

Transforming communication for people with SLCN within the justice, mental health and care and protection sectors in New Zealand; using lessons learned in the UK to inform culturally responsive, and communication-accessible practices in New Zealand which are guided by trauma-informed care principles



With thanks to:
Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
Talking Trouble Aotearoa New Zealand



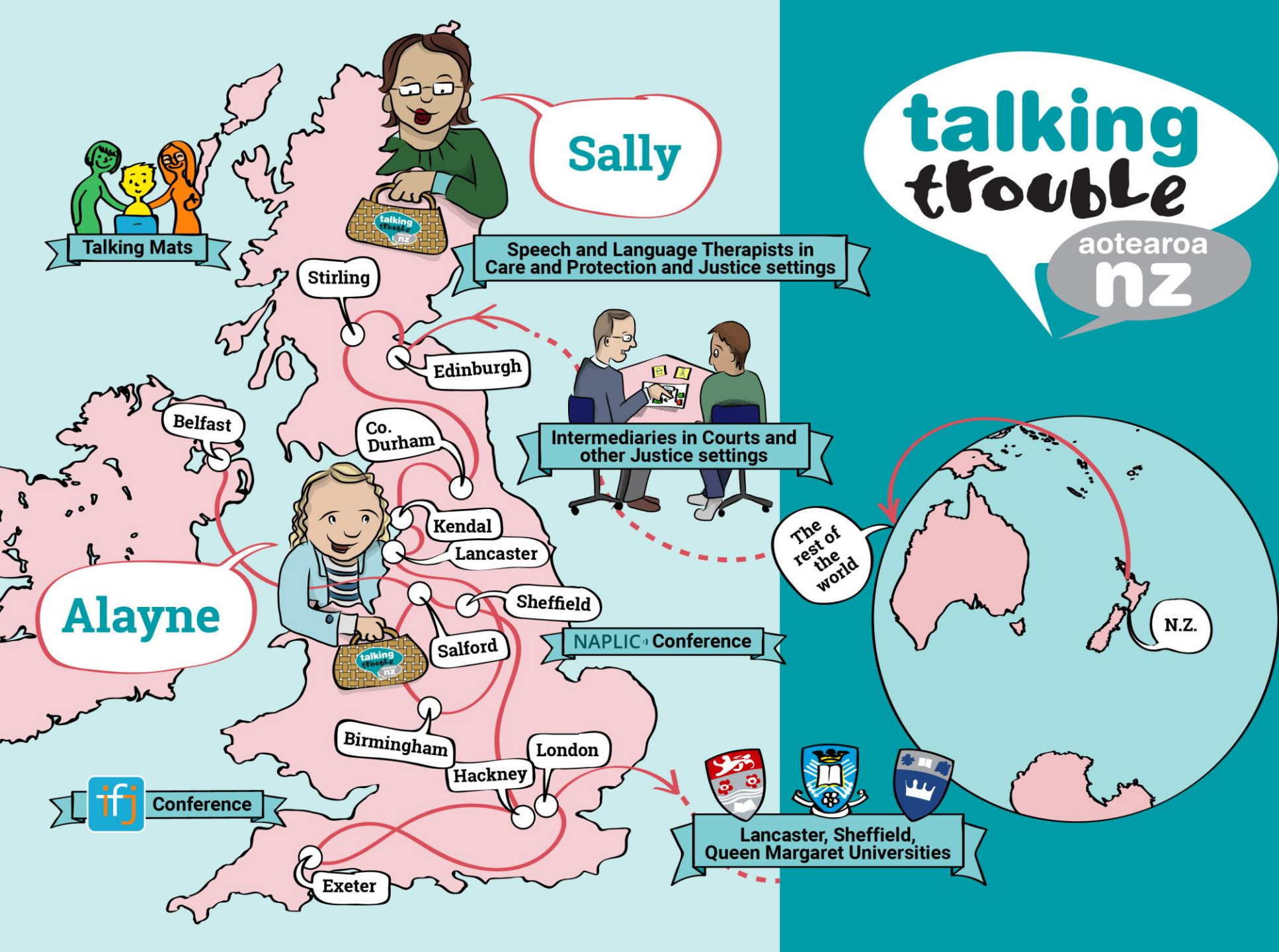
How Talking Mats is transforming communication in our practice in New Zealand

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17th April 2018

TTANZ on
the road to
learn



Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki uta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
E hī ake ana te atakura
He tio, he huka, he hau hū
Tīhei mauri ora!

Cease the winds from the west
Cease the winds from the south
Let the breeze blow over the land
Let the breeze blow over the ocean
Let the red-tipped dawn come with a sharpened air
A touch of frost, a promise of a glorious day

These slides show the material Sally and Alayne presented at Talking Mats on 17 April 2018, plus some additional slides about our projects – contact us if you want more information about anything in this presentation.

Do you understand?

Got that?

All OK?

That makes sense, doesn't it?

Yep, all good

Watch out – are you checking understanding effectively?

What's the young person's behaviour communicating?

What is a young person's behaviour communicating to you?

Break it down

"You are charged with Possession of Instruments for Conversion."

Charge

Possession of Instruments for Conversion

Charge = what the Police say you did

You had things to use for stealing a car

Screwdriver
Vibrating tools
pocket
in your hand
on your body

Look out for jargon Explain it

What words might be confusing?

Write down the jargon word or phrase if you need to use it

Keep your communication glasses on!

Look through your communication lenses at the situation

Listen to yourself – how are you communicating?

Is that working well?

How is the young person communicating?

Is there anything that can be changed to make communication easier?

What is this about?

How long will it take?

What was that all about?

How will they let you know if it is not making sense?

Did you check at the end that they knew what that had been all about?

Do they know what is going to happen next?

Doodle with purpose

No art skills required!

Provide something for eyes to focus on

Listening can be hard.

Try stick people and key words. Speech and thought bubbles.

They give a shared, concrete focus for your conversation.

Post-it note comic strips can help sort out a muddled sequence of events.

Easy read

Who needs an easy read version?

We all benefit from clear, easy to read information. Written information stays still and can be read again.

But reading can be challenging for many young people. So can concepts of time.

Is the information being given on paper at the right level?

Consider space, layout, colour, the amount of information, pictures, flow charts and diagrams.

What is this about?

How long will it take?

What was that all about?

How will they let you know if it is not making sense?

Did you check at the end that they knew what that had been all about?

Do they know what is going to happen next?

Sets of our little cards from one of our Youth Justice projects were given out at the presentation. These can be downloaded from our website.

<http://talkingtroublenz.org/links-and-resources/>

Please acknowledge Talking Trouble Aotearoa NZ if you share any of this presentation material, or our resources.

Whakawhanaungatanga

Who I am
Who are you?

It all starts with the 3 'Rs'

- **Relationship**
- **Respect**
- **Rapport**

People listen to me and care about me genuinely. It's a safe environment.



I could've but na I didn't. I didn't trust them enough. I was uncomfortable.

Ata haere
It takes as long as it takes



New Zealand Talking Mats quiz

How familiar are you with where we live?

Sweet as!
I know that



Eh???
No idea



NZ's population

4.79
million

Sweet as!
I know that



Eh???
No idea



Percentage of Māori in
NZ's population

14.9%

TRUE

or

FALSE

It's a nice idea, but the law
does not require language
and communication
difficulties to be addressed
when delivering services to
children and young people

FALSE

Legislation requires clear communication

- Oranga Tamariki Act (1989) (version 14 July 2017) requires health, education, social and legal services to be provided in an **accessible manner**
- Section 11 (2)



In proceedings or a process to which this section applies,—

(a)

the child or young person must be encouraged and assisted to participate in the proceedings or process to the degree appropriate for their age and level of maturity unless, in the view of a person specified in subsection (3), that participation is not appropriate, having regard to the matters to be heard or considered; and

(b)

the child or young person must be given reasonable opportunities to freely express their views on matters affecting them; and

(c)

if a child or young person has difficulties in expressing their views or being understood (for example, because of their age or language, or because of a disability), support must be provided to assist them to express their views and to be understood; and

(d)

any views that the child or young person expresses (either directly or through a representative) must be taken into account.

- The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROD) is the world's largest **children's rights** document. Applies to all those under 18 years of age
- The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Article 13 - Access to justice

1. States Parties shall ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, including through the provision of procedural and age-appropriate accommodations, in order to facilitate their effective role as direct and indirect participants, including as witnesses, in all legal proceedings, including at investigative and other preliminary stages.

2. In order to help to ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities, States Parties shall promote appropriate training for those working in the field of administration of justice, including police and prison staff.





Introduction to a young person we know

Dan: Troubled + Talking Trouble + IN Trouble

Wendy Kelly’s Relational Learning Framework: What has happened to him?

How does that help us understand how he presents?

Culture and his view of his culture	Cultures: Māori, Cook Island, Tongan, Deaf (birth family) He says ‘fruit salad’. He considers he only really speaks and understands English
Child development	Language, learning, emotions and behaviour (previous SLT and psychology multi-agency team). Recent psychosis
Quality of care	Very poor early in life, mixed since
Adverse experiences	MANY – in care of the State
Type/number of losses	Contact with people - birth parents, previous foster parents and siblings Contact with cultures and languages Changes in schools + no school for some years
Placement changes	MANY

Youth Voice?

Lundy's model

SPACE (safe, inclusive opportunities to form, and express their view)

VOICE (facilitated to give their view)

AUDIENCE (the view must be listened to)

INFLUENCE (the view must be acted upon, as appropriate)

Lundy, L. (2013). 'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. [Volume33, Issue6](https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701657033)
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701657033>

Court-appointed Communication Assistant (CA)

- CA appointed by the Court
 - Neutral, impartial Officer of the Court (like Intermediary)
 - Developmental Language Disorder
 - Comprehension – limited language + diagnosed intellectual disability
 - Expression – minimal and vague utterances, many vocabulary gaps
- Crossover Court (Family Court + Youth Court)
 - Long-term Family Court involvement (no CA)
 - More recent Youth Court matters (serious violence (to carers), driving offences)
- CA asked to help with Family Group Conference
 - Recent major overhaul of systems and legislation
 - ‘Voice of the child/young person’ – engagement, participation and views



Family Group Conference

- Secure Youth Justice Residence
 - Paper (A4 and post-its) and pens, koosh ball
 - Four adults - not everyone that should have been there was there
 - Bare room
- My role as CA
 - Make sure Dan understands what this meeting is about (you're staying here for now) and what next
 - Drawing, writing, flow-diagrams, checking what he has understood



Family Group Conference

- Verbal discussion
 - Dan chucking koosh ball against the walls
 - FGC Coordinator +++ talk
 - Me – reviewing, simplifying, drawing/writing key words
- Unexpected question from the Coordinator



Can't stay here (Youth Justice Residence)

Can't go back there

What do you want your new place to be like?

Leading questions

Ideas from the adults

Minimal input from Dan – how much of what was being said reflected his views?

Talking Mats to the rescue!

- Problem – no Talking Mat resources
- Solution
 - ‘post-its’ and pen
 - Framework and strategies in my head
- No table – used the floor



Concentrated
Staying sitting
Placed the post-its
Did it without talking much (his normal)
But offered some comments
Low stress + pressure – laughing
Pace – one at a time
Concrete, active
Reduced language burden
No pictures wasn't a problem – I read
out what I wrote and he can read a little
Views on many items generated
Other adults also helped

Things I would like

animals
just one caregiver
lots of caregivers
fishing
running
beach
hunting
guitar, music,
drums
girls being there
a caregiver couple
looking after him
rugby
smallish town

farming
diving
playing pool
beach
dancing
fishing
rugby
other people
there who are
about 13, 14, 15,
16, 17

In the middle

school
swimming
rock climbing
basketball
homework club
living in the city
living in the middle of
nowhere/bush
kayak
living with boys
Kapa haka/waiata

Things I wouldn't like

cooking
kids under 10
reading
sharing a bedroom

Trajectories – being preventative

Dan's younger siblings

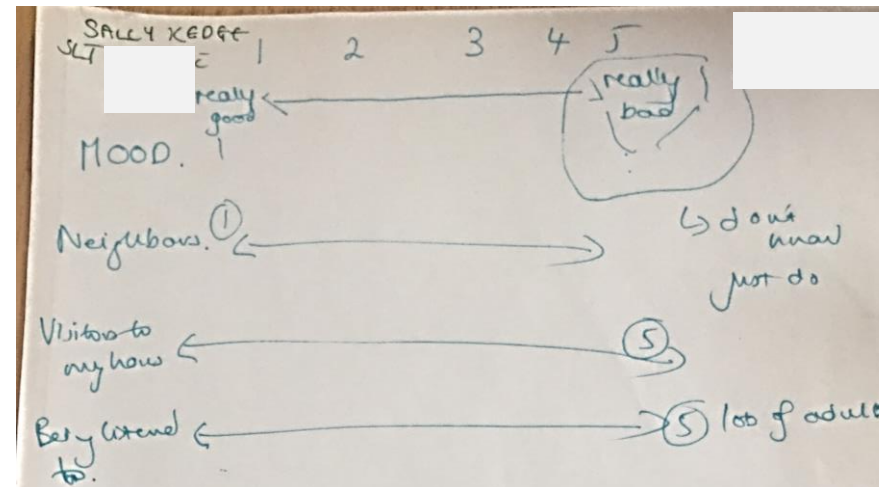
2 referred for SLT

Used a Talking Mat as a 'getting to know about you'

Disclosed some concerns about current placement



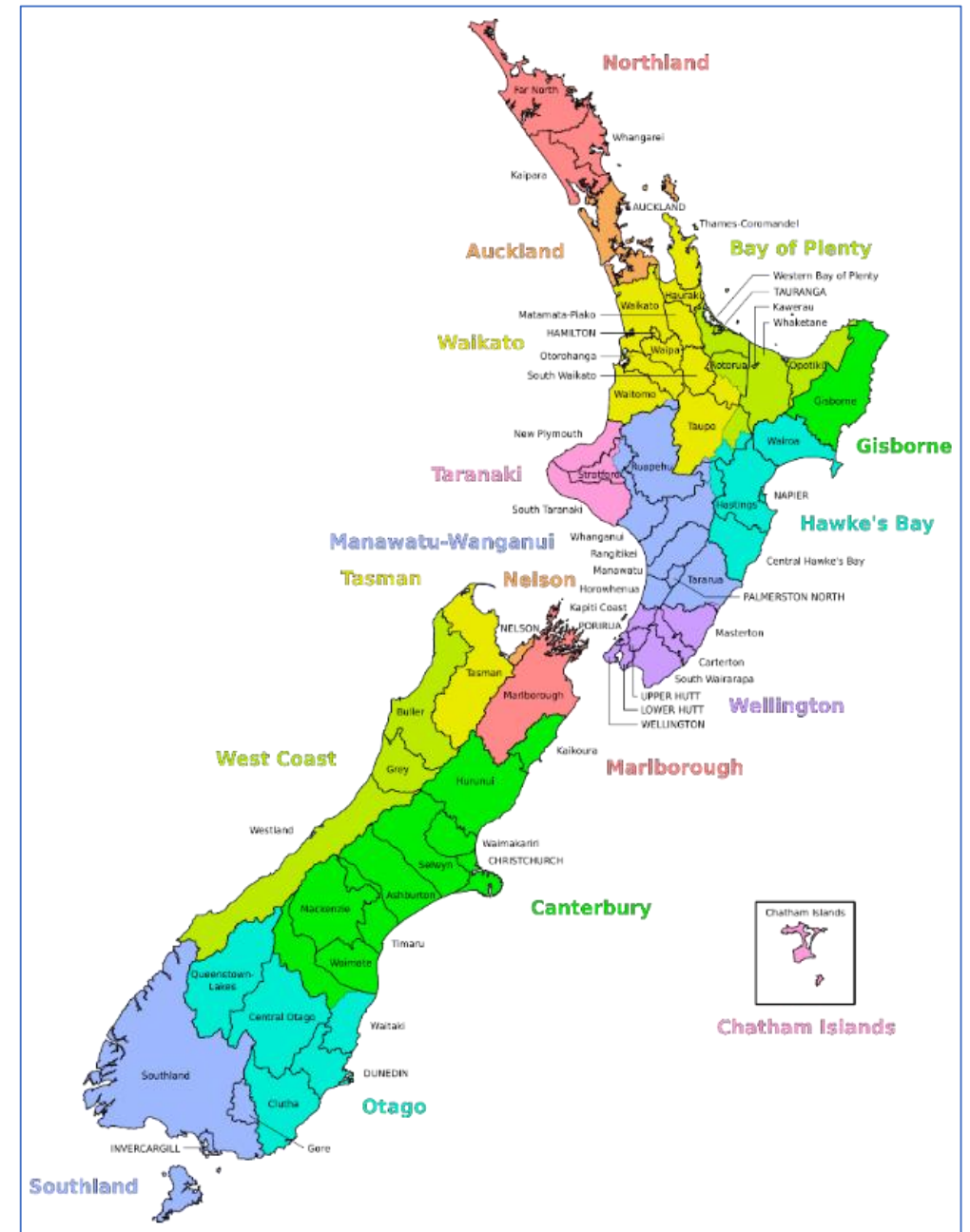
- Who do you want to know this?
- Who can do something about it?
- What am I going to do with it?



The scenario we just described isn't typical – how does it fit within NZ context?

- Population – C&P/YJ crossover and trajectory – Crossover Court = Family Court and YJ in one place
- Therapeutic jurisdiction – matters need to be dealt with to stop recidivism (plan and/or intervention (but **NOT SLT**), AND to put things right and be accountable
- Implications for communication - adults need to know how to make the plans make sense to YP, seek the right information and get YP's views
- Little fingers in tiny projects – emergent – SUPER early days – we're here to learn and be inspired

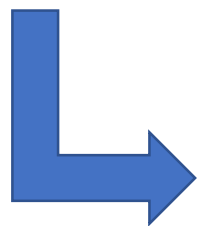
How we're using Talking Mats & how we think they can be used in future



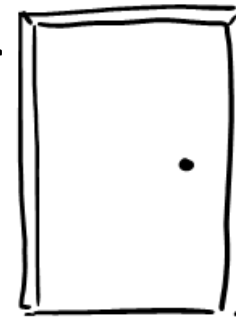
New beginnings

What do you do when there's no systemic funding for SLT services for the population you want to serve

- Persistence, patience, flexibility
- Tailoring the message – solution focused & speaking their language
- Relationship building – initiate, turn up, go to things other professions go to
- Using small wins to open other doors
- Feeling more confident about what we can offer
- TTANZ champions – aunties & uncles



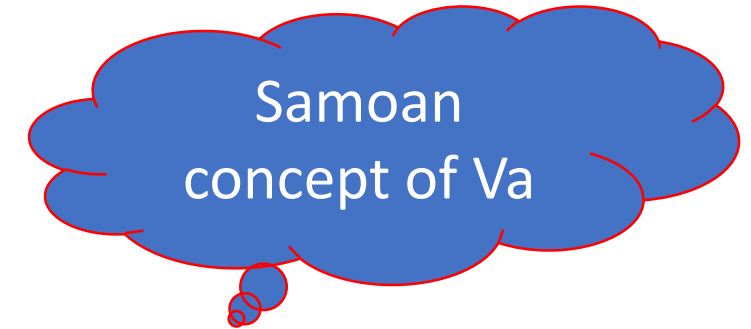
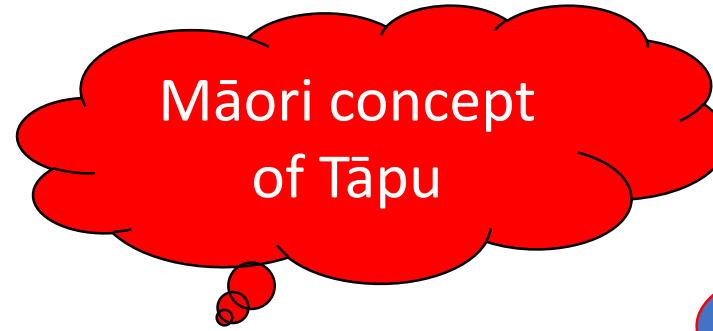
Social enterprise





Cultural lens

- Strengths
- Engaging rangatahi Māori
- Not about individual pathology – holistic



- Karen – Kāupapa Maori researcher
- Office of the Children Commissioner - WATCHDOG re: performance of residences (C&P and YJ) – Mana Mokopuna, their initiative was inspired by a demo of Talking Mats. We've helped them reflect on it, and adapt it. They want training
 - Reporting – enabling engagement and conversations more easily
 - Causing change in the environments where YP are placed

Communication Assistants

- CA roles
 - Youth – getting to know you AND what do you think about talking in court/FGCS
- What young people have said about those experiences
- Research – like UK – 60%, NZ – Maori and PI over-representation
- Youth and adults
- Complainants/witnesses and defendants

“They were using big words, so I thought what the f*** I’ll just say yep”

[When] people **listen to me and care about me genuinely**, I feel safe

Can she sit up in the dock with me?
Can’t understand what they’re saying otherwise.

‘I can explain myself with pictures more better I think’

Using Talking Mats in CA assessment

- Teenage girl complainant – sexual abuse trial appeal
 - Syndrome resulting in intellectual disability
 - Hearing impairment
 - Speech difficult to understand (cleft and phonological/articulation difficulties)
 - Significant difficulties comprehending and expressing herself
 - Hearing impairment
- Talking Mat – finding out about her interests and views on her own skills
 - Contrast between completing a Talking Mat and other highly verbal assessments for her
 - She understood the top scale
 - Used this to inform CA strategy to help her respond to questions in Court

Do you know this place?



Yes



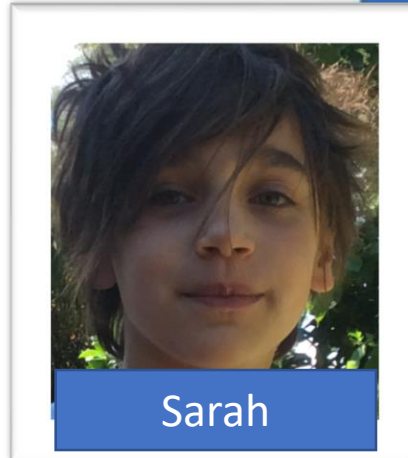
Not sure



No

What do you call it?

Sarah went to school on Tuesday



Yes, that's
right
That's true



Not sure
Can't remember



No, that's **not**
right
That's **not** true

Using Talking Mats to demonstrate views to others

- Talking Mat used in CA assessment
- Created a Communication Passport with the young person at the end of the assessment
 - Things that are annoying/things that help
- Put a photo of the Talking Mat and the Communication Passport in the report to inform professionals
 - Judge used the information and adapted the communication context
- We're excited about Talking Mats creating communication access in contexts that they weren't originally used for

XXX's Communication Passport	
These recommendations were written with XXX and YYY at the end of the Communication Assistant assessment on 18 July 2017 and then added to by XXX's mum	
Things that are annoying	Things that help
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People talking S L O W and in a patronising way• Long words• Over complication or "over-talking" things ("just say the main thing and why and that's it")	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having mum there (not too far away from XXX) and being able to see her• Drawing pictures• Having written words (but not too much writing and big enough to read)• People knowing the 'signs'<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eyes – looking around or going bloodshot• fiddling with clothes,• shrugging will mean "no" (not "I'm not sure or maybe")• Having a break to go through what has just happened or what might happen (not in the courtroom) and then come back• Knowing what to expect and having time to talk it through• People talking at normal speed but keeping things short, without long words, and with pictures to help keep it making sense• Check understanding without saying 'do you understand?' Instead ask him to repeat what he has taken from what he has heard, and then ask clarifying questions
<small>Sally Kedge, Speech-language Therapist & Court-Appointed Communication Assistant sally.kedge@talkinenglish.co.nz 021 103 4842</small>	



Talking Mat

Going well – pets, social media, friends

In the middle – sport, organising yourself, preparing meals, listening to others, handling stress, concentrating, sleeping, talking to social workers, asking for help, talking about yourself

Not going well – writing, maths, reading, talking, dealing with people you don't know.

Diverse opportunities

- HEEADSSS

- Kessler

In the last two weeks about how often did you feel....
...so sad nothing could cheer you up
...worried or frightened
...restless or stressed
...hopeless
...that everything was an effort
...worthless

- Gateway Assessments – health & education check up
- Sexual health/sexual assault – evaluation form



Diverse opportunities

- Comparison – something went wrong – two different perspectives
 - Teacher talking about the classroom environment vs YP – easy/ tricky for this YP,
 - SW vs parent vs child views on how things are going at home/in this placement
 - Social Worker vs young person on how I feel about your wellbeing and safety
- Request from a Social Worker for help. A young person with FASD asked her to help him find some information about how his FASD affects him
 - How I'm getting on with – going well/not going well
 - Easy for me/not easy for me
 - I can do this on my own/I can't do it on my own
- Young people – understanding their own diagnosis – Talking Mats as a way in to talking about their own strengths and difficulties

Identifying SLCN – what do you do when professionals don't think it's their job, don't want to fill in a checklist, don't think they know enough information?

Talking Mats to the rescue!

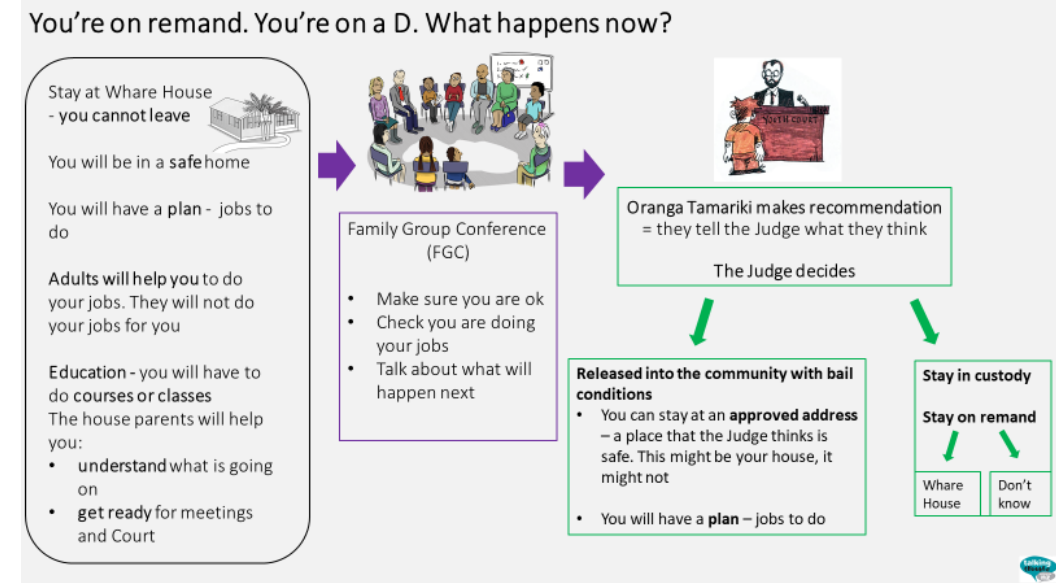


Underway just...

Lots of ways that Talking Mats can support young people to give their opinions throughout these processes

Specialist Remand Care

- Creating a greater range of custody options for young people with 238(1)(d)
- Building in communication access from the start -
 - genuine desire for YP to understand what is going on
 - trying to anticipate, and plan for communication opportunities and challenges from moment of arrest through court and then post-court placement – who is involved, what needs to be talked about, where does it happen, transitioning out – what are your strengths, more opportunities to do something
- Wanting to have ways to facilitate young people's participate in the conversations and decisions



Who else are we hoping to influence?

- RYFS, Family Court Lawyers/YJ lawyers, Police – custody questions, teachers – enjoying, passions, how tricky/easy is the work, victim impact statements
- Functionality for planning placement



Current barriers

- OUR TEAM of SLTs using it mainly
- Limited access to training and resources
- Strong need for imagery that is culturally familiar

“

They wouldn't believe me because they're white, they wouldn't understand”

Feedback from Youth Voices project reinforcing suspicion about anything relating to the dominant culture

- SLTs have limited access to YPs currently, stuff that has started to be funded is systemic – concern is how much watering down and how much understanding of communication generally do professionals have (working on it but early days)

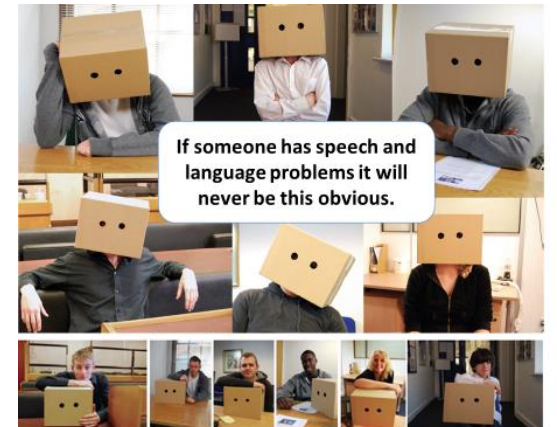


Image from The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' campaign


THE BOX What's it like to be inside?

Speech, Language & Communication expertise can make any situation easier.

A big challenge for us


- Found some useful ways to walk around communication barriers
- What WE need - We're trying to transfer tools & skills to people so they can use them for themselves – we're trying but it is very complex
- Apologies – how to ensure that the empathy requirements, expressive and comprehension demands of what happened, who did it happen to, how do they feel and think now, how do I feel, how does everyone involved feels now
- Is this our job? Whose job is it? What can be done?
- We want your ideas and we want to figure out how to do this in NZ

Life is pretty straightforward
My family/whanau get on well
We're fairly organised
I did something stupid and I know it




I'm ready to take part in a restorative justice process and my family are ready to support me
Yeah, a guide to writing an apology might help me with the complicated words. It might help me think about & remember all the things I need to put in it

Life is complicated family/whanau is really important to us but we show it differently. I was brought up to defend myself. I have no idea what showing empathy feels like



You need to postpone the process. I'm not ready to write an apology and my family aren't in the right headspace either
You need to arrange support for me so that I get to experience people being empathetic towards me. I need time to feel safe, and to start thinking about my own feelings as well as everyone else's
After all that a guide to writing an apology might be handy

The learning or communication difficulties that I have mean that I can only think about things from my own perspective. I need help to think about anyone else's point of view



You need to postpone the process whilst you get me some support for all the big words and complicated conversations. I also need support to help me understand someone else's perspective. Speech-language therapists are good at this stuff. After all that I might be ready to write an apology & take part in restorative justice. The guide to writing an apology might be helpful then

Please do not circulate without permission

“It was not until CAs became involved in cases that I started to understand how language difficulties impact on young people who come before the Youth Court. That has led me to re-think how I communicate with all young people I meet in court and to see an urgent need to change the language, forms and processes we use to make them capable of being properly understood. This must go beyond simply removing the anachronisms and institutional language; New, fresh and meaningful approaches are required.”

HH Judge Fitzgerald (NZ)

April 2018

