



# A Self-Help Programme for New & Inexperienced 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 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!"*

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

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# 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?

*"We've noticed most of the team you worked with chatting about the experience as 'the best day's PLD I've ever had,' and other similar comments. As we've come to expect after a day with you, our staff are inspired!"*

*Susan Jennison, Principal, Westburn School*

*"Tony, you were an absolute asset ... you gave me some wonderful tools and insight. It was such a valuable and memorable PD session. By far this is the best PD I have taken! Thanks again."*

*Juliette McKelvey, Teacher, Westburn School*

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# Parent-Teacher Meetings

## Going Beyond Communicating What Parents Want to Hear.

### THEMES

apologising, authority, catastrophisation, comparison, conflict, courage, decision pathways, deflection, diluting, emotional reasoning, empathy, expectation setting, eye-contact, framing, guilt, helplessness, honesty, impact, inconvenient realities, intent, messaging, meta-cognition, personalisation, perspective taking, preparation, professionalism, purpose, psychological safety, self-regulation, shame, situational awareness, simplifying, social complexity, social equilibrium, stressors, sugar-coating, teacher self-efficacy, well-being.



Of all the conversations teachers are involved in throughout a year none has greater potential to progress learners' outcomes than those they have with parents at Parent – Teacher meetings, yet most teachers are provided no professional development or learning on how to facilitate these meetings effectively.

Parent – Teacher meetings provide unique challenges. They are short, there is little time to build rapport (and if you do try there's very little time left to talk about anything else), and they are formal.

Situationally, these forums require teachers to move from teacher of students to leader of parents. Successfully switching, teachers pull parents into their worlds of teaching, curriculum, pedagogy, data and improvement and yield considerable influence. Failing to do so, teachers get dragged into parents' worlds.

Learn strategies, tactics and meta-cognitive solutions allowing teachers to take hold of Parent-Teacher meetings and to communicate unpalatable and potentially painful information in ways minimising offence, indignation and resentment whilst avoiding the traditional conversational traps of sugar-coating, diluting, deflecting, back-tracking, apologising, avoiding or withdrawing.

If you're seeking professional learning for your staff or leaders focusing on well-being, teacher leadership, advancing outcomes for learners and developing partnerships between home and school, this in-school workshop, facilitated to meet your unique context, might be part of the solution you're seeking.



## 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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# Equipping Our People for Disruption & Change

Going beyond surviving to thriving during times of uncertainty & upheaval.

## THEMES

acceptance, adaptation & improvisation, anger, anxiety, authority, consistent messaging, competing needs, courage, defensive thinking, denial, emotional reasoning, reframing, greenfield thinking, helping, helplessness, honesty, hope, inconvenient realities, informed optimism, informed pessimism, perspective taking, professionalism, psychological safety, resilience, situational leadership, stress, uninformed optimism, uninformed pessimism, shifting the burden, victimisation, well-being, wishful thinking.

When disruptions occur people can be thrown out of equilibrium.

- A new building project can dislocate the natural day-to-day ebb and flow of a school. Routines are disrupted, learners' behaviours can change and parents can become anxious.
- An unexpectedly disappointing Education Review Office review requires the coming together of teachers rather than fragmentation driven by denial, disbelief and anger.
- The departure of an established principal after many years of service creates uncertainty and insecurity.
- Grieving for a lost past makes it challenging to implement required structural and systems changes required to remain effective when rapid roll growth occurs.
- A principal new to their position creates ripples by making unpopular and difficult trade-offs.
- A special character school is required to relocate to other buildings because of changing diocese circumstances.
- Restructuring of the administration area creates tension, conflict and anger.

During times of change people can be unwittingly and unintentionally left to survive – not thrive - and leaders learn to live with and to tolerate others' resentment and bitterness. It doesn't have to be this way.

If you want your people to remain highly effective during times of significant disruption this one-day in-school workshop , facilitated to meet your unique context, may just be part of the solution you're seeking.



## What are people saying about our programmes?

"If your success criteria is to make people think – you win!!!! – in spades!!! And challenge and provoke, and reflect and confront and trigger and inspire!!! All of the above. Thanks, thanks, thanks!"

Lynley Cummack, Team Leader year 1-2

"I am so glad I lifted my head above the surface ... it so got me thinking about other ways of being that I hadn't had the time or thought to consider ... Exciting times and I do not regret for a minute lifting my head before ERO strike next week!"

Kaye Brunton – Principal

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