



# Leading Teacher Aides & Learning Assistants

Using Language, Rituals & Routines to Ensure Teacher Aides & Learning Assistants Impact on Learning.

## THEMES

authority, autonomy, collaboration, communication, consultation, defensiveness, dependence, expectation setting, help seeking, inappropriate behaviour, inclusion, independence, influence, initiative, interdependence, learner outcomes, partnership, preventable failure, professionalism, reassurance, reframing, self-authoring, self-efficacy, situational propriety, transacting, understanding information, unwanted help, vital practices, workplace relationships.

Teachers in specialist schools are leaders first – teachers second. They are responsible for the outcomes of all learners yet when it comes to learning with additional learning so much of it has to be achieved in hands-off ways through learning assistants and teacher aides.

This shift in thinking lies at the heart of being an effective specialist school teacher. In specialist school settings the uncomfortable truth is that teachers are not afforded the luxury of choosing whether to be a leader or not. It does not matter if they lack confidence in their own teaching ability, if they have insufficient teaching experience, or if they are not interested in pursuing leadership at all, your teachers become leaders the minute they accept a teaching position in your school.

Working closely with leaders, teachers and teacher aides in Special Education and mainstream settings over the last 2 decades, we have synthesised what those teachers who consistently develop and maintain highly effective working relationships with their in-class adult assistants do. It comes down to a few vital practices - high impact rituals and routines - and their use of language.

Leading adult helpers does not have to come down to trial and error and teachers do not have to be involved in extensive leadership development programmes to become more effective in these roles. Teachers can learn on-the-job, they can drive their own learning and improvement, and they can learn to yield significant influence.



If you are seeking to fill your teachers' and leaders' kete and tool kits with deliberate acts of teacher leadership to improve inclusive education and outcomes for your learners across your school, this might just be part of the solution you're seeking.

This is an in-school leadership development opportunity facilitated to take into account your school's and teachers' unique contexts.

## What are people saying about our programmes?

*"Tony, the professional learning you provided for our teachers was empowering... the models, strategies and approach you shared have been instrumental in shaping our teachers' mindsets as leaders. They are more confident, their self-efficacy is higher and that is impacting positively in our classrooms and learning spaces at base and across our satellites."*

*Andrea Neil, Principal,  
Patricia Avenue School (Hamilton).*

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# A Self-Help Programme for New and Inexperienced Specialist Education Teachers

## STRENGTHENING THE MENTAL SIDE OF THE GAME TO STAY IN THE GAME

Many teachers tell us they left the profession in their first 5-years teaching in NZ, not because they felt they weren't supported but because they didn't quite get what they believed was the right form of support.

- "Support I got from my mentor teachers was awesome but looking back it wasn't the support I needed the most. The focus was on my teaching but what I really needed – the support I really needed looking back - was something that strengthened my mental fortitude. That for me would have made the biggest difference. But my colleagues didn't have the knowledge to provide it ... and I didn't know what I needed."*

**Phillip, Secondary teacher, Auckland, (5-years)**
- "I couldn't fault the support I got from my school in my 4-years teaching but I just couldn't keep bouncing back day-after-day and the flame ... the desire went out ... I sort of lost hope."*

**Joseph, Primary teacher, Auckland**
- "I really enjoyed teaching and I was quite good too ... but the toll it took on me personally ... I could see it wasn't going to be sustainable ... it was go-go-go-go all the time. I didn't know how to stop and those around me didn't either."*

**Maria, Primary teacher, Wellington, (1-year)**
- "I've had lots of jobs since leaving teaching but it's still been the best job I've had by a long way ... but everything got on top of me. I became a less optimistic person and wasn't liking who I was becoming ... but the support I got from my colleagues I couldn't fault. They were brilliant!"*

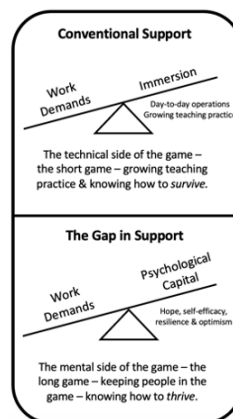
**Lizzie, Primary teacher, Christchurch, (2-years)**

Teachers choosing to leave teaching early in their careers, in NZ, tell us they don't leave because they have teaching issues but because they have issues with teaching.

They lose hope, become less optimistic, their self-efficacy erodes, and they don't quite possess the resilience they need to bounce back.

Conventional in-school support programmes do not strategically focus on strengthening the psychological capital (hopefulness, self-efficacy, resilience & optimism) new & inexperienced teachers believe they need help with. Having psychological strength focuses on the mental side of the game - being able to continue to perform despite dealing with adversity.

Whilst wrapping support of a technical nature – teaching practice - around new & inexperienced is on-going, there is much new & inexperienced teachers can do for themselves to strengthen their mental games without relying on others.



This innovative ground-breaking approach to supporting new & inexperienced teachers consists of 4-days spread across the year (1-day per term).

Tailored especially for teachers, participants will learn to use self-help strategies, mental schema, frameworks & approaches modified from the fields of behavioural, social, cognitive & organisational psychology, and elite sport & performance, to go beyond surviving in the first job to thriving across one of the most complex & challenging careers there is.

## What are participants saying about our professional learning?

*"Tony, the professional learning you provided has been so powerful and profound that we are seeking ways for you to work with our teachers who have not yet had an opportunity."*

**Mike Anderson, Principal,  
Waimairi School, Christchurch.**

This can also be facilitated for your Kāhui Ako

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# Managing Difficult Parents with Compassion & Candour

Balancing empathy, care & kindness with honesty, transparency & candour.

## THEMES

agreement, anxiety, assertiveness, attacking, authority, avoiding, being heard, catastrophisation, cognitive dissonance, etiquette, communication, competing needs, conflict, controlling, courage, deflection, disagreement, emotional reasoning, empathy, expectation setting, helping, helplessness, honesty, humility, labelling, learner outcomes, masking, partnership, perspective taking, professionalism, psychological safety, reframing, relationship building, retreating, shifting the burden, socialisation, stress, teacher self-efficacy, victimisation, well-being, withdrawing.



Parents & whānau of learners with specialist needs can be different propositions from those in mainstream.

Failing to jump from teacher of students to leader of parents, specialist teachers can often find themselves in unfamiliar and unwanted roles acting as unqualified counsellors, emergency responders, confidantes, nannies, social workers and coaches & mentors to emotionally needy parents & whānau.

Other times specialist teachers can be caught out, blind-sided and left on the back foot when strong destructive parental emotions usurp decency & civility.

In our work supporting specialist educators over the last 2-decades we know parents & whānau in your community can harbour & swing between a range of extreme emotions such as anguish, exhaustion, grief, fatigue, sadness, denial & defiance which can catch specialist educators out, and which if left unattended, can become an unhealthy basis of future relationships.

When specialist teachers lead parents & whānau they skilfully blend care, sensitivity & compassion with honesty, directness & candour. When stakes & emotions run high specialist teachers successfully making the jump from teacher of young people to leader of parents don't over-promise, catastrophise, emotionalise, seek to be liked, deflect, take criticism personally, conflate their role with self-worth, misread relational dynamics, feel bruised when parents push back, and don't feel guilty when leaning in to parents with uncomfortable truths.



If you're interested in supporting your teachers to use easily deployed tactics, approaches and strategies to successfully influence the most unreasonable of parents & whānau, and to reframe existing unhealthy relationships, this might be part of the solution you're looking for.

## What are people saying about our programmes?

*"Tony, the way you challenged our thinking and made us think about how to be effective has been a revelation ... the ideas you present are so different from mainstream PD providers and whilst I know some people are uncomfortable with that, the thinking and ideas you share make so much sense and so much of a difference. Why aren't there more people like you giving the same messages and making the complex so much easier to confront. Thanks once again – participants are saying it's the most compelling PD they've ever had with many a-ha moments!"*

*Dy Stokes, DP, Paparoa Street School, Executive Committee Christchurch Senior Leaders Network*

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# Investing in our Psychological Capital

*Unlocking the Key to Workplace Well-Being*

## THEMES

adversity, agreeableness, anxiety, burnout, catastrophisation, collaborative overload, conscientiousness, courage, cynicism, decompression, emotional reasoning, emotional exhaustion, empathy, engagement, extraversion, failure, fairness, fatigue, happiness, helping, hope, hyper-sensitivity, identity management, incivility, insight, joy, neuroticism, optimism, overload, perfectionism, performance zones, perspective taking, recovery, rest, resilience, risk minimisation, rudeness, personality, rumination, selflessness, sleep hygiene, stress triggers, self-efficacy, self-worth, social-emotional competencies, values, workaholism..

When lacking the psychological capital to meet workplace demands people look to their leaders to reduce them. This unfairly shifts the burden for workplace well-being and mental health onto leadership teams and leaders when there is much teachers can do to protect themselves whilst at work. For example, some personality types are far more predisposed to burning out than others and many of those personality types are attracted to teaching.

If you are seeking to fill your peoples' kete and tool kits with deliberate actions supporting well-being and mental health in your school, this might just be part of the solution you're seeking.

- Participants will use a global gold standard diagnostic tool to identify degrees of workplace stress & anxiety.
- Facilitation and learning is based on participants' data so that no workshop is ever the same (the most typical themes are noted above).

Participants are provided diagnostic tools to gain insight and self-awareness, and means & meta-cognitive strategies ensuring they are able to take the best possible care of their mental health whilst at school whilst preventing stress from bleeding over into their personal lives.

Providing teachers with the opportunity to measure workplace stress and anxiety levels allows participants to identify if they are in dangerous zones, or close to them, and through self-monitoring, change how they work without impacting adversely on learning outcomes or the quality of their work. For those who are at no risk, they will know how to stave off future risks.



## What are people saying about our programmes?

*"Teachers have been most disappointed we've had to postpone the programme ... they were really looking forward to the next stage. It was noticeable how after your last visit they talked and reflected for days afterwards. The learning is so powerful, I believe those who will be on leave when you are next here, who have been part of the programme, will want to stay involved."*

*Raewyn Saunders, Principal,  
Fendalton Open-air School, Christchurch.*

*"Tony, the professional learning you provided has been so powerful and profound for our pilot group that we are seeking ways for you to work with our teachers who have not yet had an opportunity."*

*Mike Anderson, Principal,  
Waimairi School, Christchurch.*

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