changing – Education (Pastoral Care) Amendment Bill

- High pressure due to media coverage and fast paced approach from Government
- Anxiety over the unknown
- Managing student, family and whanau expectations

Easy to fall into reaction-mode, find quick solutions for meeting the new Code

Young people, and I would suggest ‘old’ people too, are not interested in being part of a process...

*I am more than a file. I am a person. I have feelings and am entitled to respect. Please don't only see the problems, see the potential.*

Lay, 2000, p.68. Cited in Lavini, 2011

## Supporting Staff Who Support Students

- If the most important impact youth workers, halls staff, and so on have is based on the rapport they build – then they need to be given the time to build rapport
- Imbed the mana-protecting values of student in all aspects of your work place – hear your staff too
- Along with professional development and training, consider professional supervision. We all know how heavy the concerns and behaviours are that front-line staff are dealing with, they need to be properly supported in this work.
- Celebrate achievements and check-in regularly



## Getting it Right

*It means that I can go and ask people and know that they'll help me and I can rely on them. – Rongomai, Lavini 2011*

*Makes me feel stronger as a person coz I know that people are there for me and aren't gonna judge me for things that have happened. And yeah, they're just there if I need help. – Jess, Lavini 2011*

*Um, like life, got a better outlook on things, where I wanna go... I didn't wanna do anything except stay home. – Jasmine, Lavini 2011*

## Summary

- Utilise the resources that already exist and are based on decades of research in the youth/student voice space

**PARTH** [http://www.youthsay.co.nz/massey/learning/departments/centres-research/resilience-research/resilience-research\\_home.cfm](http://www.youthsay.co.nz/massey/learning/departments/centres-research/resilience-research/resilience-research_home.cfm)

**Ara Taiohi – Mana Taiohi** <https://arataiohi.org.nz/resources/training-and-resources/mana-taiohi/>

- Listen + know and share your organisations escalation processes
- Avoid succumbing to the bureaucratic effect and creating checklist approaches
- Investment in staff will ensure high dividend yields