To the Woods and Back again

The Reintegration Experiences of Young People Following Participation in a Positive Youth Development Wilderness Adventure Programme

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Abstract

Residential outdoor adventure (OA) programmes have been recognised as one potentially successful intervention to promote positive youth development (PYD). OA programmes create a unique social and physical environment for experiential learning that encourages individual transformation. Nevertheless, young people may experience reintegration challenges upon their reentry to home, school and peer contexts which can jeopardise the positive gains made during the OA experiences. PYD frameworks that are rooted in relational developmental systems (RDS) metatheory emphasise the importance of reciprocal interaction between youth and their complex and changing environment. Given that, the positive outcomes initiated during OA interventions are more likely to be sustained when youth participants are well supported upon their return. The current study addresses existing research gaps about the reintegration process and the contextual factors that influence learning transfer and positive youth outcomes arising from participation in an OA intervention. Case study methodology was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of reintegration after youth participated in an OA component of a New Zealand-based PYD programme from the perspectives of the youth programme participants, their parents and key informants.

The researcher conducted 69 semi-structured interviews with three different participant groups (17 youth, 17 parents and 11 key programme informants including staff, youth mentors and liaison teachers) from two school-based cohorts and across two periods of data collection. In order to capture changes in the reintegration experience over a prolonged period, the researcher carried out longitudinal data collection. This involved interviewing youth and their parents (independently) at two different time points: 1 and 7 months after the OA component. Using thematic analysis, the researcher developed a conceptual framework of the reintegration process, involving five major modes: 1) Preparation mode, 2) Memory mode, 3) Reaction mode, 4) Adaptation mode, and 5) Transfer mode. The conceptual framework also depicts the contextual factors that influenced the reintegration process, including factors that promoted or impeded the transfer of learning and thus the sustainability of the outcomes arising from the OA experience. The significance of this thesis is the in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of reintegration experienced by youth after an OA intervention. It provides a detailed description of the connection between youth development programme context and youth outcomes. Through this theory-building process, the research advances PYD knowledge by illuminating the phenomenon of youth's reintegration process and the encountered resources

and challenges that influence the learning transfer of the youth development outcomes. This qualitative research elucidated the transformational change by highlighting the mutually influential relationships between the youth participants and their context. The discussion of the findings in conjunction with the existing literature also outlines implications for future research and practice, including evidence-informed strategies to support positive reintegration and learning transfer to sustain outcomes of youth developed as a result of PYD intervention.

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Chapter 1 – Background to the Study

Introduction

Positive youth development (PYD) programmes grounded in an optimistic and strength-based approach are gaining momentum to address the multifaceted challenges faced by young people all over the world. PYD programmes are formulated to optimise youth development outcomes by viewing young people as a "resource to be developed" (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003, p. 94). This introductory chapter sets the scene for the thesis. The first section of the chapter provides a prelude to the contemporary concepts of PYD by emphasising the underlying philosophies and key features of the PYD programmes. It also expounds on outdoor adventure (OA)-based youth development programmes as an ideal form of PYD intervention. The next section of the chapter outlines the research rationale by emphasising the research concepts, context, and research programme under investigation, along with the overall aim and research questions. The final section of the chapter provides a brief description of the structure of the thesis.

Contemporary models of strength-based approaches to youth development– the PYD perspective and resilience science – both emphasise the plasticity in human development and the mutually influential interactions between young people and integrated dynamic developmental systems (Lerner et al., 2019). The PYD perspective, grounded in the relational developmental systems (RDS) metatheory, emphasises that the life course of young people can be enriched when their individual strengths are mutually aligned with the resources and assets found in their contextual environment, which includes their home, peers, school, out-of-school-time activities and community (Lerner et al., 2019). RDS, the extension of developmental systems theory, highlights that youth should not be studied in isolation, instead their development must be understood as resulting from the combination of bidirectional relationships between the individual and his or her environment (Mueller et al., 2011). The PYD perspective emphasises the integrated role of multiple contextual environments in youth development outcomes. If young people have a mutually supportive connection with their social world, which in turn helps them to optimise their strength, this results in a positive contribution to self, family, peers, and community.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, advocates of PYD perspectives have sought to redefine adolescents as "resources to be developed rather than as problem to be managed"

(Lerner, Jacobs, & Wertlieb, 2005, p. 3). The PYD perspective emerged as a response to constant negative connotations associated with youth. It replaced the traditional negative and punitive methods of youth development. The traditional youth development approach portrayed adolescents as inevitable problems which need to be fixed. Notions of youth well-being were based on the absence of negative undesired behaviours rather than the presence of strengths. If a young person was not involved in risky behaviours such as drug and alcohol use, unsafe sex, crime and violence then she or he would be seen as manifesting positive development (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005). In general, the field of youth development was framed by a deficit perspective and researchers, practitioners and policy makers followed the treatment approach to address youth problems. Despite the presence of many deficit-focused prevention programmes, this approach was not effective in reducing the occurrence of youth risk behaviours (Lerner, 2007). Many of the programmes had only temporary effects. Thus, a big challenge in the youth development field remained. It was soon realised that a sole concentration on problems would not address the challenge. The PYD perspective provided a new vision and vocabulary for youth and youth development approaches.

The concept of PYD arose from the work of both academic researchers and practitioners involved in the development of programmes and policies for youth development (Sanders & Munford, 2014). Taken together, their work indicates that the concept of PYD can be understood as three interrelated facets: PYD as a developmental process, as a philosophy or approach to youth programming, and as a practice of youth development programmes focused on fostering the healthy or positive development of youth (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007).

The PYD perspective emphasises that all young people require people, environments and experiences that enable positive development within and outside of family. According to Benson (2007), the individual strengths and resources within the adolescent's ecology are considered "developmental assets" (p. 33; see also Scales, Benson, & Roehlkepartain, 2011). Young people who live in an environment that is enriched with assets experience more positive outcomes, even when they are challenged with risks and problems. Conversely, young people who live in an environment that lacks assets and opportunities are more likely to experience negative outcomes. PYD, as a practice of youth development programmes, generally promotes individual change by working directly with youth. PYD programmes are intended to support the youth population in general, especially to create a structured environment to provide external resources when these resources are absent in a young person's environment. In the

context of an asset-enriched environment, youth development programmes act as a supplement to existing developmental opportunities. In the case of asset-poor environments, youth development programmes can be a primary source of developmental assets. In all cases, the aim of PYD programmes is to encourage youth to thrive. An extensive body of research reveals that participation in structured interventions can promote thriving, while at the same time mitigating risk, including familial risk factors (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). PYD interventions provide youth with resources and opportunities which facilitate positive outcomes (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004).

Numerous research studies (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003a; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010) have attempted to define the elements or characteristics of PYD programmes. In general, youth development programmes help young people to learn skills, attitudes, values and competencies, which are needed to avoid negative behaviours that curtail their future success, and direct them to successfully navigate their way into adult life. The principles of PYD programmes offer supportive adult relationships, healthy and motivating environments that are favourable for learning and skill development, provide challenging activities, and ensure a sense of empowerment by providing youth with opportunities and choices to participate and raise their voices (Barcelona & Quinn, 2011). Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) define youth development programmes as distinct from other types of youth programmes according to: 1) programme goals (or desired outcomes), 2) programme atmosphere, and 3) programme activities. The goals of a youth development programme promote positive development even if also attempting to prevent problem behaviours. Programme atmosphere emphasises on creating supportive environment to develop relationship between staff and youth. The third element of programme activities refers to varied activities to enhance life skills of youth. Programme staff play a significant role in determining the kind of atmosphere that is produced. A supportive and nourishing approach by staff who consider youth as resources rather than problems creates a nurturing atmosphere in youth development programmes. Furthermore, individual attention and cultural appropriateness also adds value to the youth development programme atmosphere (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Lerner et al (2019) further identified three fundamental characteristics of PYD programmes: positive and sustained adult–youth relations, life-skill-building activities, participation, and leadership opportunities for youth in family, school and community.

Activities are significant because they are the aspects which attract the participants. Youth development programmes can often be categorised based on the choice of activities offered. These include sports, conservation and environmental, arts and culture, OA, mentoring, cadet-style programmes, and volunteering or service programmes (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). At the same time, the varied learning needs and interests of young people can be fulfilled by including variety of activities within a single youth development programme. Evidence indicates that no activity has been defined as the "best activity." Rather, the ability of an activity to provide the best developmental experiences is considered to be the most important aspect of the activity (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

Research on youth development practices recognise OA-based programmes as one approach to fostering PYD (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011; Sklar, Anderson, & Autry, 2007). OA programmes vary in structure and duration (short-term, long-term, and immersive experiences) with various goals ranging from interpersonal or intrapersonal development or technical skill development. Moreover, they vary based on the types of experiences, for example challenge courses versus outdoor expeditions, and they serve diverse populations.

OA programmes serve youth at risk as well as the general youth population. OA programmes with or without therapeutic aspects are extensively accepted as a powerful catalyst of development for youth in the general population (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011). Although they vary, OA programmes have common features such as a novel setting and experiences; a wilderness or backcountry background (however, some adventure programmes do not operate in a wilderness or even an outdoor setting); small group sizes; physically and mentally challenging tasks; team-based tasks involving life skills; and trained staff to support the group towards a desired goal over the programme duration, which can vary from short term to long term (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997).

Residential-based OA programmes are considered to be one potentially successful form of growth-promoting intervention for young people (Deane & Harré, 2014b; Sklar et al., 2007). These OA programmes operate at a facility or remote site at which the youth participants live away from their parents or caregivers for a period of time. They provide authentic intensive experiences because they provide young people with a novel atmosphere and a break from their family, peer and school settings. The participants are disconnected from external influences thus they provide remoteness and encourage autonomy (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011). The new atmosphere can generate a team spirit among the group members due to the unfamiliar nature

of the atmosphere and activities which generally require team work. Wilderness activities are also said to fulfil the human needs for excitement, challenge and stimulation (Sklar et al., 2007). The level of engagement and independence in the outdoor experience can also increase social cohesion, social competence and self-identity (Shaw, Anderson, & Barcelona, 2015). The remoteness, small group size and intensive nature of these programmes provide participants with a novel experience. They offer opportunities for participants to learn from their actions and mistakes made in their contextual environment and help them realise the consequences of their behaviours in a smaller circle. The elements of isolation and disconnection in adventure-based programmes facilitate youth development (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011).

1.1 Reintegration in a Residential OA Youth Development Programme – The Research Context

Residential-based OA programmes usually unplug youth from the external influences of family, school and community, which therefore requires participants to undergo a process of reintegration upon completion of the programme. In this study, reintegration is defined as a phenomenon that includes the period of reentry or transition, adjustment, and a process of learning transfer following participation in a residential OA youth development programme. Prior studies demonstrate that the process of reintegration can result in a multitude of experiences which have similarities with the concept of "reversed cultural shock" (Dettweiler et al., 2015, p. 73). The concept of culture shock describes the personal disorientation a person may feel when they experience an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or visiting a new country or a change in their social environment. Similarly, reversed culture shock results from reentry feelings, or reactions to returning home from studying or working abroad, and includes a readjustment phase at home (Dettweiler et al., 2015). The existing studies that have explored the reintegration aspects of youth participants after an intensive youth development intervention use varied terms for the phenomenon including "expedition reverse cultural shock" (Allison, Davis-Berman, & Berman, 2012, p. 487), "residential reverse cultural or social shock" (Allison et al., 2012, p. 499), and "reintegration narratives" (Dettweiler et al., 2015, p. 77).

Research has demonstrated that when young people come back home after intensive residential OA interventions, they can be confronted with challenges along with new opportunities. A key issue that exists in the field of OA programming for youth development is determining the extent to which learning is transferred and outcomes are sustained following reintegration. As

mentioned earlier, the RDS-based PYD perspective emphasise the reciprocal relationship between young people and their context. To sustain the positive outcomes initiated during intensive, residential youth development programmes, youth need to be surrounded by a supportive environment when they return.

Extensive research studies have been conducted on the effects and long-term psychological and behavioural outcomes of adventure programmes. However, little is known about the contextual process that results in long-lasting outcomes. One feature of the majority of OA-based youth programmes that does not align well with the PYD literature is the importance of programme connection to families and community (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011). Lack of parental awareness of what goes on in adventure-based programmes complicate reintegration experiences. Thus the reintegration of young people into their family and school context following participation in a residential adventure programme requires greater consideration (Deane & Harré, 2014b; Duerden & Witt, 2010; Shaw et al., 2015). When young people take part in intensive challenging activities, they naturally experience change, and this may impact the environmental system, including family, peers, school and community, when they return. Since families are often a significant source of external support upon which young people rely, the involvement of parents in youth development programmes is considered best practice (Duerden & Witt, 2010). Though studies exist on the positive outcomes of adventure-based programmes, little research has been done regarding the process and influencing factors that facilitate learning transfer (Daniel, Bobilya, Kalisch, & Lindley, 2010; Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011). Learning transfer is a process in which the youth participants use what is learned from the programme in subsequent contexts and environments including home, school and community (Bobilya, Kalisch, Daniel, & Coulson, 2015) A research study revealed that mechanisms such as learner characteristics, intervention design and delivery characteristics and application of learning in the post-intervention environment empower participants to apply their newly learned skills in their daily life (Furman & Sibthorp, 2013b; Shellman, 2011). More studies are needed to better understand what factors influence or facilitate reintegration back into home and school and transfer of the positive outcomes gained during the programme to the young participants' contextual environment.

The research conducted by Sklar et al. (2007) uncovered the meaning and experiences of youth, family and key informants and to assess the generalisation and transfer of experiences beyond an intervention intended for youth at risk (Sklar et al., 2007). To understand the reintegration

experience of youth after an intensive PYD intervention, it is significant to explore the environmental context of family, school and the key role of parents and key informants who facilitate the reintegration process, and thus the transfer of learning. To clarify, the application and usage of learning after a programme completion is termed *transfer* in adventure education (Sibthorp, Paisley, Furman, & Gookin, 2008). The current study explored the reintegration process in the contextual environments of family and school following an intensive PYD OA intervention. To do this, the researcher employed a case study methodology to investigate the reintegration experiences of participants involved in Project K, a New Zealand-based youth development programme.

1.2 Project K – The Case Study Context

Project K is one of five PYD programmes owned by the Graeme Dingle Foundation in New Zealand. Project K is a unique programme that uses a multi-component strategy which creates positive change in young people. Each programme includes a maximum of 12 students. It is a 14-month programme designed for Year 10 students. The programme comprises a wilderness adventure (WA), a community challenge and an individual mentoring partnership with a trained mentor. The programme focuses on building confidence, teaching life skills, promoting good health, building relationships and encouraging a positive attitude. The primary aim of Project K is to arm rangatahi (youth) with a belief in their own ability to complete tasks and achieve goals, and to help them find purpose and direction, transforming lives. Project K is underpinned by the following whakatauki (proverb): "Whaia te pae tawhiti kia tata, whaia te pae tata, whakamaua kia tina" which means "Seek out the distant horizons, cherish those you attain" (Graeme Dingle Foundation, 2019). Project K is a well-known New Zealand PYD programme and its effectiveness has been extensively researched (Burnett, 2018; Chapman, Deane, Harré, Courtney, & Moore, 2017; Deane, 2012; Deane & Harré, 2014a, 2016; Deane, Harré, Moore, & Courtney, 2016; Deane, Courtney, Moore, & Gillham, 2017; Furness, 2013; Hollis, Deane, Moore, & Harré, 2011; Warren, 2005; Zhang, 2011).

Among the previous research on Project K, a study conducted by Deane and Harré (2014a) developed a theory of change (ToC) model for the Project K programme. The theoretical model highlighted the importance of the Project K experiential learning cycle as a key programme process leading to short-term, intermediate and desired long-term outcomes. The ToC model illustrated that Project K enhances participant growth with experiential learning and guided support using an iterative and cyclical process. The Project K theory-building process identified

participant reintegration into supportive home and school contexts following the WA as one significant programme development opportunity (Deane & Harré, 2014a). Evidence from staff focus group discussions also revealed that reintegration from WA to school life can be a challenge due to a lack of understanding from family members, teachers and friends (Deane & Harré, 2014a). Similar findings were noted in a previous study on Project K (Warren, 2005). Another important influencing factor included in Project K's ToC which needed further attention was ongoing support or reinforcement from key people in the youth participants' external networks including family members, teachers, and peers. Staff focus group discussions revealed that some of the young participants lack adequate reinforcement (Deane & Harré, 2014a).

While there has been extensive research into the positive effects of Project K, no research has been conducted on the reintegration process of young people into their family and school following participation in the WA component of Project K. During the WA component, participants spend 21 days away from home in the wilderness and undertake various adventure activities such as kayaking, sailing, cycling, hiking, abseiling, and short solo walks along with their team members. Although Project K contributes to young people's positive outcomes, youth need to learn adaptive and pro-social strategies to sustain or maintain the positive changes when they get back to their family, school and community. It has been suggested that positive outcomes of Project K do depend to a degree on the support of those external to the programme, especially from family (Deane & Harré, 2014a).

1.2.1 Research questions and goals of the study.

With this in mind, the research aimed to answer the question: 'What are the reintegration experiences of youth, their parents or caregivers (hereafter referred to as parents) and key informants after participation in outdoor adventure (OA) based positive youth development (PYD) programme? Accordingly, the goals of the research were to:

1. explore participants' experiences of reintegration after participating in the WA (the OA component of Project K);

2. explore parents' or caregivers' views on reintegration after their young people's participation in the WA; and

3. explore the perspectives of key informants on the reintegration of young people after the WA.

As stated, the researcher explored the phenomenon of reintegration experienced by participants in their family and school contexts using a case study research design. This included investigation of the challenges and opportunities associated with reintegration at home and school after Project K's WA.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The introductory **Chapter 1** has set out a prelude for the current research by providing a brief description of the contemporary status of the PYD context, the research context and the case study context outlining the research rationale and objectives. **Chapter 2** outlines the existing literature review that provides a detailed account of the PYD context. This chapter is divided into six subsections which trace the origin and development of PYD perspectives, theoretical frameworks underpinning PYD, the contemporary youth development context, programme and issues in Aotearoa New Zealand. Additionally, the chapter discusses Project K as a unique PYD programme in Aotearoa New Zealand. **Chapter 3** presents a further literature review of the phenomenon of reintegration in connection with various similar settings. The concept of reintegration is also discussed in the context of OA-based residential youth development programmes. **Chapter 4** builds upon the research methodology by outlining the research paradigm, case study research design, sampling and recruitment process, data collection, and analysis and report process carried out in the research. The chapter's final sections delineate the quality criteria and ethical considerations. **Chapter 5** elucidates the findings from the first phase of data and presents an in-depth account of the phenomenon of the reintegration process based on thematic analysis findings. **Chapter 6** reports the findings from the second phase of data and focuses on the differences and changes identified in the phenomenon of reintegration over a period of 7 months. Furthermore, the chapter illustrates the contextual factors that promoted and impeded the reintegration process along with a conceptualised thematic framework. Finally, **Chapter 7** outlines the discussion of the major findings included in Chapters 5 and 6 and examines the implications for future research and practice. The chapter ends with concluding thoughts.

Chapter 2 – The Context of Positive Youth Development

Introduction

The PYD perspective has been identified as an effective approach for generating youth development outcomes by researchers, practitioners and policy makers over the last two decades. The burgeoning perspective has replaced the deficit model of youth development, instead identifying youth with strengths and potential. The theoretical framework of the PYD perspective emphasises that young people achieve maximum potential when they are surrounded with a supportive environment (Bowers & Lerner, 2013; Duerden & Witt, 2010; Mueller et al., 2011; Overton, 2010). The holistic view and strength-based approach of youth development, which includes a promotion and prevention approach, has captured worldwide attention and been widely integrated into practice in the youth development sector (Lerner et al., 2019; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). The PYD perspective gained momentum by evidencing positive growth and benefits in young people's lives. This chapter provides an overview of the existing literature on PYD by outlining the theoretical aspects, features and characteristics of the approach in order to identify gaps in the field. This chapter begins with the origin of PYD within the broader context of adolescent development. It then focuses on the theories and features of PYD. It also delineates the inception of PYD and its influence in the current researcher's context, Aotearoa New Zealand. The final section of this chapter elucidates Project K as a PYD programme evidencing positive outcomes for young people all over Aotearoa New Zealand along with the identified gaps existing in broad youth development literature.

2.1 Adolescent Development and Origin of PYD

The literature on human development describes adolescence as a developmental stage between childhood and adulthood that coincides with the advent of pubertal changes. The multi-dimensional changes (biological, cognitive, and social) adolescents undergo internally and within their contextual environments transform them from being child-like to adult-like (McLaren, 2002). Early researchers of developmental science interpreted adolescence as a problematic period of developmental disturbance (Hall, 1904; Lerner & Galambos, 1998) because the inevitable biological changes experienced by young people were believed to result in emotional and physical discomfort, creating stress and tension. Traditionally, psychological theories about adolescence have portrayed young people as a source of problems (Arnett, 1999) and difficult to manage (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006), because the scientific

study of adolescent development was predominantly ruled by the famous perspective of "Storm and Stress" promoted by Stanley Hall in 1904 (Arnett, 1999, p. 317). This perspective of adolescence promoted the view that adolescents were "problems to be managed" (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003, p. 94).

Despite the presence of many deficit-focused prevention programmes, the approach was not effective in reducing the occurrence of youth risk behaviours (Lerner, 2007). Many of the programmes had only temporary effects. Thus, a big challenge in the adolescent development field remained. It was soon realised that a sole concentration on problems would not address the challenge. This challenge provided a new vision and vocabulary for youth and youth development approaches. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, a new strength-based approach was introduced as a result of an exploration of adolescence based on developmental systems theories (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007). It created a new framework and approach to understanding the development of young people. This paradigm shift from deficit- to strength-based approach, encapsulated by the PYD slogan "problem free is not fully prepared" (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2003, p. 17), encouraged youth development programme developers to emphasise youth preparation and development and not just prevention based on the notion of deterrence (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Advocates of this approach sought to redefine adolescents as "resources to be developed rather than as problem to be managed" (Lerner, Jacobs, & Wertlieb, 2005, p. 3). This new perspective on adolescence generated the burgeoning field of PYD, a field which is rooted in applied developmental sciences and which has captured the interest of researchers, policymakers and practitioners all over the world (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007).

PYD is grounded in the theory, research and practice nexus which arose from the work of both academic researchers and practitioners involved in the development of programmes and policies for youth development (Sanders & Munford, 2014). As indicated in the previous chapter, the concept of PYD can be understood as three interrelated facets: PYD as a developmental process, as a philosophy or approach to youth programming, and as a practice within youth development programmes focused on fostering the healthy or positive development of youth (Lerner, Lerner, Lewin-Bizan, et al., 2011). The tripartite conceptualisation of PYD, introduced by Hamilton, Hamilton, and Pittman (2004), provided a holistic framework for the burgeoning field of youth development. First, PYD as developmental process emphasises the natural capacity of the young person to understand and

respond to the environment; i.e., all young people have the inherent ability for positive growth and development. Both individual and contextual factors influence their natural unfolding; hence young people have the ability to actively shape their own development based on the choices they make from their environmental experiences (Hamilton et al., 2004).

Second, PYD is understood as set of principles or a philosophy or approach that highlights the importance of providing active support to strengthen the capacity of young people in their environment. PYD as a philosophy aims to enable all young people to thrive in their context. This philosophy comprises two fundamental principles: "universality," or "inclusiveness," and a strength-based approach. It emphasises the positive orientation and involvement of all youth in programmes without categorisation. It accentuates the concept all youth need to thrive (Hamilton et al., 2004). This promotion approach counterbalances the prevention approach and practices in youth development which label youth by their deficit and try to treat them. In actual practice, an integration of promotion and prevention approaches is required if all youth are to thrive (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016).

Third, PYD is described as range of practices in programmes or initiatives carried out by individuals, organisations or institutions or community. This third form of PYD is the combination of the application of the aforementioned PYD philosophy to achieve PYD processes through PYD practices (Hamilton et al., 2004). Youth development practices can be multifaceted in nature. A programme or intervention may vary in time duration; it can be long term or short term in nature, and it may generally be funded and implemented by government or non-government organisations. In all cases, it is imperative to understand the underpinning theoretical concepts that frame PYD. The following section explains the theoretical foundations of PYD perspectives.

2.2 Relational Developmental Systems Metatheory – The Theoretical Roots of PYD

The recent literature on PYD in a global context discusses the conceptual and fundamental status of PYD by emphasising the theoretical centrality of relational developmental systems (RDS) metatheory (Lerner et al., 2019; Overton, 2015). As Lerner et al. (2019) explains, the concept of metatheory as the "theory of theories" (p. 3) can be understood as a family of theoretical ideas out of which various theories and methods emerge (Geldhof et al., 2014; Lerner et al., 2019; Mueller et al., 2011). Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological systems theory

and developmental systems theory (Ford & Lerner, 1992; Gottlieb, 2001; Oyama, 2000) are some of the theoretical scholarship that are included in RDS metatheory. RDS metatheory emphasises holistic and integrative perspectives and views development "as a synthesis of variables from all levels of organisation within the ecology of human development" (Mueller et al., 2011, p. 1116). The umbrella of RDS metatheory is the base for contemporary developmental science research which is conducted to better understand optimal human development. Thus, it integrates biological and developmental science. As part of the interest in understanding optimal positive development of youth, the new lens of the strength-based PYD perspective has embraced RDS metatheory.

The fundamental concepts of RDS metatheory emphasise that change arises throughout the life span of an individual from birth till death and these changes occur qualitatively and quantitatively (Gayman, Fraser-Thomas, & Baker, 2017). RDS-based theories view development as the result of systemic interrelations within the components of human ecology. That is, human development involves the systematic integration of multiple levels of ecological influence (Lerner & Castellino, 2002). In RDS, the process of development involves mutual interaction between individual and context (symbolised as individual ←→ context relations), and adaptation within the multiple contexts of the individual (e.g. home, school, peers, community) (Overton, 2015). Reciprocally beneficial exchanges between individual and context results in positive and healthy development. This emphasises that development is embodied within cross-context relations. The central idea of RDS is that development is an interrelated process between the individual and the environment; the likelihood of positive development occurs when individual and environmental elements merge in a mutually beneficial way (Duerden & Witt, 2010). The fundamental philosophical concept of RDS is the developmental change, observed or experienced between and within individuals throughout the lifespan, which is influenced by the dynamic, mutually beneficial exchange between individual and contextual elements. This change influences the overall development of the individual and is regulated by the characteristics of the individual and the relationship between the individual and his or her context. The developmental changes can be either constructive or detrimental based on the reciprocal relationship between the individual and context and variations in developmental trajectories (Gayman et al., 2017). Reciprocally beneficial exchanges between individuals and their context, including psychological, biological, cultural, historical and social influences, result in positive and healthy development.

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (EST) is another fundamental theoretical underpinning that comes under the umbrella of RDS metatheory which emphasises human development and the interconnection between the individual and the environment. EST emphasises that the development of an individual is embedded and influenced by interactions between multilevel environmental systems. The interrelated nature of the context surrounding a developing person is the central idea of Bronfenbrenner's EST. It portrays the variety of systems within which individuals exist, beginning with the individual level then moving outward: the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems are based on proximity to the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Duerden & Witt, 2010). The microsystem is the closest layer to an individual and encompasses the immediate surroundings, for example family, school and community where the individual participates directly. The mesosystem includes the interactions or connection between two or more microsystem settings. The exosystem comprises a wide social system which does not directly influence the individual but influences the individual's microsystems. The macrosystem is the outermost layer of an individual's environment, which comprises the cultural, economic, social, political and religious influences on the development of an individual. The chronosystem in the EST emphasises the transitions and shifts in one's life span as well as sociohistorical circumstances. As stated, the microsystem consists of an individual's immediate and intimate settings and, as such, is highly influential in his or her learning and development.

The RDS-based PYD perspective has contributed to a paradigm shift in the field of adolescent development as it has provided a beneficial and optimistic theoretical frame for studying youth development (Mueller et al., 2011). The strength-based PYD perspective is formulated with the application of RDS metatheories, which aims to develop adolescents through engaging them in their key contexts such as family, peer group, school, and community and youth development programmes organisations (Lerner, Lerner, Lewin-Bizan, et al., 2011; Overton, 2010). The PYD perspective emphasises the need to align individual strengths with resources existing within the adolescent's primary ecological systems. If a youth's characteristics and ecological resources mutually align, this promotes thriving, while also preventing problems (Bowers & Lerner, 2013). The RDS-based PYD perspective suggests that the positive development of adolescents occurs by connecting them to positive contexts. The key assumption of an RDS-based PYD perspective is that youth lives can be enhanced if the

specific strengths of youth and the resources in their environment are mutually aligned (Lerner et al., 2018).

The key feature of a PYD perspective predicated on RDS is the concept of relative plasticity as the strength of the young person. It means that attributes of a youth's behaviour and development at a specific point in life are flexible (Lerner et al., 2019). That is, if a young person is placed into an environment which enhances positive development, then through the mutual interaction within the developmental system, the young person would gain the capacity to change his or her attributes (Lerner et al., 2018). The enhancing environment or the presence of resources within the adolescent's ecology are termed by some as *developmental assets* (Benson et al., 2006; Benson, Scales, & Syvertsen, 2011). The exchange between individual and developmental assets fosters thriving (positive and healthy functioning). Thriving is the term that represents a successful and healthy young person's growth. The relation between individual and context is termed *developmental regulation* by Brandtstadter (1998). If the developmental regulation is mutually beneficial to both individual and context then it is termed "*adaptive developmental regulation"* (Lerner, Lerner, & Benson, 2011, p. 295).

By considering the presence of relative plasticity across the human life span, the PYD perspective highlights that all youth have the potential to develop more positively by enhancing adaptive (mutually beneficial) developmental regulations. A key idea within the PYD perspective is that youth are surrounded by contexts (e.g., families, schools, and communities) that possess such assets. As an ecological approach, the PYD perspective accentuates the external context of the young person (Sanders & Munford, 2014), and the vital role that family, friends, and community play in the well-being of young people. In a nutshell, RDS-based PYD perspectives emphasise that youth should not be studied in isolation and the bidirectional relationships between youth and their contexts need to be considered (Mueller et al., 2011).

2.3 Global Context of PYD Perspective

The substantive and strength-based status of the PYD perspective has captured growing attention from youth development practitioners, policy makers and researchers across the globe in the recent past, especially RDS-based PYD research. However, the majority of these studies have been conducted in the United States. The scholarship on PYD perspectives was developed by developmental scientists including Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi, et al.(2005), Benson et al. (2006), Damon (2004), Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem & Ferber (2003), Roth and Brooks-

Gunn (2003), Eccles and Gootman (2002), and Larson (2000). Benson et al.'s developmental assets and Lerner and Lerner's (2013) five Cs models are two contemporary PYD models which have received extensive attention in global youth development settings (Lerner et al., 2019).

The studies conducted by Benson and colleagues (Benson, 2007; Scales et al., 2011) introduced the concept of developmental assets and coined the terms *internal* and *external assets*. Internal assets are individual skills, or the competencies or values of a young person, and external assets are the resources or strengths derived from ecological systems or contexts. Benson and his colleagues at the Search Institute classified these into 40 development assets for PYD. The 40 assets are divided into 20 internal and 20 external assets (Lerner, Lerner, Lewin-Bizan, et al., 2011). The internal assets were again grouped into four major categories such as commitment to learning (e.g., achievement motivation) positive values (e.g., equality and social justice), social competencies (e.g., interpersonal competence) and positive identity (e.g., self-esteem and sense of purpose). The external assets were categorised into another four groups including support (e.g., family support), empowerment (e.g., youth as resources), boundaries and expectations (e.g., family and school boundaries), and constructive use of time (e.g., youth programmes). Benson (2007) and Scales et al. (2011) argued that all youth have internal assets and youth thriving occurs when their assets align with their community's external assets. The theory of developmental assets highlights the crucial role of communities in enhancing the positive development of young people by defining the dynamic interaction between the developing person and the context in which the person is surrounded. Furthermore, research studies have revealed that the accumulation of more assets may help an individual to thrive and they are more likely to develop more positive developmental outcomes compared to the youth with fewer assets (Benson, 2007). These researchers have also developed a developmental asset profile measuring tool and measured the well-being of young people, drawing from 50 datasets from 31 countries involving 25,000 young people between the ages of 9–31 years and made a solid contribution to PYD research in terms of cross-cultural youth development across the world (Scales et al., 2017).

The numerous studies grounded on developmental assets have provided empirical evidence and demonstrated that the experiences of more developmental assets in young people tend to reduce the likelihood of involvement in risk behaviours (Fulkerson et al., 2006; Scales et al., 2011). Among all the external assets, family is considered a significant developmental asset

for young people (Laursen & Collins, 2009; Lewin-Bizan, Bowers, & Lerner, 2010; Theokas & Lerner, 2006). Other researchers have argued that relationships with committed and caring adults in adolescents' lives in the external context are the most important asset predicting higher levels of PYD and lower levels of problem behaviours (Li & Julian 2012) and further research also accentuates the significant role of the parent–youth relationship in the PYD of youth (Bowers et al., 2014).

Another internationally popular PYD approach is the five Cs model (Lerner & Lerner's PYD model) which underpins the philosophy of RDS metatheory. The five Cs model highlights the five characteristics of youth thriving as the indicators of PYD resulting from mutually influential and beneficial relationships (adaptive developmental regulations) between the young person and their environment. The five characteristics of youth thriving are: competence, confidence, connection, character and caring. Competence indicates a positive view of a young person's actions including social, academic, cognitive, vocational and health competencies. Confidence is an internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy which includes self-esteem, self-image, identity and belief in the future. Connections focuses on positive bonds to family, peers, school and community that are reflected in their mutual interactions. Character refers to respect for positive values, integrity and moral commitment. Caring includes compassion and having empathy for others. According to Lerner and Learner (2013), if a young person exhibits all five Cs, he or she will be more likely to demonstrate the sixth C – contributing positively towards self, family, friends, school and community (Lerner, Jacobs, & Wertlieb, 2005). The sixth C is considered the critical outcome of PYD programmes (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003).

The 4-H study, a prominent longitudinal research project conducted in the United States, based on Lerner and Lerner's PYD model, provides substantial empirical evidence for five C PYD indicators. The longitudinal 4 H study was initiated in 2002 and data collection was repeated once a year for 8 years, surveying more than 7,000 young people in Grades 5 to 12, and 3,500 of their parents, from diverse backgrounds from across 42 states of the United States (Lerner et al., 2018). Samples in all eight waves varied in ethnicity and race, family structures, geographic orientation, rural-urban status, socioeconomic status and programme participation (Lerner et al., 2018). The key findings from the 4-H study of PYD revealed that PYD is constituted by the five Cs, and intentional self-regulation positively predicts both PYD and youth contribution and negatively predicts risk/problem behaviours of the participants across

the grades (Urban, Lewin-Bizan, & Lerner, 2010). Similarly, young people with hopeful future expectations were associated with PYD and contribution and also with a low level of risk behaviours and depressive symptoms (Schmid & Lopez, 2011). It also demonstrated that school engagement is the key element of achievement in a school context that leads to lower involvement in delinquency and substance abuse (Li & Lerner, 2011). One of the major findings of the 4-H study is the identification of key ecological assets promoting PYD including parents, mentors, teachers, coaches, faith leaders, and other institutions that involve youth–adult collaboration and partnerships (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). It also verified the element of contribution as the key outcome of PYD which may include active and engaged citizenship (Lewin-Bizan, Bowers, & Lerner, 2010). Above all, the 4-H study discovered that a high PYD score is generally associated with lower risk or problem behaviours. In general, the findings from the Lerner and Lerner PYD model of the 4-H study reiterate and support the link between the strength of the young people and the resources or assets in their ecological systems, the basic philosophy of RDS metatheory. Although the Lerner and Lerner PYD model has been prominent in the youth development sector, and attempts have been made to test the model in some European countries (Gestsdóttir, Geldhof, Lerner, & Lerner, 2017; Holsen, Geldhof, Larsen, & Aardal, 2017), the model has not been thoroughly assessed across the globe with youth from diverse backgrounds and countries. Thus, a new longitudinal study is underway to understand the bases of PYD among diverse youth across Central American, African and Asian countries (Lerner et al., 2018).

PYD programmes emphasise supportive adult relationships, healthy and motivating environments that are favourable for learning and skill development, challenging activities, and increasing young people's sense of empowerment by providing opportunities and choices to participate and raise their voices (Barcelona & Quinn, 2011). As mentioned in the introduction, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) argue that youth development programmes are distinct from other types of youth programmes according to their goals (or desired outcomes), atmosphere, and activities. Furthermore, the commonly cited features of PYD programmes underline the importance of structured curriculum, having a positive programme climate, the provision of supportive adult–youth relationships, the availability of opportunities and integration of supportive systems including family, school and community (Barcelona & Quinn, 2011). The following section elaborates on the status of PYD in Aotearoa New Zealand as the current research is conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand.

2.4 PYD in the Context of Aotearoa New Zealand

The journey of youth development in New Zealand has its roots in both indigenous Māori youth development practice and international youth development approach. New Zealand is unique with its bicultural national identity based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) – the partnership document signed between Māori (tangata whenua – the people of the land) and the British Crown in 1840. Additionally, New Zealand also has an ethnically diverse population. The New Zealand census data 2013 revealed that the New Zealand population consisted of 71.2% New Zealand European, 14.9 % Māori, 11.8% Asian, 7.4% Pacific people and the remaining population identified as Middle Eastern, Latin American, African and other ethnicities. The youth population is 20.8% of the total population (The Centre for Social Impact, 2018). New Zealand's national youth development strategy defines young people as between the age group of 12–24 years (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). The diversity of the youth population in Aotearoa New Zealand requires an integrated youth development strategy. New Zealand is one of few countries that have incorporated PYD perspectives as the basic nationwide approach to enhance the well-being of young people.

Over the past 4 decades, the youth development sector in New Zealand has undergone significant changes. The first National Youth Council was formed in 1960 comprising adult leaders from youth development organisations increasingly interested in socio-political issues of young people (Baxter, Caddie, & Cameron, 2015). The 1970s witnessed the introduction of youth centres in Aotearoa New Zealand. Simultaneously, in the late 1970s and 1980s, the public and the government became increasingly aware and concerned about the youth population in terms of risks and unemployment rates (Ara Taiohi, 2011). As a result, a number of community-based youth development organisations and training forums emerged. The government established a Ministry of Youth Affairs in 1989, which is now known as the Ministry of Youth Development (Baxter et al., 2015). The paradigm shifts from a deficit to a promotion approach in the international youth development sector also influenced youth work in Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2002 the Ministry of Youth Affairs launched its "Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa" (YDSA) to promote PYD and its use by public sector agencies across the nation as a strategic tool for developing youth policies and service programmes for young people (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). Baxter et al. (2015) argue that YDSA was the greatest achievement of the Ministry.

The YDSA outlined the vision, key principles, aims and goals for the well-being of young people in New Zealand including rangatahi (young Māori), Pacific youth, youth from refugee and migrant backgrounds, differently abled youths, and LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual) youth groups. The YDSA provided a solid framework for youth development based on the key six principles as follows: (1) youth development is shaped by the "big picture," (2) youth development is about young people being connected, (3) youth development is based on a consistent strength-based approach, (4) youth development happens through quality relationships, (5) youth development is triggered when young people fully participate, and (6) youth development needs good information. All six principles are grounded on the PYD perspectives that emphasise the strengths or assets of the young person and bidirectional relationship of young people with their context or support system.

When the youth sector underwent another reform in terms of changes in government and restrictions of former national youth councils. The council was replaced by the Federation of New Zealand Youth Organisations. Organisations working in youth health also established a network called New Zealand Aotearoa Adolescent Health and Development (NZAAHD) in 1989. In late 1990, the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa (NYWNA) was established as the national umbrella network for youth work. The *Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand* was published in 2008 by NYWNA. Due to a lack of financial resources from the government the youth sector had to disestablish the two umbrella bodies (NZAAHD & NYWNA). An agreement was made to become one national peak body for youth development and Ara Taiohi (which means "pathway to and from young people") was launched in 2010 to champion the youth development sector in New Zealand. Although the Ministry of Youth Development is still operational, it appears that the youth development sector is currently led by the youth work sector (Baxter et al., 2015).

The new initiative of Ara Taiohi in the youth development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand echoed the Te Tiriti-based practice and emphasised tikanga and Kaupapa Māori-based youth development frameworks. Based on the YDSA, Ara Taiohi revised the existing *Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand* and published the second edition to provide a set of guidelines for youth work in Aotearoa New Zealand to ensure professional and ethical standards in youth work (Ara Taiohi, 2011). *The Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand* is acknowledged as a living document; it has introduced ethical clauses based on the six key principles of the YDSA explained within tikanga (customs and traditional values,

especially in a Māori context) and Māori worldviews (Ara Taiohi, 2011). In order to enhance the well-being and involvement of taiohi Māori (Māori youth), the E Tipu e Rea framework was developed with the aim of addressing youth development along with Māori development aspirations (Keelan, 2014). E Tipu e Rea extended a Māori development framework to the existing YDSA by depicting four objectives: involve taiohi Māori in activities that are important to them, integrate contemporary issues into any development project for taiohi Māori, provide opportunities for taiohi Māori to integrate the tikanga of their ancestors into their activities, and ensure the soul of taiohi Māori is nurtured in all activities (Keelan, 2014).

The youth development sector of Aotearoa New Zealand was strengthened by the initiatives of youth work organisations. The YDSA, which is based on the bicultural and multi-ethnic context in New Zealand, emphasises the big picture of youth development. The code of ethics depicts the four core values of youth work in Aotearoa: young-person centred, relationship focused, culture and context appropriate, and community contribution (Ara Taiohi, 2011). A youth advisory group representing multiple sectors in New Zealand developed the Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa (PYDA) Framework which defines the two key outcomes for the youth development sector as developing the whole person and developing connected communities for young people (Jansen et al., 2010). The PYDA identified *Te whare tapa wha* framework as one of the key youth development models to work with young people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Te whare tapa wha, a kaupapa (principles) Māori holistic health and wellness model (Durie, 1994) views the development of an individual as a holistic process. The traditional Māori model uses the concept of a whare (house), with the four cornerstones or four walls of the house depicting different aspects of health and wellbeing: taha tinana (physical health), taha wairua (spiritual health), taha whānau (family health) and taha hinengaro (mental health). The model accentuates the interconnection of the four dimensions. If one dimension is missing or damaged, the person may become unbalanced or subsequently become unwell (Durie, 1994). Similarly, the model of *te wheke* (the octopus) is another kaupapa Māori health model which acknowledges the link between the mind, spirit, human connection with whānau and the physical world and the interwoven dimensions and close relationship of te wheke's head, eyes and eight tentacles representing specific dimensions of well-being. The head of the octopus represents te whānau (the family), the eyes represent waiora (total well-being of the individual and family), the eight tentacles represent wairuatanga **(**spirituality), hinengaro (the mind), taha

tinana (physical well-being), whanaungatanga (extended family), mauri (life force in people and objects), ake (unique identity of individuals and family), hā a koro ma, a kui ma (breath of life from forbearers), and whatumanawa (the open and healthy expression of emotion). Similarly, the Pacific model of *Fonofale* and the concept of the *Va* emphasise the holistic view of human development context. The Fonofale model encompasses Pacific cultural values and represents the Samoan fale (house), with the roof representing cultural values and beliefs; the foundation representing family; and the four pou (posts) between roof and foundation representing spiritual, physical, mental and other dimension of the individual (Suaalii-Sauni et al., 2009). The Va model emphasises the relationship that is "the space in between" as the most influential dynamic in the development of the individual within the context that influences the identity of the individual (Mila-Schaaf, 2006)

Traditional Māori youth development practices and framework fit very well with the integrated PYD perspectives. This includes the traditional developmental strategies to prepare young people for their transition to adulthood and some of the rite-of-passage concepts of pūkengatanga, whare wānanga, and urungatanga. Pūkengatanga highlights the role of an elder (pūkenga) in showing and teaching knowledge to the young person directly under their care. Whare wānanga represents the formal structures established to pass special skills and knowledge of history, genealogy and religious practice to Māori young people who are selected because of their special gifts or talents or interest. The strategy of urungatanga is the direct exposure of young person to a situation where they are expected to analyse the context to work out a solution to the problems, especially in the context of cultivation of agriculture, child care and public occasions (Ara Taiohi, 2011; Hemara, 2000). All three traditional Māori youth strategies align with Lerner's (2019) key curricular features of the PYD programmes such as: positive and sustained adult–youth relationships; life-skill-building activities; and opportunities for youth participation and leadership of valued family, school and community activities.

2.5 Youth Issues and Contextual Factors in Aotearoa New Zealand

The growing interest in PYD-based youth development programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand broadens the youth development context and emphasises the importance of the holistic development of youth. However, despite these PYD approaches and trends in the youth development sector, New Zealand still has the highest mortality rate, for people in the 10 to 24 age group, of 19 of the world's developed wealthy countries (Shah, Hagell, & Cheung, 2019).

New Zealand's youth (15–24 years) have the highest suicide rate among 34 OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries. The Youth'12 report, the third national health and well-being survey of 8,500 students across 91 secondary schools in New Zealand also highlighted that some of the concerns of health and well-being areas, including significant depressive symptoms (16% of female and 9% of male) and deliberate acts of self-harm and suicide ideation, were worse than comparative countries (Clark et al., 2013). Further, there is an ongoing concern for Māori and Pacific youth in New Zealand who are significantly over-represented in youth justice systems. The latest statistics from the Ministry of Justice (2018) reveals the estimated offending rates for young people aged 14 to 16 years as 642 per 10,000 population for Māori, and 256 per 10,000 population for Pacific. This is likely due to the long-lasting impact of intergenerational trauma, and interpersonal and structural racism experienced through colonisation and deprivation. However, compared to the Youth 2001 survey, the Youth'12 findings suggest that the health and well-being of youth have improved over the period (Clark et al., 2018).

A recent longitudinal youth transition study conducted in New Zealand provided an in-depth understanding of the factors that influenced the developmental pathways of youth aged between 12 and 17 who sustained exposure to complex harm and risk including abuse, violence, addictions, educational disengagement and mental health issues (Munford & Sanders, 2017). The findings from the longitudinal research highlight the significance of social environments and the integrated practice approach required to ensure the well-being of young people. Along with other social environments such as peer groups, school settings, community and workplace contexts, family environments exert a significant influence on all aspects of the development, overall health and well-being of young people.

A recent evidence review report of the YDSA (The Centre for Social Impact, 2018) identified protective factors for the youth population in New Zealand highlighting the individual, family, community, school and employment domains in youths' lives. The individual domain encompasses individual characteristics including high-quality interpersonal relationships with others, temperament, outlook and personality, self-esteem, self-regulation skills and having one's own hobbies and interests. The family as one protective factor highlights the importance of having routine and boundaries, development of cultural identity and values, supportive relationships and open communication, positive parenting and access to extended whānau (family) support. The community as a protective factor outlines the significance of

neighbourhood safety; belonging to pro-social or supportive environments such as marae (the courtyard of a Māori meeting house), youth groups or church; and having close relationships to adults outside of the family, including access to mentors and access to resources and support services. The protective factor of school encompasses opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, long-term school engagement and positive school ethos and environment. The employment and vocational setting are also identified as the crucial protective factors for youth development in a New Zealand context.

As mentioned in the previous section, the social development policies and systems in New Zealand recognise the importance of family for the well-being of all people. Researchers (Fergusson & Horwood, 2001; Pittman et al., 2003) have emphasised the influence of family on positive youth outcomes. Unfortunately, young people from families that have high levels of conflict, low levels of parental warmth, and inadequate monitoring from parents, are much more vulnerable to risk (McLaren, 2002). The longitudinal Dunedin multidisciplinary study, and the Christchurch study, provided robust information on the development and well-being of young New Zealanders and highlighted the central role of family in influencing the life experiences and choices available to young participants (Edwards, McCreanor, & Moewaka-Barnes, 2007).

Conversely, some researchers have argued that the role of family is inconsequential compared to other influences such as peers or genetics (Clarke-Stewart & Dunn, 2006). Moreover, the literature on family resilience, risks and threats also highlights the possibility of family as a source of threat or as a risky social environment (Masten & Shaffer, 2006). Not all young people experience a sense of safety, identity and belonging in the family. For example, parents with mental or physical illness or a disability, deviant parental behaviours (for example substance abuse, violence and criminal tendencies) and family conflict all negatively influence the well-being of a child. An extensive body of research reveals that young children from risky families with high levels of conflict and aggression, and who experience relationships that are cold and unsupportive or neglectful, are more likely exposed to risk (Edwards et al., 2007; Sanders & Munford, 2014). Young people who have experienced abuse, neglect, and who witness family violence experience disrupted childhoods which adversely affect their well-being (Sanders, Munford, & Liebenberg, 2017). The majority of the participants in the Pathways to Resilience Research (Dewhurst, Munford, & Sanders, 2014) in New Zealand did not experience positive and supportive relationships with family. Parents in conflict were not

able to meet the physical and emotional needs of their children. These children perceived their relationship with family members as a challenge (Dewhurst et al., 2014).

Family is not only recognised as an important domain in an individual's life but also as a site for policy application, support and intervention to promote long-term positive outcomes for all family members and society at large. Family constitutes the primary context for most children to grow up in, and parents and siblings are the most significant people in a child's life (Dewhurst et al., 2014). Ideally, families are expected to nurture and care for children, to influence their sense of identity and belonging and to inculcate them with social norms and values. As children grow up, especially in the period of adolescence or young adulthood, relationships with family members change due to the external influences of peers, school and community. Young people seek more independence and develop their own world views. Despite peer relationships becoming increasingly important, most adolescents generally maintain good relationships with their parents (McLaren, 2002).

Young people who develop positive relationships with parents are likely to experience greater emotional well-being, school success and self-esteem. Young people who are exposed to peer group risks such as gangs, violence, and substance abuse can also be protected by positive parental relationships (Pingel et al., 2012). Further, interventions designed to create more protective factors, for example, positive relationships, community connectedness or stronger self-esteem, can be more effective than attempting to remove the risk factors associated with anti-social peers (Becroft, 2009). Studies have revealed that an anti-social peer group only influences a youth when his or her parental relationship starts to deteriorate (Ary, Duncan, Duncan, & Hops, 1999; Luthar, 2006). Evidence from research also demonstrates that the presence of at least one strong parental relationship may lead to fewer behavioural problems. In the absence of a positive parental relationship, strong positive relationships with older siblings or extended adult family members are significant (Becroft, 2009). For the majority of adolescents who have healthy relationships with their parents, the family can act as protective influence and young people can rely on their parents when they experience challenges, whether these are issues to do with their peers, school, romantic relationships, or difficulties obtaining or maintaining employment (Dewhurst et al., 2014).

2.6 Youth Development Programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand

A recent evidence review conducted to support a revised version of the now-outdated YDSA mapped the youth development ecosystem in New Zealand and developed a continuum framework that includes principles, services and four key youth development approaches: risk-based interventions, universal services, youth-driven and youth-led approaches (The Centre for Social Impact, 2018). The risk-based interventions approach is used to support young people at the highest level of risk to address their acute needs of the youth. Youth justice, care and protection, alternative education and wrap-around NGOs are some of the implementing agencies that follow risk-based interventions. These services and programmes are less aligned with YDSA principles in terms of delivery strategy. The universal service approach is accessible to all young people and incorporates some of the culturally specific framework for youth development. School, healthcare and welfare services and some of the wrap-around NGO services, including philanthropic investments, implement universal services. Youth-directed approaches emphasise youth engagement and participation and incorporate strength-based approaches very well aligned with YDSA. Mentoring and local and central youth advisory groups are some of the examples of a youth-driven approach. The youth-led approach provides full opportunities for youth to design and lead with the support of adults or with peers. In this approach, youth have greater agency and freedom which strongly aligns with YDSA principles. Youth councils, youth parliament, youth arts, business and social-change movements are some of the model examples for youth-led programmes in New Zealand.

Youth participation in community-based activities is identified as the path to positive outcomes for youth in New Zealand (O'Connor & Jose, 2012). OA-based, youth-service oriented, mentoring, performing arts, disabled youth groups, rainbow youth, youth enterprises, youth counselling, youth leadership and holiday programmes are some of the focuses of community-based youth organisations or NGOs in New Zealand. Among the many PYD programmes in New Zealand, Project K is identified as a unique programme with multiple components to enhance the positive outcomes of young people in New Zealand. The next section of this chapter elaborates on Project K, previous research and discusses the identified gaps in the literature to emphasise the current case study research.

2.7 Project K as a Unique PYD Programme

As stated in Chapter 1, Project K is one of five PYD programmes owned by the Graeme Dingle Foundation in New Zealand. Project K was started in 1995 by famous mountaineer Sir Graeme Dingle and his wife, lawyer Jo-Anne Wilkinson. On returning to New Zealand after an expedition in the early 1990s, they observed alarming dysfunction such as high rates of violence, substance abuse and lack of opportunities for youth among some of the communities they visited. They were shocked to learn, from media reports, that many young people in New Zealand experience similar problems and were motivated to find a solution to the problem. Project K was the result of their vision and their solution to generating positive outcomes for young New Zealanders (Deane, 2012).

Project K is unique and innovative because it combines three effective strategies to ensure long-term positive outcomes through the three stages: wilderness adventure (WA), community challenge and a year-long individual mentoring partnership. These strategies were derived from in-depth research and consultation with educational experts in New Zealand. Originally the programme was framed for troubled youth but, later, Dingle realised that many programmes are available for youth at risk and changed the focus of the target group to young people who are heading towards risk (Deane, 2012).

The Project K programme is licensed to community partners who represent registered trusts involved in the delivery of Graeme Dingle Foundation programmes according to the needs of their community. Community partners may contract facilitators or providers to carry out activities as part of the WA and community challenge. The Graeme Dingle Foundation also has regional managers who are responsible for delivery of the programmes in five regions across New Zealand. The Project K programme is governed by the Graeme Dingle Foundation's National Support Office. Project K participants undergo 2 to 3 days of induction during which participants are oriented towards the programme's goals and the three components.

The Graeme Dingle Foundation follows a selection procedure for the Project K participants. All Year 10 students from Project K-participating schools (age 12–14) in New Zealand, complete a self-efficacy survey with the help of two teachers who represent a Project K liaison team. The survey consists of three subscales to identify the students' self-reported ratings of academic, social and help-seeking efficacy. These surveys are entered into a database which

ranks the students based on median levels for Year 10 level in their school, with those displaying lowest self-efficacy at the top and highest self-efficacy at the bottom. Based on these self-efficacy rankings, the programme coordinator consults with the schools to identify potential participants for the programme. Informed consent is sought from students and parents of potential participants to create a final group. From the final group, 12 students (6 boys and 6 girls) are randomly selected to take part in Project K from the first 15–20 students on the list based on the selection criteria. Students exhibiting recent or ongoing risk behaviours are exempted from the programme due to safety concerns (Project K Programme Manual, 2016).

During the first component, Project K participants undergo a 3-week-long outdoor experience in the wilderness. The students are exposed to a range of challenging activities such as kayaking, abseiling, tramping, mountain biking and camping. Participants are assisted and guided by trained field staff. The intensive WA component provides challenging opportunities for participants to develop life skills, leadership skills, teamwork, perseverance, goal setting skills, resilience and self-reliance. WA provides an intensive atmosphere in a natural setting away from all the distractions of the social environment, which results in positive outcomes.

The second, component, community challenge, aims to transfer the skills participants learned from the WA to their daily life and community context. Students are encouraged to design their own community project by exploring community resources to contribute back to their community. The reintegration process of the WA is carried out during this stage. The Project K group come together for 10 days although there are flexible options for the structure of this component (1 day a week over 10 weeks or 2 days a week over 5 weeks or every day for 2 consecutive weeks immediately after the first component).

In this final stage, each Project K participant is matched and paired with a trained mentor who supports and encourages them to achieve their goals over a period of 12 months. This stage provides the youth participant with a significant adult outside of their family and complements existing relationships with the significant adults in their life including parents and teachers. Throughout the mentoring period, mentor and mentee communicate via phone and email each week and organise mentoring meetings.

Parents of the Project K participants are involved in the programme during the various stages. They are invited to participate in the information meeting four weeks before the start of the programme followed by the introduction and consent meeting. The Graeme Dingle Foundation

sends various letters to parents, for example confirmation letters on their child's place on Project K. During the first week of the WA, they are updated with the progress of their child along with the expedition plan and a map of the journey from the facilitators. During the second week, they are invited to attend a WA meeting at school and informed about their child's progress and the changes expected in students after the WA. They are also provided with a copy of the WA timetable, sample logbook and a homework make-up sheet to cover the school work missed during the WA programme. Parents are given the opportunity to write a note or letter to their child along with a treat box to be handed over to their child in the wilderness.

Though parents are involved in the programme, gaps have been identified in the transition period. A recent study suggested that ongoing inputs from key people and external support may enable the young participants to facilitate the learning transfer over a lengthier period resulting in long-term programme impact (Deane & Harré, 2014a). The gaps identified from the previous Project K research necessitate an exploration of the reintegration experiences of youth after they return home from the WA. This study seeks to address the gaps that exist in the PYD research literature in the areas of reintegration and learning transfer after young people participate in an intensive residential youth development programme.

Since 2005, Project K has been the topic of many research studies that have revealed that the programme can produce significant positive outcomes for young people (Burnett, 2018; Chapman, Deane, Harré, Courtney, & Moore, 2017; Deane, 2012; Deane & Harré, 2014a, 2016; Deane, Harré, Moore, & Courtney, 2016; Deane, Courtney, Moore, & Gillham, 2017; Furness, 2013; Hollis, Deane, Moore, & Harré, 2011; Warren, 2005; Zhang, 2011). Deane (2012) conducted a mixed method evaluation of Project K with the theoretical framework of the thoughtful evaluation model. This theoretical framework balances concepts of scientific credibility and stakeholder empowerment. Deane's (2012) analysis of Project K outcome evaluation data collected as part of a randomised controlled trial and her mixed method evaluation revealed that Project K improved the academic and social self-efficacy from pre- to post-programme and sustained the effects over 1 year post-programme. Higher career self-efficacy was also observed among Project K participants. However, no overall differences were observed between the groups for achievement on the major national qualification offered in New Zealand secondary schools (NCEA, Level 1).

She also developed a theory of change model (ToC) through a process of triangulation and integration of key findings from focus group discussion with eight programme staff, open-

ended comments on the programme from 361 youth participants, research findings from six previous Project K research projects and through a review of the literature (Deane, 2012; Deane and Harré, 2014a). The theory of change illustrates that Project K enhances participant growth with experiential learning and guided support using an iterative and cyclical process leading to short-term, intermediate and desired long-term outcomes. Individual characteristics and programme environment were identified as the influencing factors for success of the process.

It is suggested that ongoing inputs from key people and external support may enable the young participants to facilitate the learning transfer over a lengthier period resulting in long-term programme impact (Deane, 2012; Deane & Harré, 2014a). The gaps identified from the previous Project K research necessitate an exploration of the reintegration experiences of youth after they return home from the WA. The current study seeks to address the gaps that exist in the PYD research literature in the areas of reintegration and learning transfer after young people participate in an intensive residential youth development programme.

While there has been extensive research into the positive effects of Project K, no research has been conducted on the reintegration process of young people into their family following participation in the WA component of Project K. During this intervention, participants are away from home for 21 days in the wilderness and undertake various adventure activities such as kayaking, sailing, cycling, hiking, abseiling, and short solos walks along with team members. Although Project K contributes to young people's positive outcomes, youth need to learn adaptive and pro-social strategies to sustain or maintain the positive changes when they get back to their normal routine. It has been suggested that positive outcomes of Project K do depend to a degree on the support of those external to the programme, especially family (Deane & Harré, 2014a).

Chapter Summary

The positive youth development (PYD) perspective has been identified as an effective strength-based approach and is widely referred to in the global youth development sector. The holistic PYD perspective also framed the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) which is used to develop policies and service programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand. Recent PYD literature has emphasised the need to explore the context of the programme to understand the developmental process through which youth gain and sustain positive change (Larson, Kang, Perry, & Walker, 2011). PYD programmes underpinned by RDS metatheory highlight

bidirectional interactions between the individual and contextual factors, and the beneficial exchanges that results in healthy development (Overton, 2015). Considering this, PYD researchers call for qualitative studies to unpack the challenges and obstacles experienced by youth and programme staff in regard to developmental challenges (Larson et al., 2011). Existing literature showed significant gaps in understanding the how and why of the youth development programme contextual process. The next chapter critically reviews the concept and process of reintegration experiences in the context of residential-based OA youth development programmes.

Chapter 3 – Reintegration in Youth Adventure Programming

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, OA-based youth programmes provide opportunities for young people to enhance their positive well-being by carrying out challenging activities in a novel atmosphere away from their familiar social environment. OA-based programmes are considered PYD programmes when both programme types share common characteristics including structure, purpose, activities and delivery to the youth population (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011). Youth development programmes that encompass a residential component are considered to be a particularly successful form of growth-promoting intervention for young people because the intensity of the experience is thought to catalyse individual transformation. The distinct features of residential youth development programmes (e.g., youth camps, OA and overseas service-learning programmes) that create this intensity include the removal of youth participants from their natural ecological setting and comfort zone and placing them in a novel setting with a small group to engage in activity-based life-skills learning through challenging tasks with the support of an experienced facilitator or guide (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011). All residential youth development programmes therefore require participants to undergo a process of reintegration upon completion of the programme. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on OA-based youth development programmes to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon of reintegration after intensive residentially-based programme participation. The chapter also outlines the existing knowledge on the reintegration (sometimes termed reentry or transition) experiences of young people observed in similar reintegration contexts. It also accentuates the significance of reintegration and its role in sustaining positive youth outcomes.

3.1 Youth Adventure Programming

Despite the commonalities between adventure-based programmes, the youth development field employs numerous interventions with slightly different terminology including OA interventions (Bowen et al., 2016), adventure programming (Miles & Priest, 1999), adventure-based programming (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011; Sibthorp et al., 2007) OA programmes (Garst, Scheider, & Baker, 2001), OA camps, adventure education (Hattie et al., 1997; Prouty, Panicucci, & Collinson, 2007), adventure therapy (Kimball & Bacon, 1993; Neill, 2003),

wilderness therapy (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994; Russell, 2001) wilderness adventure therapy (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994; Crisp & O'Donnell, 1998) and bush adventure therapy (Pryor, Carpenter, & Townsend, 2005).

Deane and Harré (2014b) amalgamated the existing research on adventure-based youth programmes with therapeutic and nontherapeutic components and proposed a youth adventure programming (YAP) model. This model integrates the common critical features, experiential learning cycle, moderating factors and potential participant outcomes observed in adventure-based youth programmes. Deane and Harré's (2014b) YAP model highlights the three critical programmatic features of adventure programmes that appear to influence positive outcomes: 1) a novel physical environment, 2) challenging and attainable activities with authentic and clear consequences, and 3) an intensive and supportive small group social setting. The literature shows that a range of positive outcomes can result from participation in OA programmes, including cognitive and behavioural competency, development of moral character, strong relationships with adults and peers, a strong sense of identity, empathy, and contributions to self and others (Deane & Harré, 2014b; Kartoshkina, 2015).

Nature-based OA programmes promote youth well-being and physiological and psychological health (Deane & Harré, 2014b; Shaw et al., 2015; Sklar et al., 2007). OA programmes provide real-life intensive experiences that remove young people from their normal settings for a period of time (the duration varies according to each programme). This provides a novel environment away from family, peers and school. Wilderness activities fulfil the human need for excitement, challenge and stimulation (Sklar et al., 2007). Researchers have found that the unfamiliar nature of the atmosphere and activities creates a team spirit among the group members. The level of engagement in the outdoor experience increases social cohesion, social competence and self-identity (Shaw et al., 2015). Adventure programmes have common features such as wilderness or backcountry environments, small group size, physically and mentally challenging tasks, team-based tasks involving life skills, trained staff to support the group and a duration of 2 to 4 weeks. OA programmes can also help young people change their perceptions of their world and improve their admiration for the natural environment (Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).

Although the evidence on nature-based outdoor programmes suggests they have the potential to result in numerous positive outcomes, one of the areas that needs consideration is the involvement of families in the implementation and design of outdoor activities (Duerden &

Witt, 2010; Shaw et al., 2015). This is because, in the context of an intensive wilderness adventure, young people who undergo exhausting physical activities naturally experience change, and they rely on parents and caregivers, as their significant source of external support, for guidance in relation to further support. Involvement of parents in youth programmes is also considered best practice (Catalano et al., 2004; Duerden & Witt, 2010) but more studies are required to understand how to facilitate the transferral of positive outcomes gained during programmes to young participants' home experiences (Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).

3.2 Residential-Based Youth Programmes and Reintegration

Residential OA programmes, in particular, provide authentic intensive experiences because they remove young people from their normal life for a period of time. This provides a novel atmosphere and break from their family, peer and school settings. The remote settings disconnect participants from external influences and encourage autonomy (Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011). The new atmosphere can generate a team spirit among the group members due to the unfamiliar nature of the atmosphere and the activities, which generally require team work. The level of engagement and independence in the outdoor experience can also increase social cohesion, social competence and self-identity (Shaw et al., 2015).

The design and delivery of residential youth development programmes aim to unplug young people from their comfortable zone and place them in a novel setting which physically, mentally, emotionally and socially engages young people along with their peers in a group. Residential youth programmes such as adventure-based camps, expeditions and overseas service learning provide extensive intensive experiences with responsibilities and enable young people to make their own decisions which result in high levels of ownership in the programme (Allison & Wurdinger, 2007; Jansen, 2004; Stott, Allison, Felter, & Beames, 2015). Numerous research studies (Deane & Harré, 2014b; Deeley, 2010; Dettweiler et al., 2015; Kartoshkina, 2015; Sibthorp, Bialeschki, Morgan, & Browne, 2013) have demonstrated that structured intensive experiential programmes can have positive effects on the personal growth of the individuals involved. However, most studies focus on short-term effects and there are still questions about whether the effects are sustained. PYD programmes underpinned by RDS metatheory highlight the reciprocal interaction between the individual and context which results in positive outcomes for young people. Thus environmental influences and changes must also be considered, given the importance of a young person's ecology in their development. Indeed, a research study conducted by Durlak et al. (2007) argues that PYD is

ameliorated when the environments external to the intervention are supportive and provide opportunities for youth to practise their newly learned competencies. Conversely, the developmental gains acquired by youth from participation in youth development programmes may be compromised if they do not encounter positive and supportive families, peers, and communities outside of the programme experience.

Lack of parental awareness about and orientation to residential youth development programmes complicate reintegration experiences (Kartoshkina, 2015). Thus the reintegration of young people into their family context following participation in a residential youth programme requires greater consideration (Deane & Harré, 2014b; Duerden & Witt, 2010; Shaw et al., 2015). However, limited research focuses on reintegration processes following participation in intensive youth residential programmes. Though studies exist on the positive outcome of short-term residential-based programmes such as youth camps, OA and overseas service learning, little research has been done regarding the reintegration process. A successful reintegration process should facilitate learning transfer in the post-intervention environment to empower participants to apply their newly learned skills in their daily life (Furman & Sibthorp, 2013b; Shellman, 2011). More studies are needed to better understand what facilitates the reintegration of youth back into their normative environment and the transfer of positive outcomes gained during the programme to the young participants' daily life.

3.3 Reintegration After an Intensive Residential PYD Programme

Overall, very few studies have been conducted that explore the reentry aspects of the youth after an intensive youth development intervention. The process of reintegration consists of both "bitter and sweet" experiences (Kartoshkina, 2015, p. 38). However most research studies only highlight the bitter side of the reentry aspects (Allison et al., 2012; Dettweiler et al., 2015; Kartoshkina, 2015) A qualitative study conducted by Dettweiler et al. (2015) addressed the alien feeling of German students at home after a 6-month-long expeditionary learning programme on the high seas with intercultural encounters in Cuba and Costa Rica. In this study the term *reintegration narratives* is used to represent the multitude of experiences the youth underwent when they returned home after the expedition. Reintegration after participation in a youth development programme that removes participants from their everyday environment is likely to be similar to the concept of "reversed culture shock" (Dettweiler, 2015, p. 73). "Expedition reverse culture shock," a term introduced by Allison et al., (2012), elucidates the reentry experiences of youth. His study highlighted three major features associated with reverse

culture shock following an expedition: a sense of isolation, extending the lessons of the group, and using the group as a compass for future. The majority of sojourners from Allison's study experienced a feeling of isolation and they were not able to express their experience to their family and friends because the people around them were not able to grasp the intensive experiences the youth underwent. Young participants continued to practise the lessons learned from the exposure in their daily life. Some of the lessons involved interacting with others in a different way. The expedition exposure also helped them to make decisions about their future.

The reintegration narratives captured by Dettweiler (2015) reveal relatively similar features. Soon after their arrival from a voyage to the Caribbean young participants were excited about being home. But the excitement turned into depression before they were able to recover and adjust to the new situation. They reportedly missed their second family (the expedition group). They felt as though nothing had changed at home and they became bored with the situation. The disinterest from family members and teachers and envy from friends were some of the points highlighted by the participants. An explorative survey conducted among adult staff facilitating an Australian-based OA programme (Lawrence-Wood & Raymond, 2011) identified both feelings of pride and achievement, and feelings of loss or having their minds drawn back to their experiences when they returned to their home environment. According to Kartoshkina (2015), the negative symptoms of reentry or reintegration are accompanied by words such as problematic, difficult, shocking, grieving, painful and traumatic and the positive side of reentry experiences include feelings of excitement, happiness, relief and comfort. However, there is scant data available with regard to positive aspects of reintegration experiences of participants involved in multi-component PYD programmes.

3.4 Concept of Reintegration from Various Contexts

The term *reintegration* is widely used in numerous contexts including OA programmes and expeditions, cross-cultural contexts, military assignments, out-of-home care or foster-care services, detention or incarceration contexts, and in the context of hospitalisation. In most of the literature the term reintegration is used interchangeably with *reentry* and *repatriation*. The majority of research related to reintegration is from a cross-cultural context, tourism and education fields (Szkudlarek, 2010). The phenomenon of reintegration can therefore be examined from diverse domains. Reintegration is used as a relational metaphor for reconnecting intimacies in the context of addiction. In other words, reintegration can be understood as the process of re-establishing oneself in one's social world (Adams, 2008). In a

similar fashion, reintegration in a hospitalisation setting is defined as the reorganisation of physical, psychological and social characteristics of an individual into a harmonious system followed by an illness and hospitalisation (Wood-Dauphinee & Williams, 1987). On the other hand, reintegration in the context of child soldiers' assignment can be explicated as a complex series of interlinked processes through which people who have endured distinct experiences initiate renegotiation to rebuild their life to their living environment (Özerdem & Podder, 2011). Yet another level of cross-cultural context, the notion of sojourner reentry refers to the complex transitional process of returnees after intensive experiences abroad (Pitts, 2016). Reintegration in the context of detention or incarceration of youth is defined as the reentry into community life as a whole contributing productive person (Anthony et al., 2010). This means acceptance of the person as a member of the community is required. It is also referred to as a process of re-entering society after a term of incarceration.

Reintegration is a complex phenomenon which is experienced by diverse groups. A significant literature review conducted in the recent past systematised the existing knowledge on cross-cultural reentry and provided an overview of the repatriation or reintegration phenomenon in cross-cultural contexts. The cross-cultural reintegration concept encompasses different groups who spent significant time overseas and includes students, corporate expatriates, service-learning volunteers, and returning migrants (Szkudlarek, 2010). A recent systematic literature study (Szkudlarek, 2010) highlighted the significance and concerns related to the reintegration phenomenon and pointed out that it should be considered as a priority issue considering the challenges faced by sojourners. Reintegration processes in the context of cross- culture experiences comprise of three aspects. This includes affective, cognitive and behavioural aspects. The affective aspects consist of the cultural shock and reverse cultural shock; cognitive streams including the re-entry expectations and adaptation challenges; and behavioural aspects which indicate the transformation during the transition (Szkudlarek, 2010). The reintegration paradigm of incarcerated youth includes the challenges for youth transitioning from a residential setting to a community setting, which are depicted as anxiety producing and exhilarating or both (Altschuler & Brash; 2004).

3.5 Components of Reintegration Process in Residential-Based Youth Development Programme

In this section, the components of the reintegration process are discussed based on the literature related to areas of youth development programming including youth OA and expedition-

orientated programmes, youth camps, and youth overseas service learnings. The post intervention encompasses the affective aspects of the psychological well-being of the young people after the intervention. During this phase, the young people experience positive and negative emotional turbulence, place attachment, feelings of isolation, missing their second family, boredom, feelings of pride and achievement, envy from friends and disinterest from family, and cultural shock (Kartoshkina, 2015). Sudden immersion into their old culture can disconcert an individual and change ordinary behaviours, putting them in a state of cultural shock as mentioned above.

Generally, cultural shock is explained in the context of travelling from country to country. However, feeling out of place in a new and unfamiliar situation is also considered cultural shock (Fabrizio & Neill, 2005). Culture shock describes the personal disorientation a person may feel when they experience an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or visiting a new country or a change in their social environment. The experts in the discipline of cross-cultural reintegration introduced the theoretical framework of the cultural shock model (U curve) and the reverse cultural shock model (W curve) to conceptualise the psychological consequences of an expatriate's reentry (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960; Szkudlarek, 2010). The U curve model of cultural shock comprises four phases for intercultural sojourn as: (1) euphoria, positive excitement about a new environment; (2) cultural shock caused by unexpected, generally negative experiences in a novel environment; (3) acculturation, the learning process of adaptation to a new environment; and (4) the stable state in which adaptation or acculturation is successfully achieved (Szkudlarek, 2010). The W curve of the reverse cultural shock model is an extension of U curve model, repeating the same four stages of the U curve model on return to the home country. However, a few critiques were voiced against the W curve model and the cyclical curve model for multiple transition repatriates was introduced (Chaban, Williams, Holland, Boyce, & Warner, 2011; Onwumechili, Nwosu, Jackson, & James-Hughes, 2003; Szkudlarek, 2010). The expedition reverse cultural shock (ERCS) model introduced by Allison et al., (2012), emphasised the reintegration experience after an expedition. Ulrich Dettweiler's (2015) model provided empirical evidence to ERCS model based on the experiences of youth involved in an overseas expedition.

As already mentioned, after an intensive residential programme, young people experience positive and negative upheaval. According to Kartoshkina (2015), the negative symptoms of

reentry or reintegration are accompanied by words such as problematic, difficult, shocking, grieving, painful and traumatic, and the positive side of reentry experiences include feelings of excitement, happiness, relief and comfort (Kartoshkina, 2015). She has described the post-course adjustment or post-trip adjustment as bitter-sweet experiences. However, most research studies only highlight the bitter side of the reintegration aspects (Allison et al., 2012). An international volunteer who returned to Australia after her service learning in a developing country found her reintegration period most challenging, more difficult than the cultural shock she faced in her host country. The volunteer experienced mixed feelings ranging from anxiety, stress, guilt, sadness, joy and excitement, relief and grief. These were felt while leaving her new close friends, both local and fellow volunteers. She found it difficult when her family and friends did not show an interest in her experience and debriefing (Esslinger, 2005).

Most young people experience an attachment towards their location or place of the intervention. Place attachment is "defined as the link people develop to specific environments, where they have a tendency to feel safe and at ease" (Turley & Goldenberg, 2013 p. 97). This can also be understood as *place identity* and *place dependence*. It is similar to the identification with a group, defined by a location. This attachment takes time to develop and it is difficult to explain how these bonds are formed. These attachments towards the place and experience resulted in feelings of loss among the returnees. The reintegration narratives introduced in other recent research (Dettweiler et al., 2015) reveal relatively similar features. Soon after their arrival from a voyage to the Caribbean, young participants were excited about being home. But the excitement turned into depression before they were able to recover and adjust to the new situation. They reportedly missed their second family (the expedition group; Dettweiler et al., 2015). An exploratory survey conducted with adult staff facilitating an Australian-based youth WA programme also identified both feelings of pride and achievement, and feelings of loss or having their minds drawn back to their experiences when participants returned to their home environment (Lawrence-Wood & Raymond, 2011). The expedition returnees felt as though nothing had changed at home and a sense of boredom ensued. In similar fashion, the majority of sojourners from the UK experienced a feeling of isolation and they were not able to express their experience to their family and friends because the people around them were not able to grasp the intensive experiences the youth underwent (Allison et al., 2012). Most of the Appalachian Trail (AT) thru-hikers expressed that others were unable to relate to the thru-hikers' experiences (Turley & Goldenberg, 2013). During the post-intervention period they missed their contact with nature, physical exertion, the AT thru-hiker community and the

simplicity of life on the AT. Hikers also experienced cultural shocks; the environment they returned to felt as though it was new. Returning home created stress on their cognitive being, forcing them to adapt with places, norms, values and language. They also experienced some level of depression or sadness during their process of readjustment. They experienced loneliness, boredom and dark feelings.

Reintegration experiences also involve adaptation processes. The adaptation process comprises the cognitive aspects of the reintegration process. The cross-cultural reentry model introduced by Betina Szkudlarek (2010) emphasised the cognitive aspects of the reentry process with two theoretical frameworks: an expectation model (Adler, 1981; Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992) and a cultural identity model (Sussman, 2000). The adaptation phase consolidates the common reintegration features of reentry expectations and confrontations of young people: identity crisis and difficulties adapting to the existing environment. The AT thru-hikers revealed that they had difficulty with the readjustment process and experienced personal changes. The majority of the thru-hikers experienced readjustment to social expectations, in which thru-hikers were pressured to act a particular way. They also expressed difficulties in functioning within the structured setting of normal life (Turley & Goldenberg, 2013). Likewise, the international service volunteer expressed that her family and friends, who had been eager to see her return, went back to their normal routine and expectations (Esslinger, 2005). The intensive experience had changed the meaning of friendship, family relationships, personal goals, work and study as the result of a reassessment of her values. Some of the relationships were strengthened and others were weakened. She expected others to be the same, while they expected her to be the same. She found it difficult to redefine her personal goals and social networks. The most challenging factor was learning to realign herself into an old environment when she had experienced an inner transformation (Esslinger, 2005). The inner transformation experienced by young people during an intensive experience which yields behavioural changes in their day-to-day life, is referred to as the *transition process*.

3.6 Transfer of Learning

The seminal work carried out by Jim Sibthorp and colleagues (Furman & Sibthorp, 2013a, 2013b; Sibthorp & Morgan, 2011; Sibthorp et al., 2013; Sibthorp et al., 2015; Sibthorp, Furman, Paisley, Gookin, & Schumann, 2011; Sibthorp & Jostad, 2014; Sibthorp et al., 2008) illuminated the phenomenon of learning transfer and its mechanisms following participation in OA programmes. During this period of reintegration, young people attempt to apply the

learnings into their life concurrently with readjusting and readapting into the social environment. The application and usage of learning after a programme completion is termed *transfer* in adventure education (Sibthorp et al., 2008). “Transfer of learning is the process by which a person utilises what is learned in one setting or situation in subsequent situations” (Daniel et al., 2010 p. 39). “The concept of transference is an integral part of the WA experience, though this part of the experience takes place after the actual experience has ended” (Paxton & McAvoy, 2000 p. 203).

As discussed in the previous chapter, young people often experience numerous positive outcomes after an intensive residential programme. A recent systematic literature review thematically analysed 35 overseas youth expeditions and categorised the personal development associated with the programme as *upward*, *downward*, *inward* and *outward growth* (Allison et al., 2012). Upward outcomes associated with overseas youth expedition participation include personal growth such as increased confidence, physical and social resilience, self-reliance, and the ability to overcome challenges; outward outcomes include learning to relate to others; inward outcomes include self-learning and awareness; and downward outcomes include learning about the environment (Stott et al., 2015). The positive outcomes derived from the AT included hikers being motivated towards making other long-term goals such as to taking up travel and adventure, developing their career goals and taking on physical challenges. (Turley & Goldenberg, 2013). In the same way, the UK overseas expedition youth also shared that they continued to practise the lessons learned from the exposure in their daily life, extending the lessons of the group, and using the group as a compass for the future (Allison et al., 2012). The youth volunteer from Australia was determined to start a new challenge and to make use of her experience in her home country (Esslinger, 2005).

3.7 Factors that Facilitate or Impede Reintegration

In order to sustain the positive outcomes gained during the exposure, young people need contextual support post intervention. A recent study found that transferrable long-lasting outcomes are closely related to a variety of transfer mechanisms related to different programme components including: learner characteristics, intervention design and delivery characteristics and application of learning in the post-intervention environment (Sibthorp et al., 2011). Hence it is significant to identify the factors which enable or hamper the reintegration process.

The reintegration process of young people is different from that of adults even if they undergo the same intensity of exposure (Lawrence-Wood & Raymond, 2011). Because young people undergo development trajectories of young adulthood along with their reintegration process, it is imperative to identity the factors that facilitate the reintegration process. For example, significant differences are observed in the reintegration process of young incarcerated youth compared to adults due to the transition changes of young adulthood (Mears, 2004). A study related to the reintegration process of children after their psychiatric hospitalisation identified four major barriers: internal experience or perceptions of young people, parental experiences and perception, peer attitude and reaction, and teachers' attitude and reaction during their reentry period (Savina, Simon, & Lester, 2014). The core concept of PYD revolves around developmental system theory (Overton, 2010) and ecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Duerden & Witt, 2010) where systems or ecology are an integral element of youth development. PYD interventions generally promote individual change by working directly with youth. However, environmental influences and changes must also be considered, given the importance of a young person's ecology in their development. Indeed, a research study conducted by Durlak et al. (2007) argues that PYD is enhanced when the environments external to the intervention are supportive and provide opportunities for youth to practise their newly learned competencies.

To sustain the outcomes initiated during intensive youth development programmes, youth need to be surrounded by a supportive environment when they return (Kartoshkina, 2015). Harmonising with the system around the young people will smoothen the transition process (Wood-Dauphinee & Williams, 1987). When young people undergo intensive challenging activities, they naturally experience change, and this may impact the family system when they return. Most of the young people identified a lack of interest from their parents as one of the barriers for their reintegration process. Additionally, the post-trip communication gap between programme and parents was identified as an extreme barrier. Parents' lack of knowledge and understanding about the intensive intervention is considered a stumbling block for young people (Sklar & Anderson, 2006). Hence parents or guardians need to be better prepared to face the reintegration process of their children if they are not involved in the youth intervention. Half of the AT thru-hikers did not experience depression during their reintegration process, as a result of having strong family support (Turley & Goldenberg, 2013). Having a strong social support network with parents, friends and community is identified as a catalyst for the reintegration process (Casey et al., 2010). An overseas youth volunteer revealed that debriefing

her experience with others and continuing her voluntary service in the local community facilitated her reintegration process and her realignment as a transformed person. Informal networking with former alumni of the programme can be another opportunity for young people to share their unique experiences (Esslinger, 2005). Mentoring is identified as a positive moderating factor for repatriate adjustment of cross-cultural reentry of young people (Wu, Zhuang, & Hung, 2014). In a similar way, mentoring has been ascertained as a promising strategy for the successful transition of young offenders into their community (Abrams, Mizel, Nguyen, & Shlonsky, 2014). Proactive engagement of young people in the community beyond their intensive experience could be one other solution to smooth the reintegration process (Brown, 2010).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the concepts and process of reintegration in the context of youth development programmes. It has identified the gap existing in the youth development literature which strengthens the significance of the current research. Chapters 5 and 6 present the case study evidence from Phase 1 and Phase 2 data analysis respectively. The comprehensive empirical evidence from research participants provides an in-depth understanding of the reintegration process, the differences over a period and also outlines the contextual factors that promote and impede the reintegration process and learning transfer. It also contributes to improving the knowledge to support youth and staff to ensure sustainable positive outcomes and long-term impacts generated by the youth development programmes.

Chapter 4 – Research Methodology

Introduction

The main objective of the study was to explore the reintegration experiences of young people when they return home after participating in a 21-day OA as part of a PYD programme (the WA component of Project K). As mentioned in Chapter 1, a qualitative methodology was employed to identify the subjective meaning and reintegration experience of the participants from Project K which was identified as the case or unit of analysis. Case study design (discussed in more detail below) was used to examine the process and reintegration experience of Project K youth participants and the perspectives of their parents and of key informants who have worked as part of the Project K programme run by Graeme Dingle Foundation. The following sections introduce the research methodology in detail including research paradigms, the choices of design, and methods of data collection, sampling and data analysis.

4.1 Research Paradigms

In social science research, the term *paradigm* refers to an accepted philosophy of research. It outlines the nature of social reality and refers to "the entire way of looking at the (social) world" (Davidson & Tolich, 1999, p. 26). A paradigm can also be considered a research orientation and influences the ontology, epistemology and methodological decisions. *Ontology* refers to beliefs about the nature or beliefs of reality (what is reality?); *epistemology* is the relationship between the researcher and what is to be known (how do you know something?) and *methodology* is the way of carrying out research or discovering knowledge in a systematic way (how do you go about finding out what is known?) (Killam, 2013).

While different paradigmatic perspectives exist in social science research, the researcher used qualitative research grounded in constructionism and interpretivism. The main objective of the research was to understand the reintegration experiences of the Project K participants and the perceptions of parents and key informants. Given this context, constructionism was the best option to capture the multiple realities of young people, parents and key informants.

An interpretivist epistemology emphasises that "knowledge is socially constructed rather than objectively determined" (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2001 p. 18). In an interpretivist paradigm, the researcher attempts to interact and observe people in a natural setting to gain an in-depth subjective understanding of research participants' lives (Rubin, 2014). The researcher

attempted to discover and understand how young people experienced the reintegration process and how parents and key informants perceived the phenomenon in their subjective world. An interpretivist paradigm underlines that social reality is incomplete without considering the participants' subjective interpretation (Rubin, 2014). Researchers aligning with an interpretivist paradigm consider participants to be more knowledgeable than the researcher (Sanders & Munford, 2005). Relationships with participants are part of the process of generating sound research knowledge. Hence the current research provided opportunities for the young people and their parents and key informants to actively participate in and meaningfully contribute to the research by sharing important information about reintegration experiences.

A review of PYD research revealed that most of the existing research on youth development has applied traditional quantitative data collection and analysis techniques (Barcelona & Quinn, 2011). However, more recently, studies have begun to emphasise the significance of qualitative research methods in the youth development field to advance the understanding of effective youth development (Arbeit, Hershberg, Rubin, Desouza, & Lerner, 2016; Fox, 2016; Futch Ehrlich, 2016; Futch Ehrlich, Deutsch, Fox, Johnson, & Varga, 2016; Griffith, 2016; Katsiaficas et al., 2016; Lerner & Tolan, 2016; Zaff et al., 2016). Qualitative research is envisaged as a crucial method to elucidate the youth voice and to extract contextual aspects. As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the current research was broadly formulated in a relational development systems (RDS) metatheory framework (Lerner et al., 2019; Mueller et al., 2011; Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007) which underscores the bidirectional relationship between young people and their environment. Lerner and Tolan (2016) argued that qualitative research methods are significant to bring forth an in-depth understanding of the bidirectional nature of interactions between young people and their environment (Futch Ehrlich, 2016).

Qualitative methods assist the researcher to investigate in-depth understandings and the meaning of PYD processes within the context of the lived experience of youth. "Rigorous, research-based case studies of successful youth programs, settings or contexts can provide useful best-practices models that could possibly be replicated elsewhere" (Barcelona & Quinn, 2011, p. 35). Additionally, qualitative research allows the researcher to investigate the topic from the participant's point of view and not the researcher's perspective. In this context, a case study design was identified as the most suitable. Figure 4.1 depicts an overview of the research methodology.

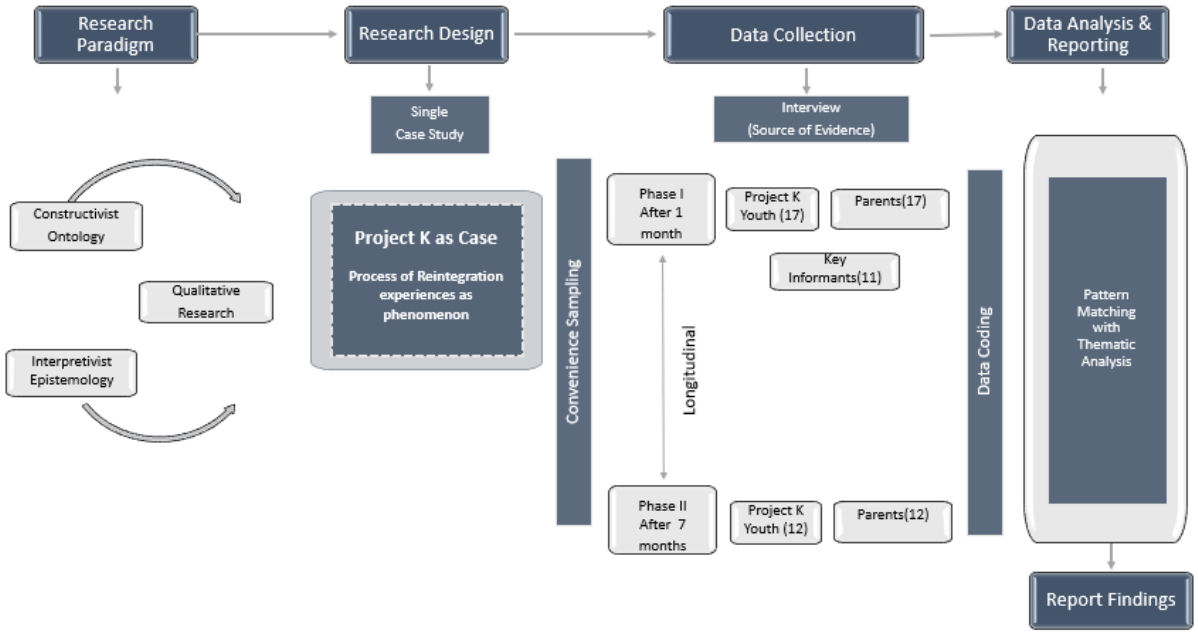

Figure 4.1. Overview of the research methodology.

4.2 Case Study Design

The case study is an "all-encompassing" (Yin, 2014, p. 17) formula which is applicable to diverse epistemological orientations. Thus, it is also appropriately applied within the interpretivist and constructivist paradigm. Even though there are several experts (Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2000; Hancock, 2006; Merriam, 2016) in case study research, Robert Stake's (1995) and Robert Yin's (2006) case study models are widely used among researchers. This study followed Yin's (2014) approach. According to him, "case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16).

According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) a case is "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (p. 28). A case is also known as a *unit of analysis* and the subject of the case study is considered a *phenomenon* (Yin, 2014). The case can be determined by asking what the researcher wants to *analyse* – i.e., an individual or a programme or a process or an organisation (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Therefore, the researcher identified Project K as the

case or unit of analysis. The process of the reintegration experience was considered the contemporary phenomenon.

The phenomenon of the research needs to be intrinsically bounded, otherwise it cannot be considered as a case (Merriam, 2016). Furthermore, a case study is applied to a situation in which the study phenomenon and context is interwoven. The research was conducted in the context wherein the youth participants successfully completed their 21 days of a WA programme before returning to their normal daily life. Contextual conditions are inseparable and significant to the research. Yin (2014) makes it clear that "The boundary between a case and its context may not be sharp because real-world affairs do not readily fall into clear-cut categories" (p. 214). For instance, to understand the process of reintegration, the researcher examined information about the young participants' family, school and peer environments. At times, it was impossible for the researcher to separate their reintegration experiences from their contexts. However, case study research accommodates this kind of vagueness – one of the strengths of the case study design (Yin, 2014).

Case study design also accentuates a holistic approach (Yin, 2014) and thus was selected because it enabled the researcher to explore how young people dealt with their real-world environment. Moreover, it enhanced the researcher's exploration of the facilitating factors of the contextual environment that influenced the young people's reintegration process, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Over and above the experiences of the young people, the research also explored the perspectives of parents and key informants regarding the young participants' reintegration process. The perspectives and observation on reintegration experiences varied from parents and key informants but, together, gave a holistic view of the process of reintegration.

According to Yin (2014, 2018), there are four types of case studies which can be applied to any case study research. They are Type 1, single case (holistic); Type 2, single case (embedded); Type 3, multiple case (holistic) and Type 4, multiple case (embedded). These four types of case studies are based on the contextual conditions in relation to number of cases, number of units of analysis and embeddedness (Yin, 2014). The Type 1 case study follows a holistic approach with a single case. The Type 2 case study involves a single case with multiple units of analysis. On the other hand, Type 3 case study includes the same case study with units of analysis at more than one level. The Type 4 design involves multiple case studies with multiple units of analysis (Yin, 2014). In this study, a single-case (holistic), Type 1 design was used because

this type of design is “advantageous when no logical subunits can be identified or when the relevant theory underlying the case study itself of a holistic in nature” (Yin, 2014, p. 55). Even though the Project K programme encompasses three components, namely the WA, community challenge, and mentoring, the research focused only on reintegration experiences after the WA. Thus, there were no logical subunits of Project K included in the current research. Additionally, the research explored the process of reintegration experiences of youth wherein young people were the only participants in the WA. However, their reintegration experience was holistic in nature, especially as the boundary between their experience and context was not clearly evident. Considering the holistic nature of the reintegration phenomenon, the study also explored the perspectives of parents and key informants even though they were not part of the WA.

The researcher also decided to select Project K as a single case based on the rationale suggested by Yin (2014). He argued that a single case study design can be used when having “a critical, unusual, common, revelatory or longitudinal case” (p. 51). The researcher decided to select Project K as a single case based on two rationales: common and longitudinal circumstances (Yin, 2014). The logic behind selecting a case as common is that the phenomenon of reintegration experience investigated in this study is common to all the residential-based OA youth development programmes. Single case study allowed the researcher to build knowledge on the existing theory of PYD.

The second rationale for single-case design was the longitudinal nature of the research. The case was studied at two different points in time to examine the phenomena under investigation and their changes over a period of time. The research explored the changes in reintegration experiences over a period. Thus, two phases of data collection were employed. Data was first collected approximately one month after Project K youth returned to their normal environment from the WA, to explore the reintegration experience in the short term. The second phase was approximately six months after the first phase of data collection to explore changes in the process of reintegration over a longer period. Conversely, the perspectives of key informants were collected only once over the full data collection period at a time that was mutually convenient to them and the researcher. The key informants’ perspectives were collected to derive a holistic view from the key people who had participated or might have supported or observed the young people during the reintegration process; the key informants’ data did not require a time frame since they did not have lived experience with the Project K youth, unlike

their parents, to trace the difference between their experiences 1 to 6 months after the programme. Furthermore, the thesis employed a single case considering the common and longitudinal characteristics, which is possible only with single-case design (Yin, 2014). It is also most suitable for a single researcher. Multiple case studies may require additional resources beyond the capacity of a single student researcher (Yin, 2014).

4.3 Research Method and Data Collection

According to Yin (2014), "data" is referred to as "evidence" and the data collection methods are referred to as "sources of evidence" in the case study design, which may include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts. Data derived from different time points and units can also be considered "multiple sources of evidence" (Yin, 2014). Use of multiple sources of evidence is one of the principles of case study data collection to strengthen the construct validity and reliability of the data (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, multiple sources of evidence also enhance data triangulation (Bryman, 2016; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). "Triangulation entails using more than one method or sources of data in the study of social phenomena" (Bryman, 2016, p. 386) measures and increase confidence in the research findings. By considering the research purpose, availability of the resources and longitudinal nature of the research phenomena, the researcher identified interviews as the main source of evidence for the research.

Researchers commonly use interviews to derive evidence from participants in a case study (Yin, 2014). Interviewing allows the researcher to enter into the other person's perspective. "Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspectives of others are meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 2002. p. 341). Interviews provided the opportunity for participants to talk about their experience and perspectives. The researcher used a semi-structured interview method to collect the data or evidence from the participants. The semi-structured interview is identified as a qualitative data collection strategy that allows the researcher to ask the participants a series of predetermined and open-ended questions (Given, 2008). By using this technique, the researcher could follow a uniform pattern across the data collection but also had the freedom to explore the phenomenon according to each context. As discussed previously, the research evidence was enhanced by perspectives from Project K youth, parents and key informants on a single case study by carrying out a longitudinal data collection process.

4.4 Sampling and Recruitment

Sampling is one of many design choices in research. “There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 244). In qualitative research, more emphasis is given to detailed in-depth information rather than the quantitative aspects of the data source, seeking depth rather than breadth. Further, the majority of qualitative investigations use non-probability sampling (Strydom & Delport, 2011). In non-probability sampling, each sample unit in a population does not have equal opportunity to participate in the study (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport., 2011). Convenience sampling is one type of the non-probability sampling in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2010). In this sampling form, samples are chosen according to the convenience of the researcher (Yin, 2010). In this research, the selection of research participants was made according to convenience from two co-ed cohorts of Project K participants from two Auckland-region schools. Successful participation in the research required Project K youth and one of their parents to take part in the interview process.

Regarding the population for the research, every year around 12–14 schools take part in the Project K programme. From each school, 12 students participate in the 14-month programme. Approximatively, 168 young people graduate from Project K every year. Based on a convenience sampling approach, the researcher planned to invite 24 Project K participants and their parents from two schools in the Auckland region and a minimum of five key informants to participate in the research study. The researcher took an indirect approach to recruitment. Data collection preparation and recruitment procedures were carried out with the support of the Graeme Dingle Foundation which governs the Project K programme. To comprehend the complete data collection procedure, it is important to understand the preliminary recruitment process of Project K participants and the complex nature of the Graeme Dingle Foundation’s organisational structure which is delineated in Chapter 2.

The data collection preparation and procedures involved the participation of three units: (a) the Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Team, (b) the director of the community partner; (c) and the doctoral research team. A statement of collaboration described the mutual collaboration, roles and responsibilities of the Graeme Dingle Foundation and the researcher (see Appendix A). Following agreement, the Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation team approached the director of the Project K community partner that operates in the Auckland region to organise a meeting with the director of the community partner and the

researcher. The researcher discussed the project further with the community partner director and coordinators of the Project K programmes at two schools and provided them with an organisational information sheet outlining the support sought (see Appendix A).

The community partner director and the coordinators agreed to support the researcher with the recruitment of individual research participants. They invited the researcher to attend induction meetings held for Project K youth and their parents at two schools. The Graeme Dingle Foundation conducts induction meetings for Project K youth and their parents to provide programme orientation before their WA exposure as part of the programme. The Project K community partner, supported by the Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Team, provided an overview of the research to the youth and their parents during the induction meeting at two different schools. They also introduced the researcher to the participants and assisted the researcher to distribute participant information sheets (PIS) and assent forms for young participants who were all under 16 years of age, and consent forms for parents (see Appendices B and C) to permit their children to participate in the research study and to participate themselves. The researcher introduced the objectives of the research to the Project K participants and their parents and clarified any questions and concerns.

Out of 24 Project K youth and their parents invited from the two schools, 17 pairs (10 pairs of youth and parent from one school and seven pairs from other school) expressed their interest and consented or assented to participate. During the first phase of data collection 17 pairs of youth and parents participated in the data collection. In the second phase of data collection, 12 pairs out of 17 took part in the research. The researcher provided the option for both parents to take part in a joint interview if they were willing to participate together. Two pairs of parents took up the opportunity during the second phase of data collection.

Regarding the recruitment of key informants as research participants, the director of the community partner and the Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Team identified eligible key informants and contacted them about potential participation. The Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Team provided the researcher with a list of people who had expressed interest in participating in the research, and their contact details. The researcher contacted 11 potential key informants over the phone to discuss the study and schedule a time for an interview at a mutually convenient place and time. Key informant PISs and consent forms (see Appendix D) were given to the participants prior to commencing the interview. See Table 4.1 below for participants' demographic details.

Table 4.1

The Demographic Profile of the Research Participants for Phase 1 and Phase 2

Demographic Profile Youth Participants	**Phase 1**	**Phase 2**
Number of youth participants	17	12
Gender		
Male	8	5
Female	9	7
Ethnicity		
Māori	5	3
New Zealand European	4	3
Samoan	1	1
Tongan	2	2
Cook Island	1	0
Fijian Indian	1	1
Filipino	1	0
South African	2	2
Demographic Profile Parent Participants	**Phase 1**	**Phase 2**
Number of parent participants	17	14 (two pairs)
Father	1	1
Mother	15	8
Both parents	0	2
Caregiver other than biological parent	1	1
Demographic profile of Key Informants	**(No time frame)**	
Number of key informant participants	11	
Gender		
Male	3	
Female	8	
Programme Role		
Programme staff	6	
Mentor	3	
School liaison teacher	2	

4.5 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher developed three semi-structured interview schedules (see Appendices E, F, and G) reflecting a line of inquiry based on the review of literature. The youth interview schedule focused on their experiences at home after they returned from the WA and included questions regarding post-intervention adjustments as well as opportunities and challenges they faced to transfer their newly learned skills to their daily life. The parent interview schedule included questions about their experiences of their children's reintegration at home. This helped to explore the reintegration and post-intervention adjustments of the young participants from parents' points of view. Likewise, the key informant interview schedule focused on their perspectives and observations of Project K youth participants' reintegration experiences. The youth interview schedule was piloted with one young person who was similar in age to the Project K participants and made further refinements based on the pilot experience. All interviews were audio-recorded for ease of transcription and accuracy and reflections and thoughts were recorded after each interview as field notes to enhance the quality of the data (Yin, 2014). The youth from the two school cohorts participating in the research were inducted in March 2016 and they underwent the WA in April. The youth and parent interviews occurred approximately one month after the young people returned from the WA. Project K participants and their parents were interviewed separately so that their responses would remain confidential and this provided an opportunity for participants to speak freely about their experiences. Data collection of key informants was carried out in mid-2016.

Though it was planned to conduct the semi-structured interviews with youth and parents at a time and place of their convenience, the Graeme Dingle Foundation requested that the researcher conduct the first phase of interviews with youth and parents at school while both youth and parents were present for a mentor-matching meeting. Although it was a great opportunity to interview most of the research participants on the same day and at the same place, the interview conditions were not ideal as it was difficult to conduct the interviews in a private space and interview times were restricted to 20–40 minutes. Nine interviews were conducted under these conditions. Thus, the researcher expressed her concerns to the Graeme Dingle Foundation and the rest of the interviews were organised by consulting directly with the research participants at a convenient time and place. This timely change to the data collection process substantially improved the quality of interviews with interviews lasting a minimum of 60 minutes. In the same way, all interviews with the key informants were at a time and place of their convenience and lasted 40 minutes on average. Of the total interviews the

researcher also conducted four phone interviews according to the convenience of the research participants.

A second level of data collection was carried out approximately six to eight months after the first phase of data collection to identify the changes in the process of reintegration for the youth participants and their parents. The researcher prepared generic interview questions for the second phase of data collection. Tailor-made questions were also developed for each participant individually based on their responses during the first interview in order to trace the particular change they had experienced.

The researcher transcribed seven audio-recorded interviews verbatim and the remaining 62 transcripts were transcribed by an external contractor. All the transcribed interviews were sent to the participants for their feedback and approval. Participants were given the option of withdrawing their data within 2 weeks of receiving the research transcripts.

4.6 Data Analysis

According to Yin (2014), a general analytical strategy is needed. The strategy can be developed based on theory, working with the data from the ground up, or by developing a case description and examining rival explanations (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) also discusses different, mutually exclusive analytical techniques for data analysis in case study research, one of which is pattern matching. Pattern matching involves comparing predicted theoretical patterns against observed empirical patterns (Sinkovics, 2018). Pattern matching, in combination with thematic analysis, was used to analyse the data and this involved deductive and inductive analytical strategies. Thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative data analysis and helps the researcher to identify themes and patterns of meaning across the data set to address the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The researcher followed the six steps of thematic analysis recommended by Braun and Clarke (2013) including familiarisation with the data through reading and re-reading the transcripts, coding, generating initial themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the themes and writing up the analysis.

A case study database was created in NVivo software (Version 11) and the 69 transcribed interview scripts were uploaded to facilitate the data analysis process. Two stages of data analysis were followed. The purpose of first stage was to derive a comprehensive understanding of the reintegration experience of youth and perspectives of the parents one month after the youths' return from the WA intervention based on the data from the first phase

of data collection. The second stage of data analysis explored the differences in reintegration experiences of Project K youth over a period of 7 months based on data from the second phase of data collection. Although the key informant data were collected at any point over the full data collection period, matching concepts from the key informant data were triangulated with both the first and second stages of the data analysis process.

Pattern matching was first carried out by using NVivo's auto coding function. Auto coding involves automatically coding the data, as one way of familiarising oneself with the participants' responses (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). In this case, the researcher used the interview questions that were drawn from the literature. The auto coding technique in NVivo assisted the researcher to generate major patterns or themes informed by the interview questions in a deductive manner. As part of the initial data analysis process, all three research participant groups' data were auto coded separately. The researcher also carried out open coding in NVivo using thematic analysis to generate second level and third level themes. Open coding is a coding method that helps the researcher become familiar with the data and develop initial interpretations by searching the content from the participants' response (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). Figure 4.6 provides an overview of the data analysis process.

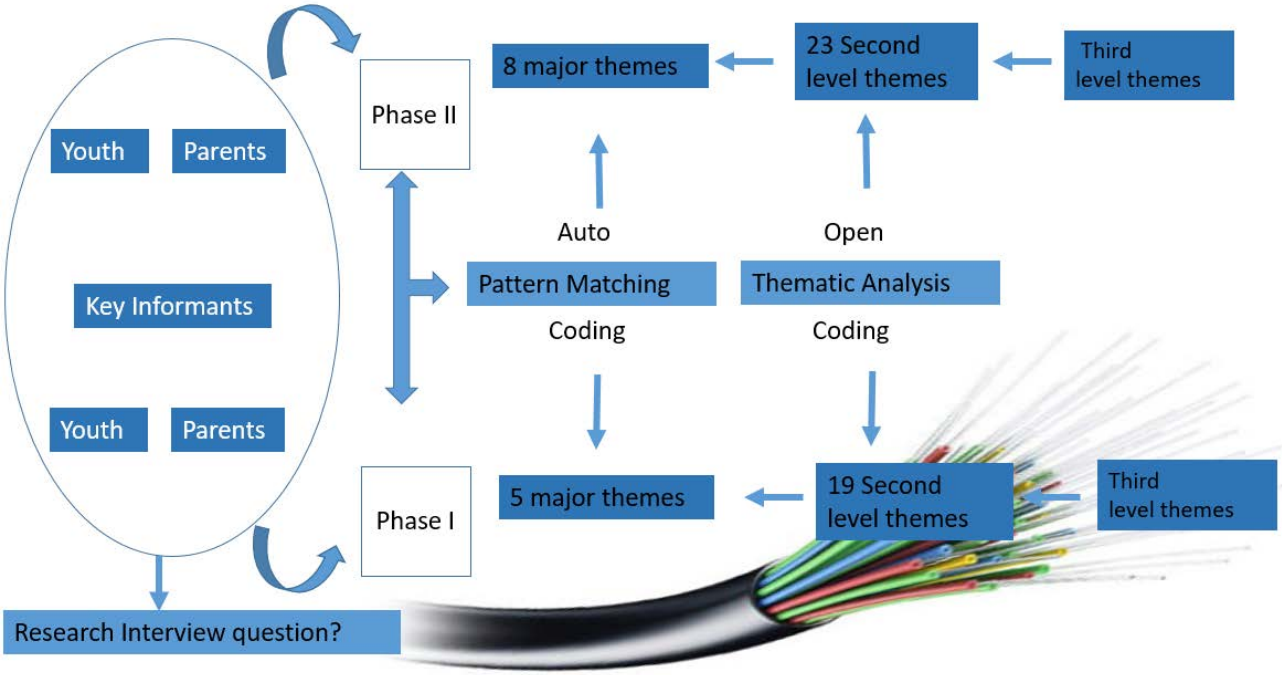

Figure 4.6. Overview of the data analysis process

4.6.1 First stage of data analysis.

The first layer of auto coding focused on data collected from the youth participants, followed by a second layer of auto coding conducted across the parents' data, while the third layer of auto coding involved the 11 interview scripts from the key informants. Through the auto coding process the researcher generated five major level themes: Preparation Mode, Memory Mode, Reaction Mode, Adaptation Mode and Transfer Mode from the first phase of data. These major themes were also reflective of the interview questions, which were deductively derived from the literature as per the auto coding process described above. This was then followed by the inductive thematic analysis, the open coding process which enabled the researcher to identify and generate third level and second level codes. This allowed identification of patterns and themes across the youth, parents' and key informants' coded data sets, which were grouped into 62 third-level themes under 19 second level themes. Third-level and second level themes were categorised under the five major themes mentioned above (see Appendix I and J for the NVivo visualisation of coding framework). This stage helped to develop a conceptual thematic framework of the process of reintegration as the case study's identified phenomenon. The five major themes and second level themes will be described in detail in Chapter 5 along with the conceptual thematic framework.

4.6.2 Second stage of data analysis.

Similar to the first stage of data analysis, the researcher completed auto coding and open coding using pattern matching and the six steps of thematic analysis for the second phase of data analysis focusing on the three different participant groups. With the help of auto coding, eight major themes were generated. Similarly, the second and third layers of open coding generated 23 second level themes and third level themes which were categorised under eight major themes. These will be described in detail in Chapter 6. The matching concepts from key informant data were triangulated with the youth and parents' data set.

The second stage of data analysis explored the differences in reintegration over a period of time. To capture the longitudinal differences in the phenomenon of reintegration, the researcher developed tailor made research questions for each participant to follow up on the specific or unique information they had shared during the first phase of data. Field notes were used to customise the semi-structured questions. Field notes are considered to be a type of evidence (Schwandt, 2007). Although there are no standards for the content or structure of field notes, they can be considered raw data developed in the field, based on the researcher's observations

or the conversations. This raw data may include rough diagrams, charts or list of words (Schwandt, 2007). The researcher colour coded list of words or sentences in the field notes to emphasise the concepts to be followed up during the second phase of data that were derived from the first phase of data analysis (See Appendix K for field notes examples). The data analysis review process also included discussions with research supervisors to verify the internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity of the themes. This helped to determine labels that appropriately captured the data extracts. The second stage of data analysis revealed the contextual factors that promoted and impeded the reintegration process, mainly during transfer mode. These are presented in detail in Chapter 6.

4.7 Reporting the Case Study

Writing the case study report is the last stage of case study research (Yin, 2009). The two stages of data analysis were used to organise the discussion of findings in Chapters 5 and 6. The first findings chapter delineates the conceptual thematic framework developed on the reintegration process which is supported with the narrative quotes from all three groups of research participants. Conversely, Chapter 6 reports on the changes and differences experienced and observed in the process of reintegration after 7 months. It also outlines the contextual factors that facilitated the reintegration process with narrative quotes from the second stage of data analysis.

4.8 Quality Criteria Followed in Case Study

Although case study is unique and distinctive in nature, as with any methodological choice, there are limitations (Bryman, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). It is important to consider the best techniques or strategies to improve the quality and robustness of the design. The following section elaborates on how the researcher ensured the quality of the case study despite the limitations and challenges. Yin (2014) suggests considering four aspects of the research design to strengthen the credibility of the research: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability.

4.8.1 Construct validity.

A construct validity test identifies the operational measures that match the concept under investigation. The test requires the researcher to follow two steps. The first step is to define the specific term under investigation and link it to the research objectives; the second step is to

identify similar operational measures that match the research concepts (Yin, 2014). The researcher justified the construct validity by forming an operational definition for the process of reintegration experience which is the research concept or phenomenon under investigation. She also identified similar operational measures that matched the concept from previous research and were included in the review of literature. One tactic which was applied to increase the construct validity is the use of multiple sources of evidence. The researcher incorporated triangulation of multiple data sources (youth, parents and key informants) to increase the construct validity.

4.8.2 Internal validity.

Though it is difficult to fully justify the internal validity in a case study, four analytical tactics are recommended to improve internal validity. These include pattern matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations and using logic models (Yin, 2014). The researcher used a pattern matching-based thematic analysis technique to analyse the data across the data set in an attempt to increase the internal validity of the study. Although the researcher used analytical strategy of working the data from the ground up, the findings also evidenced the patterns against the existing reintegration literature. However, in this research the internal validity is not justified as per Yin's (2014) pattern matching.

4.8.3 External validity.

The third test, external validity, is to define the generalisability of the study findings. For case study, statistical generalisation is less relevant than analytical generalisation (Bryman, 2016; Yin, 2014). This view is also known as *theoretical generalisation* (Bryman, 2016; Mitchell, 1983). Analytical generalisation aims to generalise the findings to concrete situations and not to build abstract theory (Yin, 2014). Analytical generalisations are framed based on:

> a) corroborating, modifying, rejecting or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts that you referenced in designing your case study or b) new concepts that arose upon the completion of your case study. (Yin, 2014, p. 41)

The analytical generalisations derived from the study findings are considered a conceptually higher level than the original theoretical proposition implied in the case study. Thus, external validity was strengthened by integrating theoretical propositions to formulate single case studies and augmenting the study designs with *how* and *why* questions to generate detailed data (Yin, 2014). PYD theory is used in the study design and adhered to the interview schedule while collecting the data to enhance the external validity. In order to strengthen the external

validity of the findings, the reintegration theoretical framework was connected to PYD literature. The researcher also discussed how the body of findings contributed to new knowledge about PYD settings which is outlined in chapter 7.

4.8.4 Reliability.

The final test, reliability, is meant to illustrate the trustworthiness and consistency of the data collection procedures. The background logic is that if an external researcher was to use the same data collection procedures, the same research findings should be produced. The objective is to reduce bias and mistakes in the research. Reliability issues can be surpassed by administering "case study protocols" and a "case study database" as case study tactics (Yin, 2014). The researcher created a case study database using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software NVivo version 11. The database encompassed all soft copies of the original audio recordings of interviews, finalised interview transcripts, field notes and all the processes of data analysis, including codes, nodes, memos, queries and findings, in a single file which could be readily retrieved and shared for further reference. Finally, the study under investigation secured approval from the University of Auckland Human Participant Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) which thoroughly scrutinised the research procedures according to UAHPEC protocols (see Appendix H).

4.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations emerge when human subjects are involved in the research (Yin, 2014). Gaining ethical approval is one of the important steps which need to be taken during the preparation process of the research. A good case study researcher ensures a high level of ethical standards (Yin, 2014). This project was approved by the UAHPEC. PISs were developed separately for research participants – Project K youth (Appendix B), their parents (Appendix C) and key informants (Appendix D). Assent forms for Project K youth participants (Appendix B) and consent forms for their parents (Appendix C) and key informants (Appendix D) were also prepared. All documents were developed in accordance with UAHPEC guidelines considering the aspects of voluntary participation, conflicts of interest and cultural sensitivity.

Chapter Summary

In summary, the case study design was chosen to explore the phenomenon of the reintegration process of the youth participants when they returned from the WA. Contemporary PYD research and literature emphasise the need to employ qualitative research to examine the

interaction or bidirectional relationship between the young persons and their context. The holistic case study research design enabled the researcher to develop in-depth understanding of the line of inquiry and also contributed to the theory-building process. Thematic analysis aided the conceptualisation of the reintegration process and related contextual factors. These are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 5 – Reintegration Experience – One Month After the Wilderness Adventure

Introduction

This chapter details the findings from the first phase of data collection which involved documenting participants' views on the WA, 1 month after the experience. As discussed in Chapter 4, five major themes were generated: 1) preparation, 2) memory, 3) reaction, 4) adaptation, and 5) transfer. These themes are referred to throughout as *modes* since participant reflections on the WA were expressed as a staged process before, during and after the WA. These modes are embedded within a reintegration process conceptual framework, as illustrated in Figure 5.1. The conceptual framework can be used to understand youth, parents' and key informants' perceptions of the reintegration process after the WA. Reintegration processes occurred within the participants' home and school contexts. Thus, all five modes are bounded within, and influenced by, the micro- and mesosystemic impacts on participants' lives. In Figure 5.1, the modes are the major themes and the description in the boxes are the subthemes (second level themes).

Preparation mode is the first aspect of the reintegration process. In order to fully comprehend the participants' reintegration experiences, it was necessary for the researcher to first ask Project K participants to reflect on their feelings, thoughts, observations or perceptions in the lead up to the WA. This involved asking youth participants and their parents, one month after their reentry into their familiar environments, to reflect on their experiences before participation. The second aspect of the reintegration process – memory mode – encapsulates Project K youth participants' reflections and feelings about their time during the WA, and information shared by parents about the youths' WA experiences. The third aspect of the reintegration process – reaction mode – captures the immediate experiences and reactions of youth participants and their parents immediately after their return from the WA. These were also linked to emotional upheavals of the participants. The next aspect of the reintegration process – adaptation mode – expands on findings related to the experiences of youth, and observations of their parents, in terms of the supports and difficulties faced, as well as how they coped with the changes over the month after they returned to their familiar environments from the WA. Transfer mode represents the final aspect of the reintegration process. Findings concerning personal growth and changes experienced by youth, or observed by parents and key

informants, after participating in the WA are understood through this mode. In addition, this mode of reintegration details how the youth participants succeeded or failed to transfer the skills learned from the WA into their day-to-day lives 1 month after reentry.

Taken together, these modes can be a means for understanding the retrospective processes (i.e., emotions, thoughts, feelings), of youth and their parents, associated with apprehensions from the past (before the WA), present (their lives after returning), as well as their continued application and future learning. However, where some modes represented how participants looked back to their pre-WA experiences (preparation mode), the transfer and adaptation modes placed a greater emphasis on the most recent experiences upon reintegration. Moreover, key informants' perceptions of the Project K youths' WA experiences and reintegration process are included in all five modes. As detailed in the previous chapters, the key informants' data were collected to triangulate the youth and parent data and to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the reintegration phenomenon.

Throughout this chapter, the introduction of each mode is followed by a description of the second-level themes that were identified based on similarities and differences in the data described under subheadings of each mode. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 4, each second-level theme was conceptualised from the third-level themes, which are italicised throughout the chapter and mentioned whenever relevant. Participant quotes have been embedded in each section as supporting evidence and were transcribed verbatim. Editorial comments are included in square brackets where additional explanation was required.

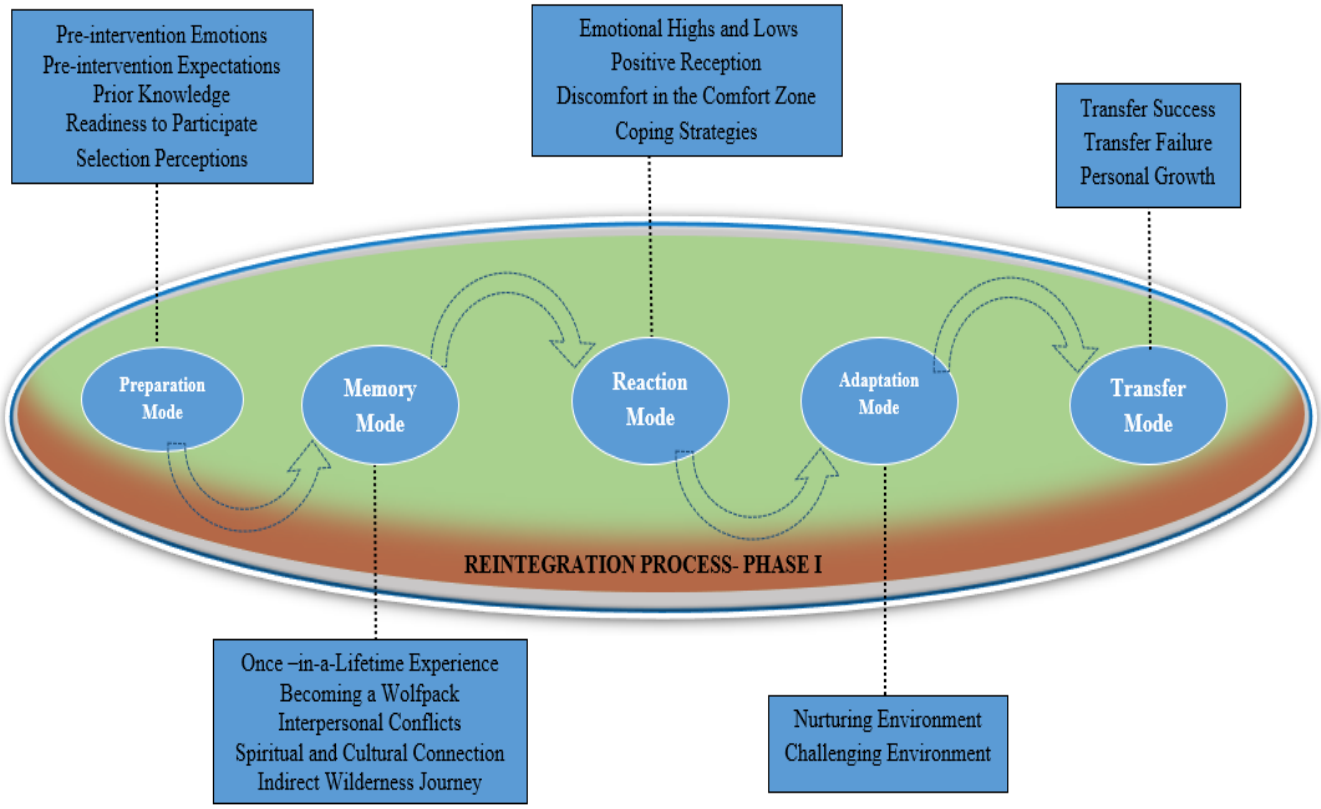

Figure 5.1. Conceptual thematic framework of Phase 1 reintegration experiences.

5.1 Preparation Mode

Preparation mode is the first aspect of the reintegration process. The researcher asked the youth participants and their parents to reflect on their experiences before participation. The participants' responses revealed that the youth and their parents had various expectations and experienced a bundle of emotions prior to the WA. Their emotions and expectations appeared to be associated with what they knew about the WA before they started. Their prior knowledge is also influenced by any prior connection they had to the programme and by the degree of understanding they obtained during the induction. These findings are described under five second-level themes identified within the preparation mode theme: 1) pre-intervention emotions, 2) pre-intervention expectations, 3) prior knowledge, 4) readiness to participate, and 5) selection process.

5.1.1 Pre-intervention emotions.

The subtheme pre-intervention emotions reflect the *mixture of emotions* experienced by youth and their parents prior to the WA. Youth responses from the Phase 1 data revealed that the

majority of the youth entered into the WA with a *mixture of emotions*. Some of them expressed these emotions as excitement, curiosity, anxiety, nervousness, and fear. The individual differences in their mixed emotions were generated by various aspects they anticipated would be associated with the WA, including novelty, fear of the unknown, undertaking an intensive and challenging experience, homesickness, and an unfamiliar environment. Many of the youth participants were worried about their survival in the new unfamiliar environment which would not include any amenities like Wi-Fi or other technology. Olivia (all names used are pseudonyms) claimed she overthought many aspects of the WA before she left, for instance "tents and stuff like the food, like the toilets and stuff. I don't know how it was going to be like." Moreover, the majority of them shared that they had never been away from home and their parents for 17 days. Some of them described themselves as an "indoor persons" who did not like outdoor activities. Conversely, a few of them were excited for the challenging experiences since they wanted to take up the adventure and have fun with friends. One of the youth participants shared that she looked forward to the WA to have a break from home.

Youth apprehensions were also caused by lack of friendships or relationships with the WA cohort, including the facilitators. Some of them were worried about the "fear of making mistakes" or being shouted at by facilitators and peers. The *mixture of emotions* can be seen from Liam's (youth participant) response:

> I was kind of nervous, just really like curious, wondering like what's going to happen, how I am going to enjoy it and stuff and how I was going to get on with everyone, yeah just really curious, yeah nervous, kind of sad leaving home, but really excited at the same time I was really pumped for the adventure.

Parents also encountered a similar *mixture of emotions* prior to their child's WA exposure. In contrast to the youth participants, many parents expressed positive emotions like happiness, excitement, and gratefulness. Many of the parents felt lucky for their children for receiving a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that most of them could not afford. However, some of them were anxious and concerned about the "safety and well-being" of their child. One of the parents expressed it as "bundle of things" which can be seen from Donna's response:

> I was nervous, I was excited, I was overwhelmed by it all but knew it would be something really, really cool for her to do and achieve and it was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of opportunity for her to explore this so yeah, I was really, really looking forward to it. I think that's what was more nerve-wracking.

Responses from key informants provided further clarity to the pre-intervention emotions and substantiated the youth and parents' responses. Many of the key informants revealed that the *mixture of emotions* varies according to individual characteristics, as well as youths' previous exposure to similar experiences. It can be seen from the following quote from one of the key informants Amber: "It can be huge … for some students because they've never been exposed to anything like that before whereas other students might be quite sporty, and they might love being away from family."

David – a liaison teacher – talked about the newness of the WA and lack of exposure, which could heighten the pre-intervention emotions:

> For a lot of… our students in general, they don't get outside of their own world. Much that they sort of can be quite isolated in their family, at home, I noticed… from my classroom teaching, when we take a group of students… into the city to watch a play or something a lot of them have never seen a play and very rarely even travelled over the bridge…, I don't think many of them would have gone into the wilderness before. Very few of them would have tramped.

Hence it can be concluded that the pre-intervention emotions of youth and their parents are diverse and depend on their individual characteristics, context and their prior exposure to similar experiences.

5.1.2 Pre-intervention expectations.

The subtheme pre-intervention expectations outline the expectations and estimations experienced by youth and their parents prior to the WA and are categorised under two third-level themes of *expecting positive change* and *varied expectations*. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Project K programme aims to increase the self-efficacy of the youth participants. Parents appraised their children's existing abilities and expected that the WA would improve their life skills. Some described their children as shy, un-sporty or withdrawn and expected that the WA would bring positive change in their young ones. They expected that their children would come out with increased confidence, better communication skills, self-awareness, responsibilities, new friendships, improved teamwork, and leadership skills, a new attitude, and a bit of discipline. Hence many of the parents had persuaded their children to take part in WA. This could be seen from the following quote from Olivia's mother Charlotte:

> Our main push for her to participate was to build her confidence. She has always been quite quiet and reserved and very respectful, but we sort of just wanted her to, you

> know, open up and express a wee bit more about how she, you know, what's she thinking and how she's feeling and all that sort of stuff.

On the other hand, the majority of the youth participants and their parents had varied expectations because of the physical, adventure and novelty elements of the WA. Some of the youth participants were "pumped" for the fun part of WA and expected it to be awesome. A few of the youth participants expected that they would be doing challenging adventure activities like skydiving, rock climbing or abseiling. Others had no clue about what to expect or thought it would be easy. Some of them assumed the WA would be extreme and would teach them "how to live in the bush." Some of the parents considered the WA to be an opportunity for their children to experience outdoors rather than being inside a room with their gadgets. Marion (Ayla's grandmother) described herself as a country person and was excited about WA:

> I wanted Ayla to see that kind of… I'd always talked about going into the bush and doing things and she would laugh at me, "oh grandma that's stupid, that's silly." So… when I heard it was for 3 weeks, it was, "oh my God, maybe this will bring that countryside out in her."

Conversely, there were discrepancies in parental expectations. A few parents did not have many expectations for their children because they did not know much about the Project K programme. Youths' and their parent's recollection of their pre-intervention expectations demonstrate the differences in their understanding of the programme which can be seen in the following subtheme.

5.1.3 Prior knowledge.

The subtheme prior knowledge entails the level of knowledge and understanding the participants had prior to their WA. This subtheme includes two third-level themes: *prior connection to the programme* and *range of pre-intervention knowledge*. Responses from research participants featured notable differences among youth participants from the same Project K cohorts due to their prior connections to the programme. Some youth participants had a good understanding of WAs and Project K due to previous exposure. Jack and Ethan attended the same school and jointly participated in the programme. When probed to share their prior knowledge of the programme Ethan noted that:

> My brother was in it… I think 3 years or 4 years ago… and I've been to all the meetings they had, and they [brother and friends] always talk about how hard it was… and how

> you had to get used to it…. and there were pictures of the bags… how big the bags… and how heavy they were… and just the information that was given out to us.

Conversely, Jack expressed that: “I had no idea, I had no idea what to expect… so pretty much just went blindly.” Even though Ethan and Alice disclosed that they knew about the WA from their elder siblings who participated in Project K in previous years, they received different levels of feedback from their siblings which influenced their knowledge about what to expect. Alice remembered that her brother participated in the programme 2 years ago “so he has told me about it, but he didn’t enjoy it though, because he’s not a person that’s… he’s just one of those boys that just stays in his room.”

Similar to the youth participants, some of the parents disclosed prior knowledge of the programme due to their prior connections and exposure to the programme. Ethan’s mother Susan knew about the programme due to her past experience with her older son. She recalled the conversation she had with one of the Project K staff prior to Ethan’s participation in the WA:

> I talked to the lady [Project K staff] and I said to her “oh I hope, and I wish… they are going to pick my son...” and they said to me… “do you understand Project K?” ... and I said “yes... I am because my oldest son been there before. I can tell I like that programme… it is very good, and it helps a lot.”

However, most participants described some prior knowledge of the programme. Zara, one of the youth participants, recalled

> I knew what we were going to do, just very briefly about it, but not that much. They told us that we were going to be biking kayaking and tramping but like not for how long we were going to be doing it.

Some of the youth participants and their parents were naïve about the Project K programme and WA intervention. This could be seen from the quote from Jack as well as the following quote from Heather (mother of Indie): “No idea, didn’t even know it existed until she got picked.” Similarly, Fiona (mother of Harry) shared that she never heard of the programme in their home country: “I didn’t know what’s gonna happen and it like. We don’t have this-this type of thing back in our country so quite new to me as well.”

Later, Fiona added her concerns for Henry being new to the school and the country and having a language barrier saying, “he doesn’t really speak English that well… Because you know at

home you don't practice English much because we speak our own language." Moreover, some of the parents expressed language barriers which prevented their understanding of the programme information. One of the parents, Brenda, was very limited with her English language while conversing with the researcher. She added that she knew the programme "roughly… as very wild experience… that's all, in the beginning." In contrast, Susan (Ethan's mother) had lived in New Zealand for more than 3 decades and she knew Project K and its impact very well, but she could not share her perspective with other parents and youth because of her language barrier. She recollected "they [Project K staff] want me to stand up and talk in front of the parents, but I said I can't because my English is not really good, and I said no I can't." The responses from the parents were substantiated in the following words of one of the key informants, liaison teacher Wendy:

> Most of our parents, English is not their first language and that's a barrier. I've seen many of them sit in the meetings and a lot of the information does go over their heads. They get the facts, the times, the money, but a lot of the other stuff it doesn't quite get there.

This evidences that some parents and youth may experience difficulties in understanding the programme because of language barriers or cultural differences which may be associated with their recent migration to New Zealand. Some of the parents perceived WA as a camp. However, the programme induction helped parents to realise it was more than a camp. Responses from key informants also highlighted the programme knowledge gap among the parents. One of the key informants confirmed the disparity in programme knowledge among parents and explained:

> I think it would be different for all parents. I think some of them wouldn't have a clue, to be honest. They get told, but I think some of them just wouldn't get the profound impact that it has on a young person. I hope that they do but some of them wouldn't. Look I'd like to say a good understanding; I don't think it is.… In fact, I know they are all really busy. They are really pleased that the students have this opportunity. They know they go on a camp …, but I really don't think they have a good understanding of it quite so much.

It appears that the disparities in pre-intervention knowledge were due to contextual and individual differences associated with prior connections to the programme, as well as cultural and language barriers.

5.1.4 Readiness to participate.

The subtheme readiness to participate illustrates the varied levels of interest and preparedness to take part in the WA. As mentioned in the pre-intervention emotions subtheme, only a few of the youth participants were curious and excited for the WA, because they liked the idea of having novel and challenging camping experiences and were looking forward to having fun with their friends. On the other hand, responses from the majority of the youth participants and their parents demonstrated a lack of interest among youth participants. Jack recollected that: "I didn't really like the idea of going out into the wilderness." Many of the parents revealed that they were more eager than their children. Fiona (Henry's mother) recalled that "I was more excited than him." Moreover, some of the parents expressed that their children were reluctant to participate in the WA. Hence, they pushed their children to participate in the WA, which can be seen in the following responses from Lucy's mother Anna:

> She [Lucy] didn't want to go … I thought no she should go … I just saw the camping picture… She goes … "I don't want to do it. But this looks like camp" [laughs] and she goes… "I don't want to do it," and I go, "no, you are going to do it.

Responses from key informants also affirmed the recollections of the youth and their parents. One of the key informants, Jennifer, recalled: "They [Project K youth] didn't want to be here; they didn't want to kind of being sent off." Another key informant mentor, Sean, talked about some youths' reluctance to participate in the WA and some of the reasons behind their unwillingness:

> Getting into it [WA] the kids go, oh, they've got to go out on this camp thing and they [Project K youth] don't actually want to. They just want to stay at school because, you know, some of their friends will be going what are you doing is something wrong with you, why are you going away on this, you know.

This subtheme described the perceived differences in youths' readiness to participate in the WA programme. It appears that some of the youth participants experienced a lack interest in the initial stage of their selection process prior to their WA. However, some youth participants overcame their reluctance through parental encouragement. Moreover, youth reluctance can also be caused by their desire not to be different from their classmates or the stigma associated with being selected. This is elaborated on in the following subtheme.

5.1.5 Selection perception.

The subtheme selection perception describes the various levels of understanding among the research participants with regard to the selection process prior to the WA. Even though the researcher did not ask any specific questions related to the programme selection process, this subtheme was identified from the participants' responses. Responses from some of the youth and their parents indicated perceptual disparities of the selection process. Recollections from some of the youth participants showed clarity in their understanding of the selection process. It is evident from the following words from one of the youth participants, Zara:

> Amber [Project K staff] came to our school and she spoke at assemblies and then we all got surveys and we had to fill them out and then I got a letter saying that I was picked to do it. We had a meeting for the 24 students picked and they said only 12 of us could be able to do the whole thing out of the 24. But only like 6 or 8 of us came so we had to get more people, I think.

Liam's father George was happy about the selection process and information received from the service providers. He described that:

> I just got a text from the lady from the Project K saying that Liam had been shortlisted to one of the 20 pupils and yeah and then we went to the meeting and I was just so happy that he got in and Liam was as well, … we had interviews and everything and the meetings …. they gave so much information that yeah it was really good, fantastic.

Conversely, the response from one of the parents contradicts the actual selection process of the Project K programme. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the actual Project K selection process is based on the self-efficacy survey and consultation with the school teachers and no open application process involved. One of the parents, Charlotte (mother of Olivia), recalled that:

> We got a letter saying that I think we could apply for a spot in Project K and we had to write in, you know, fill out an application why we think Olivia would be suitable for this type of project.

On the other hand, two other parents, Gloria (mother of Zoe) and Susan (mother of Ethan), had clear information about the selection process and criteria due to their prior involvement with the programme for their older children. Susan recalled: "When he came and said, 'Mum, I fill out the form for Project K and I understand they only pick 12' and I said to myself oh I am very happy if they pick you."

Even though Gloria had been contacted in a previous year about her older son being selected, he did not get the chance to participate. The following demonstrates Gloria's experience:

> The teachers didn't put him on the programme at the time because something went down. So, they said it was safe if he didn't go on it. So, this would be my second child that got chosen for Project K.

Lack of understanding about the programme selection process also caused misconceptions among some of the parents. The lack of clarity can be seen from the following comment from Kay (mother of Jordan): "I don't know how he got chosen. He said, 'oh there were 80 of us and I got shortlisted.'" Successful entry to the WA programme created an alarming feeling for Kay which can be seen as follows: "he was excited and, you know, for me it was like… my immediate thought was 'oh my God you are one of the troubled kids.'" Further conversation with Kay revealed how she responded to Jordan:

> Well... that's what I said to him..., "I hope you are not proud son... because you've been shortlisted as one of the kids that need to go" and he goes "well I did get in out of 80 people," but did you see where my head was at, it was like that was nothing to be proud of shortlisted as a bad kid that has to go on something like this.

Most of the key informants provided additional insights into how they prepare the youth participants and their parents prior to WA. Some of the parents were not clear how their child was selected for the Project K programme, despite the induction programme provided by the service providers. Some of the youth participants and their parents also had limited information regarding the WA. From the response from parents, it appears that lack of knowledge of the programme can create apprehension in youth and their parents.

5.2 Memory Mode

As part of the exploration of their reintegration experiences, the researcher asked the youth participants to reflect on their experiences in the WA one month after it ended. Their parents and key informants also shared their perspectives in relation to their young people's experiences in the WA. The one-month period provided the youth time to allow their emotions and thoughts to sink in and to settle back into their normal routines. The theme memory mode captured their reflections on their time in the WA; what their parents knew about those experiences and the perceptions of key informants on the youths' WA exposure. Memory mode is presented through five subthemes: 1) once-in-a-lifetime experiences, 2) becoming a

wolfpack, 3) interpersonal conflicts, 4) spiritual and cultural connections, and 5) indirect wilderness journey. While sharing their reintegration experiences, the researcher noted that their WA memories were very fresh in their mind. The first subtheme once-in-a-lifetime experiences illustrated the meaningful and unique features of youths' WA experiences. The second subtheme becoming a wolfpack describes the youth participants' recollection of their new group identity and group support experienced during the WA. The third subtheme interpersonal conflicts illustrate the memories of interpersonal dynamics and conflicts experienced during the WA. The fourth subtheme describes the recollection of spiritual and cultural connection experienced during the WA. The final subtheme indirect wilderness journey delineates the parental responses and references to their own unique thoughts and experiences while their children were away in the WA.

5.2.1 Once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The first subtheme of memory mode, *once-in-a lifetime experiences,* presents the recollections and memories of the unique features and aspects of the WA which provided a meaningful experience to the youth participants. The majority of the youth participants recollected the WA as an *opportunity to realise their strengths and weaknesses.* Moreover, parents also perceived the WA as a unique opportunity for their children which helped them to recognise their children's potential. Similarly, it also assisted youth to identify areas needing further improvement. The following comments from youth participants, parents and key informants emphasise how the WA acted as an instrument to realise the strengths and weaknesses of youth participants: "I found out that I can actually just keep going as well because I never really tried to rely on people because not many people tried to keep me going." (Lucy, youth participant)

> Everything from climbing a mountain overcoming his fear of heights because he's just terrible with heights, but he managed that at the Pinnacles. The kayaking because his mate at the back was sick so he didn't realise his strength, you know, and was able to row on his own. (Kay, mother of Jordan)

> The ability to realise that they can do things that they never thought they could do. So, they recognise that they have potential. (Wendy, key informant, liaison teacher)

Lynne (Hazel's mother) recollected how she was amazed by her daughter's potential and willingness to help another teammate to carry that bag during the WA. The following demonstrates the expressions of a surprised mother:

> I questioned her because I got a text from Amber [Project K staff] and it had something to do with her carrying somebody else's backpack that was heavier than hers. She [Hazel] offered to help a fellow student who was struggling to carry his backpack on one of their journeys and swapped it for her bag which was actually lighter … I said… "who was it...?" Me thinks that it was one of the other girls… not realising it was one of the boys who was struggling. I went… "wow!!"

The majority of the parents were surprised about their children's hidden potentials which were revealed through the WA programme. Kay (mother of Jordan) remembered how she was concerned about her son's health issues and how successful he was during the WA:

> I've always been protective of where he [Jordan] goes because of his eczema it has to be managed. So, letting him go for 18 days I knew this is the time, this is a good time for him to not only take care of his own skin but learn and that is what he did.

Some of the youth participants also reflected on the WA as *an opportunity to experience novelty and the natural environment*. They were taken out of their comfort zone and this enabled them to experience novelty. Ethan reminisced about the WA and described it as a "new part of his life." Youth participants described the novelty using language such as "new thing," "new experience," "new location," "new surroundings," and "new smells." It was a unique experience for all the youth participants.

Many of the youth participants recalled that they felt uncomfortable in the open and natural environment. Youths who described themselves as an "indoor persons" (see preparation mode), described their discomfort with being in the outdoors. Some of the youth participants expressed their struggle to manage basic needs in the absence of home luxuries. This could be seen from the following comment from Olivia: "just a hole in the ground for a toilet and no water supply just a lake at the back." Some of them recollected the new routine they had to follow: getting up early, learning to cook as well as cooking with a Bunsen burner, learning to take up responsibilities including washing, packing and putting up tents. The majority of their parents also recalled learning about their children's novel experiences in a natural environment. This can be seen from Zoe's mother Gloria's, response: "Her [Zoe's] experience, how she was cold and how they did their own washing and did their own cooking, sleeping in the tent and the long drops and not having a shower."

Some of the youth participants shared that the WA helped them to admire the peaceful and beautiful nature of the environment. Some of them compared the WA to their home back in the noisy city. Olivia stated: “it is a big change being in the city around all the noise and stuff and then all of a sudden being in this muddy camping ground.”

All the youth participants perceived the WA as a *challenging experience*. Youth were physically, mentally, socially and emotionally challenged during the WA. Youth vividly remembered the challenging activities and physical exhaustion experienced during the WA. They talked about tramping, hiking, kayaking, and biking expeditions for hours and days with their heavy backpacks. Harry recalled, “doing work for 11 hours, biking for 50k and kayaking.” The physical exhaustion and challenges experienced by the young people can be seen from the following words from youth participant Lucy: “it was hard hiking and kayaking and biking. I still kept going even though I just really wanted to stop and go home.”

Some of the youth also recalled having health issues, seasickness or injuries. Liam remembered he was taken to town for a small surgery for his in-grown toenail during the WA. Liam’s father George shared the challenging scenario his son experienced during the WA:

> There was a couple of times that he [Liam] sort of thought oh this is going to be a really hard challenge thing like that. But he carried on with it because halfway through it he had to go for an operation he had an ingrown toenail.

Being in the WA without technologies itself was challenging for some of the youth participants. They were taken out of their comfort zone away from all their luxuries. This tested their mental toughness, as explained by some of the key informants:

> Its [WA] pretty life-changing… taking the kids away from all of their influences and peers and families…. it really helps them gets some big breakthroughs by being in the wilderness and challenging themselves. (John, programme coordinator)

> I’ve heard and read young people talking about how when they are in the wilderness, they have to give up their phones and they don’t shower and it’s difficult. (Barbara, programme manager)

Youth participants reflected the mental, emotional and physical *support received from the members of their cohort*. The majority of the youth indicated the mental strength and happiness they derived from the WA. They pondered on the fun they had along with their Project K mates, peer group support and teamwork which are illustrated under the following subtheme of this

mode “becoming a wolfpack.” The following comments from a parent and key informant depicts how youth were able to overcome the barriers of the WA:

> It [WA] was not so much the physical side of things for Zara that she lacked in, it was more mental for her and once again believing in herself that she could actually do it and to keep pushing and to keep going, which I think she struggled with a little bit in the first few days but then realised I can do this and I guess with the help and support of them as well, (Donna, mother of Zara)

> So wilderness is definitely like the breaking down of barriers if they can get through that then they can say actually, you know, there are other possibilities that we can achieve because we have managed to climb to Mt Te Aroha, we have managed to tramp for 4 days, we have managed to kayak for 3 days and I’ve survived in the wilderness for 18 days with this group of people. (Amber, key informant)

Moreover, the majority of the youth participants perceived WA as a *lifetime achievement*. Youth recalled it as a fun and adventure-filled opportunity to do novel activities. They set different goals during the WA and successfully accomplished their goals. Donna, mother of Zara, recalled it as “really cool for her to do and achieve and it was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of opportunity for her to explore.”

Additionally, WA *surpassed expectations* of youth participants. In reality, the WA exceeded some of the youths’ pre-intervention expectations. One of the youth participants, Hazel, recalled that: “the challenges that I faced we weren’t going to face challenges like that…. It wasn’t easy.”

Furthermore, some of the youth participants recollected the learnings they had on *natural consequences* during the WA. It helped them to learn about consequences in a spontaneous and natural manner. Jordan recalled the natural rewards and consequences that resulted as part of their activities in the WA: “Everything we did we benefit from it like we put up the tent quickly we can start the next activity quicker or sooner we cook the sooner we can eat.”

Besides that, youth participants also remembered WA as *experiential learning*: they learned through experience and reflections by doing the activities. Youth participants were given autonomy and responsibilities to make meaningful learning in the WA which enabled them to experiment and direct learning through applications. The following comments reflect the experiential learnings of the youth participants in the WA:

> Making dinner with not a stove just like a little Bunsen burner, just to pack our lunches and our clothes and like the tents, because every morning we had to pack it down because it was wet and then we had to put it back up. (Ethan, youth participant)

> He went caving, he told me about the history around the caves and the place. So, there was a lot of detail that, doesn't come from books because he had his heart in it. So, to have that the feel and the touch and have the emotion injected into everything he was doing he was able to come home and stipulate everything, …. I'd never seen that before. (Kay, Jordan's mother)

> It's not like you are sitting down in a classroom and teaching them that, but it's giving them responsibilities in terms of helping them prepare food and meals and stuff that can be done through experience. (Jennifer, key informant, mentor)

The subtheme once-in-a-lifetime experiences describes the recollections of the youth participants, perceptions of their parents and key informants about the meaningful unique features and elements of the WA.

5.2.2 Becoming a wolfpack.

The subtheme *becoming a wolf pack* describes the unique relational bond, group support and collective identity developed by the youth participants through the WA. The majority of the youth participants and some of their parents shared that either Project K group members did not know each other or did not have a close relationship prior to their WA even though they were from the same school and year. The WA helped them to *build new relationships*. The data also revealed some of the youth participants already had relationship problems or peer conflicts with some of the Project K group members. This can be seen from the following comment from Caleb: "I didn't know any of them, any of the people and one of them was pretty much usually a dick to me." However, the novel, unfamiliar and intense situation made youth become one family. The foreignness, challenging environment and activities of the WA required mutual support within the group. Moreover, the challenging nature and activities were also emotionally confronting for the youth. However, they were able to overcome their emotional challenges with *teamwork and group support* as Ethan and Jordan shared: "I wanted to go back home, but people were supporting me to stay and don't give up." (Ethan). Likewise, "Jack wanted to go home on the second day of kayaking because he was seasick, and he was vomiting. So, I had to keep him happy and tell him we're nearly finished we're nearly there" (Jordan).

Moreover, youth also recollected the *instructors' support* during the WA. The following memories from one of the youth participants and another's parent's response demonstrates the crucial role and support given by instructors during the WA:

> They [instructors] helped me a lot because they showed me, they like unlocked the part of me that hasn't been unlocked before like my confidence, and instructors just showed me how to build up and gain your self-confidence and talking to others and to set goals to achieve in life. (Ethan)

> There was one in particular male instructor that she [Zara] got on really well with and had some really in-depth conversations with him and I think just having that someone else to push her and encourage her. (Donna, mother of Zara)

Further, youth became one family through team-building and goal-setting activities which provided ample opportunities and time for youth participants to share responsibilities and work together. They carried out all the activities as a team. Some of the youth participants shared their personal stories within the Project K group. One of the Project K youth cohorts named their group the *wolfpack* and spoke about how it provided a *collective identity and family feeling.* They had their "own song and inside jokes" which only they could understand. Some of the youth participants shared that they continued singing their song at school 1 month after their return. Ayla explained "while we were at Project K, we had this thing the boys kept singing this song… like 'where are you and I'm so sorry,' and if we see each other we just say, 'where are you?'"

Some of the youth described their common experiences and endeavours as "our own thing" which no one could understand outside of the wolfpack. Many of the youth participants shared that the WA moulded them to into one wolfpack family. Others described it as a "second family" or "family away from family" and talked about making "lifelong friends." Many of the parents and key informants also noticed the family feeling and bonding within Project K group upon return. One of the parents recalled that Project K group members called her daughter the "alpha wolf-top dog, the leader of the pack." Kay, mother of Jordan, reflected about the family bonding and connection she observed between Jordan and his Project K group. She recalled: "I think the connection is much deeper than just a social interaction…. It has given him a family away from home." Interestingly, one of the key informants, Sandra, programme coordinator, shared that some of the Project K alumni maintain their Project K friendships, "They learn off

each other so they get this lovely team bond. I've got students who have already started Project K 11 years ago here …. and their groups still get together."

This subtheme evidenced that the WA moulded and created a family spirit within Project K group participants. The novelty, foreignness and challenging atmosphere and environment of WA transformed the youth participants from an unknown group into a well-known family by the end of their experience.

5.2.3 Interpersonal conflicts.

The findings under this subtheme are categorised under two third-level themes: *personality differences* and *bullying and interpersonal conflicts.* Some of the youth participants had memories of negative experiences within the WA group or wolfpack. Some of the youth experienced conflicts with other participants which spoiled the whole WA experience. Youth participants and their parents described it as "bullying." Zara added that:

> The stuff that happened on Project K made me upset. Just a misunderstanding between me and another girl, a couple of them, it wasn't really a big deal, but they got really angry at me …. They were just saying really rude stuff to me and was talking to the other people in the group about me, which made me upset all the time … I felt like I was separated from them like I didn't really fit in with the rest of them. I didn't think I could do it, and it was really hard.

Zara's mother also recollected that: "She hasn't had a very good time. A little bit of nonsense went on with the girls when she was away at camp …. I have no idea why these girls were bullying her."

Some of the youth reported that their instructors intervened to resolve the conflicts. Ayla also shared what had happened to her and another boy in the WA, she remembered that:

> Some of the boys were like bullying and stuff …. the boys that were bullying me were also bullying one of the boys and the facilitators separated the groups the girls and the boys, but I was scared for that boy that was being bullied because he was with the boys that were bullying.

Responses from key informants also substantiated the youths' and parents' recollections about interpersonal conflicts and bullying among the Project K cohorts. The following response from one of the key informant liaison teachers provides evidence:

> I have seen bullying between a couple of students well, I haven't seen it but it's been brought my attention that two students have had some it's been some bullying going on of another student, based on what I assumed is something that happened while they were away. (David)

Additionally, the participants reported that the interpersonal dynamics and conflicts were created by personality differences among the youth participants, as pointed out by Zara's mother Donna: "it happens because of the personality difference, like the girls." Moreover, the group dynamics and conflicts are likely to happen in Project K groups since the majority of the youth participants are not familiar with each other prior to the WA. Ayla mentioned the fact that they had no choice in terms of selecting their group members, "at the end of the day we're all a team and this was our team whether I liked it or not. I just couldn't take some people out and bring all my friends in." One of the key informants also recalled personality clashes and a lack of maturity among Project K participants:

> There's a personality clash with the kids, with the girls…. it's quite hard because they are still young… it's hard for them to be like, oh why is she acting like that, why is she saying that. You can't do anything about that. It's just all about developing and encouraging and supporting each other through their different sorts of personalities. (Janet)

5.2.4 Spiritual and cultural connection.

The subtheme *spiritual and cultural connection* comprises two third-level themes: *experiencing spirituality in nature* and *cultural connectedness.* A few of the youth participants and their parents commented on the spiritual connections ignited during the WA. One of the youth participants, Ethan, shared that they prayed at night during the WA to derive strength to overcome the challenges they experienced during the WA. He revealed:

> Me and my friends prayed at night… we just prayed we were going to have fun on Project K and we were going to be safe and the next day we felt better because we did it… we all took turns and we said in our own language.

Likewise, Gloria, mother of Zoe, recalled: "she [Zoe] said to me while she was out there, she'd pray every night." Similarly, Jordan's mother, Kay, recollected how her son was reconnected to his spirituality and tupuna (ancestors) through the WA:

> He [Jordan] and I are believers in spirituality and tupuna, our ancestors, and how to call on them…. when he got home, he told me how he worked it and how he connected to tupuna and being in a forest.

One of the key informants, Amber, explained how she supported and enabled some of the youth participants, who had expressed their concerns at missing normal ritual routines, to practise their faith or spirituality during the WA:

> We allowed them to take their Bible or whatever they needed to be able to do that and generally the providers allowed sometime in the morning or whenever to do whatever they need to do for whatever their belief may be.

The spiritual connection also kindled the cultural connectedness of the youth participants. Ethan revealed that when they prayed at night, they took turns and prayed in their own language. Kay, mother of Jordan, emphasised the close association of nature and te ao Māori worldviews which were strengthened during her son's WA experiences:

> Nature is very important to Māori and he can identify what his nana had told him about mother earth and how it was being reignited and those were things that I thought he'd forgotten. So culturally much stronger, so it touched on areas that it isn't book written, what I mean. It is orally delivered and so it has to be practically connected and that's what he learned.

5.2.5 Indirect wilderness journey.

The third subtheme *indirect wilderness adventure* portrays primarily the parental responses and reference to their own unique thoughts and experiences while their children were away during the WA. As mentioned in preparation mode, parents also experienced mixed emotions prior to their children's WA, even though they were not directly involved in the WA, and they continued their indirect wilderness journey along with their children through ongoing communication with the facilitators. Parents *followed their children's journeys through daily text messages* from the service providers. The majority of the parents were keen to receive the daily texts which comforted them and allowed them to connect with their children. The separation from their children for 17 days was massive for some of the parents. It can be seen from the following responses from Charlotte, mother of Olivia, and Gloria, mother of Zoe: "it was really comforting to know that stuff and just that connection, you know, so she wasn't just fully taken away and we never see or hear from her. So, it was just nice to have that daily contact." (Charlotte). Similarly, Gloria said: "It was like emotional to read their texts and see

her name pop up that she was a leader and how they were doing…. I looked forward to seeing the next text for the next."

The responses from parents also showed traces of happiness and a sense of pride upon receipt of the communication from the programme staff. The text message also helped the parents to get a sense of the WA daily activities, including the type of food they were eating. Most of the parents talked about appreciating the details of the message. So, parents knew about who was leading the group in the activities and chores, who experienced challenges during the day, where and when they stayed at different places. George (father of Liam) evidenced how he continued his indirect wilderness journey by following the daily text messages:

> I knew just how fantastic what they were doing for all the children and everything, plus we got the texts every day and they were fantastic every evening and they let us know what was happening and who was the leader and what they did and what they were going to have for tea and everything like that. Oh, some of the times the girls, you know, were faster in the morning getting up and getting ready, the boys were slacking and things like that. So, it was really great just seeing yeah just finding out how their day went.

Conversely, one of the parents experienced a *feeling of being left in the dark* due to the lack of adequate communication with their child during their WA, as seen in the words of Harry's mother, Fiona:

> Quite left in the dark like you know we didn't know what exact, we didn't know what happened in that thing. We didn't have any idea what they have done except from you know the morning messages we received at or that person is the leader for the day, this is what he does. But that's very basic. Like we don't have, we don't know what the kids are doing and what programme they are following, things like that.

Similarly, one of the parents experienced loneliness during her son's WA experiences because she was a single mother of an only child. The majority of the parents' indirect wilderness adventures were boosted by *letter writing and video updates halfway through the WA.* The service providers provided the opportunity for parents to write a letter and also receive a letter from their children around the midpoint of the WA experience. For most of the parents, the letter writing and reading their child's letter was an "emotional" process. Writing a letter was the only opportunity for parents to communicate with their children during the WA and vice versa. Most of the parents perceived and utilised the letter writing as an opportunity to motivate

their children and also provide some updates from home. Conversely, their children's letter described the adventure and challenging activities, the hardship they experienced in the natural environment, details of group interactions and dynamics and the food they ate during the WA.

Parents were emotionally moved and heartened by reading their children's letters. Donna, the mother of Zara, stated: "we read it in the car after we got it, me and her little sister cried and cried and cried. It was such a long time to be without her." One of the parents, Heather (mother of Indie), commented on her daughter's letter as funny: "I've got it up on the fridge because it made me laugh. It was so funny. So, we put it up on the fridge, so everyone can have a read of it."

Several parents expressed that their child's letter was so many pages long compared to their own letter. A few of the parents made sure everyone at home had added to the letter. In some instances, all the members of their family wrote a separate letter to the youth participant. The responses from parents also evidenced some differences in opinion related to the letter writing process. Some of the parents shared that their children responded to their letter after reading it. Whereas some of the parents shared that letter writing did not make any sense since their children did not get the chance to read their parents' letter first. "It wasn't like responding to hers and she wasn't responding to me," Heather (mother of Indie) recollected. Moreover, some of the parents commented that they had to write letters a few days after their children left. It was too early for some parents to feel the separation from their children. So parents did not have anything more to write other than to encourage and boost their morale which they had already done while seeing them off. In those instances, parents and children received the letters almost at the same time. Donna (mother of Zara) commented:

> It was quite strange because she didn't actually read my letter before she wrote a letter back to me so she was getting ours as I was getting hers at the same time …. was quite hard not having enough time away from here before actually writing to her, all you could do was wish her luck again like you already had done before she'd left and tell her to stay positive and that she could do it and to give everything a go. I think it would have been nicer to have been a little bit later on and then maybe for her to have received my letter and then write back to me. I thought that was quite odd.

In addition to letter writing, some of the parents were able to watch a video of their children from the WA. Other parents recollected they were shown photographs of their children along with expedition routes and maps. The disparities in parents' responses demonstrate the

differences in programme execution across two different sites. Despite the differences, the majority of the parents were grateful to the service providers for the communication they had with their children during the WA.

Some parents and youth shared that the WA was a *break from each other*, despite still missing each other. Parents enjoyed the break away from their noisy and quirky teenagers. Some of the parents relished the downtime and peaceful home atmosphere without their teenage children for 18 days. But their mixed feelings can be seen from Donna's words:

> It was really nice having a break from her because teenagers are really difficult and I'm a single parent so yeah, I don't get any downtime to myself, so it was a nice break, but I missed her like crazy, absolutely. It was kind of weird, I sometimes kind of felt a little bit guilty because I enjoyed the peace and quiet. I didn't have time to deal with and I did feel a little bit guilty but then I really, really miss her a lot and I just couldn't wait for her to be back. The house was so quiet without her.

Charlotte (mother of Olivia) shared she could "refocus" on her life with her partner while their child was away: "I suppose it was a good time for us just to refocus on a lot of stuff as well me and my partner while the kids were away and yeah, we missed her heaps." Similarly, Susan (mother of Ethan) shared that, in her letter, she wrote: "oh son, when you are going, oh my voice is good because I never shout Ethan, Ethan, and Ethan." Similarly, some parents also thought that it would be a good break for their children as well. It was evident from Donna's (mother of Zara) response: "Although it was very intense it was sort of, I guess for her [Zara] a break away from home as well."

5.3 Reaction Mode

The third major theme of the reintegration process, reaction mode, describes the immediate retrospective experiences or observations of the youth and their parents upon the completion of the WA journey. Reaction mode delineates the reflections of youth and their parents' immediate emotions, responses and reflections when they arrived back from the WA to their normal life. They recalled the formal "welcome-back" ceremony organised by the service providers at their school. Reentry to the social environment was emotional for the youth and their parents. They experienced a mixture of emotions. These findings are described under four subthemes 1) positive reception, 2) highs and lows, 3) discomfort in the comfort zone, and 4) coping strategies. The first subtheme provides the reflections upon their initial reception at

home and school. The second subtheme relates to the immediate emotional reactions experienced or observed by their parents and key informants upon the young people's return to in their daily life. The third subtheme delineates the immediate challenges and strangeness experienced or observed in what had been their familiar environment and how different it was to the WA environment. Coping strategies delineates the youth participants' coping actions and how they responded to the reactions.

5.3.1 Positive reception.

Most of the youth, their parents and key informants reflected on the welcome-back ceremony organised by the service provider and school. All the youth participants were happy and excited about the positive reception that occurred at their school straight after their return from the WA. Caleb recalled, "We had a like a massive welcome back and it was good." Youth responses demonstrate the welcome-back ceremony was a significant opportunity for them to celebrate their once-in-a-lifetime experience. Youth participants' achievements were acknowledged in front of their parents, school and service providers. The majority of the key informants also described the positive reception that occurs through welcome-back ceremonies. Many of the youth shared that they were well supported by their parents and family members' attendance, and for some of the youth participants, many extended family members turned up. One of the key informants, John, described how the welcome-back ceremony has become a remarkable event over the past decade:

> In 2009 when our first group came back, we were in a smaller room with the families and the kids in the wharekai [dining hall] which was next to the marae [Māori meeting house] at the school. So now there are so many people that want to come and hear the speeches of the kids and families and staff at school and other students that we now go into the performing arts centre and we have the kapa haka group powhiri [Māori welcome ceremony] them back into school and so it's quite a big ceremony that we have a lot of people turning up.

Youth participants also talked about various kinds of acknowledgements and *reward for their WA achievements.* Youth recollected the various supports from others, including the presence of their parents and families at the welcome-back ceremonies, bringing their favourite foods for the welcome-back ceremony shared tea, cooking or buying their favourite food for their dinner for the first night at home upon arrival, and material rewards (including money, gifts, and special outings) they received for their WA achievements. Max shared that: "they [his

parents] were very welcoming and bought me a few things. Just like lots of hugs and we missed you." The majority of parents shared that they supported their children to the best of their abilities and reiterated the information shared by the youth participants with respect to organising celebrations and nice meals and providing them with gifts. One of the parents, Heather (mother of Indie), recollected how they surprised her daughter to reward her for her WA achievements:

> When she was away we wanted to surprise her, so we bought ourselves a new bedroom suite which we hadn't for like a hundred years because you don't think about that. So, we gave her our old one which is old king size bed with drawers and everything. So, we redid her room, I don't know if that's supporting her or missing her. So, we did all her room and, you know, bought her nice winter sheets and just made it all nice and cosy and so when she came home, she was just overwhelmed to be home and then overwhelmed and just loved her room.

Having *the opportunity to share WA experiences* was a key element of youths' recollections of their positive reception. The youth felt proud to say their speeches in front of their parents, friends, and teachers. Even though giving a speech was a "nerve-wracking" experience for some youth, they appreciated the opportunity to share their achievements. One of the parents, George (Liam's father), expressed his happiness at listening to his son's speech:

> I just felt so proud and I was just sitting there and just felt so proud of him and all of them because I just think it was something, I was just so happy yeah just so happy, you know, the children that went on the Project K yeah and all my family as well. My sisters, aunty and uncle yeah, they were just so happy.

The majority of the youth were excited to go back to school after their WA to see their friends and teachers. Some of the youth participants shared that their friends were eager to hear about their WA experience. The youth felt proud and supported when their friends asked about their WA. Lucy recollected:

> Most of my really close friends were just like a bunch of them like seven or so they were like really supportive. They were like oh I missed you, are you ok what happened to you, but yeah it was really nice to receive support from them. They were actually being interested in it. They were like ok that's cool and they would ask more like they were being nice about it; they were being really helpful.

Some of the youth were acknowledged by their teachers at school. Indie felt really good about her teachers' response:

> My PE teacher was coming up to me and asking me how it was and asking how I did about the physical side of it, I said I did it really good and my graphics teacher was asking me about it and she said that they are proud of us for doing it.

Upon their arrival back home, parents provided time and space to relax and regain their strength, opportunities to listen to their WA experiences, and asked about their experiences. Youth also recounted how their parents expressed how much they missed them. Jack recollected that: "They are just like happy I'm back and like they gave me food and give me time to rest before making me do things again." Some of the youth appreciated their parents' curiosity to hear their adventure stories. Indie remembered that: "My mum was kind when I got here because she missed me so much, and when I got home everyone was excited and wanting to talk to me nonstop so yeah it was cool."

The following reveals how Liam's father (George) supported him when he returned home:

> Just absolutely so happy to see him obviously coming back, but I'm supporting him and talking to him and everything and I think yeah just letting him slowly settle back in and come back and we had a nice meal and then the next day we went to see his nana and visit the family and things like that and just let him slowly just settle back into, not push him or anything like that, you know, I said you've still got 4 days off school so just chill back and do what you want. You can go on your Xbox, you can chill back and get back into, you know, being back at home from the wilderness.

5.3.2 Emotional highs and lows.

After their 18 days of WA, reentry to their normal life was emotional for youth and their parents. Youth experienced the emotional highs of happiness and excitement to see their loved ones. Returning home also created emotional lows. Youth recollected their return and reintegration with a *mixture of emotions*. They were happy and excited about their arrival. They felt relieved to return to their comfort zone. For the majority of the youth participants, it was the first time they had been away from their parents and family for 18 days. So, they couldn't wait to see them. Zara recollected, "When I first saw my mum and sister, I was really excited because I hadn't seen them in so long, yeah I couldn't wait to tell them about everything."

Even though they were physically exhausted, they were thrilled and excited about their achievements. The discomfort experienced during the WA and the relief of returning home was evident in Jack's response:

> Relief… no more sleeping in tents that smelt horrible…. Six guys after a day of hiking like a really hot day of hiking…. it's not a good smell, and the ground was always very uncomfortable because like we didn't really get any flat sleeping spots.

Some of the youth missed their pets and animals on their farm. Thus, returning home was an exhilarating experience for them. Simultaneously, they also experienced negative emotions of sadness and anxiety. As stated above, some of the youth were anxious about the speech they had to give in front of their friends and family during the welcome-back ceremony. They did not want to "fob out" in front of the audience. They were also sad because they *missed their wolfpack* and the WA environment. Ayla recalled that:

> I actually missed the log cabin that we stayed in for residential. I was surprised that I actually missed it. I enjoyed staying there and I wanted to stay longer even though I missed home, I actually enjoyed staying there. It was a beautiful place, yeah…the environment was very peaceful… I wish if I could go back, I would appreciate how peaceful and quiet it was.

Indie indicated that "I really missed all my friends and stuff, and the instructors." Some of the youth wanted to continue the WA experience because it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for all of the youth participants. During the WA, youth developed their own new routines and adapted to life in a natural wilderness setting, so it was difficult for some youth to get back to their normal lifestyles. The highs and lows of returning home were captured in Lucy's conversation:

> Oh returning home I felt relieved to just be home, but then again it kind of felt like I didn't even leave because my mum was like welcome home and I just like went in her room and just like felt my room well like messed around like yeah I'm back home again and then I felt like I kind of missed being back at the wilderness. It was kind of weird because I really wanted to come home but then I missed it… I did kind of feel sad because I was so used to waking up at 6 and not having a shower and just starting our day together. But then again, I felt happy because I actually had showers and I had a nice toilet and I can make my own food, yeah.

Parents and key informants also observed the mixture of emotions among youth participants. The majority of the parents shared that their children were relieved and happy to come back to their comfort zone and have hot showers, and a comfortable sleep in their own bed in their own room, and eat their favourite food with their family, and to share their adventurous experiences in the wilderness. Lynne (mother of Hazel), remembered that "she was happy to be at home, happy to be in her bed, happy to have I don't know how long she was in that shower for, but man…. she was in the shower for ages." Simultaneously, some parents also noticed their children being sad and longing for the WA. Donna (parent of Zara), shared that:

> Probably for the first week and I think she kind of missed it a little bit …. she said she was really happy to be home but there was a little part of her that still did miss that, that adventure and being out there. She didn't really explain just that she sort of missed that group I think ….I think the male attention …from the male instructors, ….I think just having that someone else to push her and encourage her and someone that doesn't know her at all just to spend some time with her and just the things that she was doing and achieving I guess within herself she missed, …she just missed the whole experience overall. Although it was very intense it was sort of, I guess, for her a break away from home as well.

Similar to parents, key informants also shared their observations of the emotional highs and lows youth experienced when returning to their daily life. They shared their overall observations and perceptions based on their many years of work experience with different Project K cohorts, including the current youth participants. The key informants also observed youth participants being very emotional when they returned and received their certificates during the welcome-back ceremony. The key informants also observed that the youth participants were tired and exhausted after their WA. Amber, a senior Project K staff member, captured her observation of the emotional highs and lows as follows:

> They are genuinely pretty happy to be home, you know, away from the wet and the cold and stuff, but they still miss that camaraderie that the 12 students have together because …. it is completely different when you are away from everything and, you know, you've got no one else but these 12 people that make you feel comfortable ….They're all the time saying I wish I were back on wilderness and the main thing is because of that bond that they have and, you know, I guess that friendship and that family connection that they have during the wilderness.

Although parents observed their children's mixture of emotions, they also experienced a mixture of emotions when their children arrived from the WA. However, it was different for the parents, as they never had direct WA experiences. Parents were excited to see their children after 18 days; there were tears of happiness at their reunion. Some of the parents were thrilled to receive hugs from their young teenage boys after a long time. Similar to the youth participants, the majority of the parents experienced a *sense of achievement and pride* about their children. At the same time, some of the parents experienced *anxiety regarding* the *physical exhaustion* their children experienced during the WA. Some of the parents were shocked to see how tired their children were. Heather, mother of Indie, recollected that:

> When we saw them all they turned up they were battered and bruised. I was like…. They looked like they had been to war. But they were happy, I was like oh that boy had just fallen off his bike and grazed his face and Indie had a big scab down her leg. Everyone was sort of limping, but they were all smiling.

The majority of the parents shared that when their children returned, they were tired and just eating and sleeping. Even though parents were concerned about their bruises, the youth participants were not concerned about their injuries and some resisted extra attention and care from their parents, which can be seen from the following comments from Heather (mother of Indie) and Fiona (mother of Harry):

> She [Indie] was battered and bruised and had sores. She looked like she had been beaten up, but she didn't care. I'm like I'll put a plaster on, no it's all right mum don't worry about it… So, she didn't care about it, oh you've got a bruise…., I've got a bruise here, I've got a bruise there. That was from falling down, from tramping. So, all her wounds had a story. She wasn't fazed at all. A little tough nut, I said let me put a plaster on that, "no, it's fine."

> He [Harry] had an accident before they arrived. So, he fell off his bike, so he was quite sore. So he has got bruises on his face…. he was sore… I was attending to his bruises… I was keeping eye on him if he is going to feel dizzy or you know his vision gets blurry or something like that… he was in pain, but he was more excited for it happened. Just he is to be a man, he doesn't complain. (Fiona, mother of Harry)

5.3.3 Discomfort in comfort zone.

The subtheme *discomfort in comfort zone* elaborates the immediate challenges, difficulties, and strangeness experienced or observed or perceived by youth and their parents and key

informants in the youths' familiar environment upon return from the WA. Upon arrival in their normal environment, some of the youth participants *felt challenged* for various reasons. As mentioned in memory mode, some of the youth participants perceived the WA as a break away from their homes due to personal reasons, hence returning home was challenging for them. According to Hazel: "It [going home] was challenging, it was like just going through another challenge." Some of the youth were also challenged by a lack of understanding of their WA experiences. Some of the youth shared that their parents did not realise the intensity of the WA. When they returned home, their parents did not provide enough time to relax and urged them to engage with normal routines. Caleb described how his mother took him to a restaurant, to have their normal Friday dinner out, without providing adequate time for him to relax: "they were like… they didn't know how hard it was really, they just didn't really care… so left just rushed to the restaurant too." On the other hand, a few other youth participants were challenged by the lack of opportunity to share their stories. They expressed that their parents did not provide enough time or attention to acknowledge their achievements or to hear about their adventure stories. Lucy recollected:

> They were just like because some of them like my mum she was very brief about it. She was like I hope you have fun, then… just go. I wanted them to understand more and just talk to me more about it.

Furthermore, youth participants stated that even though their parents listened to their experience, they did not understand how intense and difficult their WA was. Youth struggled to make them realise how hard it was. Youth also observed a similar lack of understanding from their friends and teachers at school. Ella explained her difficulties as:

> It was hard like when you tried to explain what you went through because they didn't understand that. Like with the hike you would explain like you walk through rain and stuff, but they think like a basic walk and climbing and everything. It's hard because they like try to imagine you doing it. Yeah, it's beyond what they think it is. The teachers they didn't really know like what we went through. So, they were like ok you went through Project K, how was it, but they didn't really understand what we went through.

Some of the youth participants revealed that some of the teachers and friends at school were not genuinely interested in listening to their experiences. Moreover, many of the youth

experienced *jealousy from their classmates*. A few of the youth shared that even their close friends ignored them when they returned to their class. Indie shared that:

> A lot of people at school when we were leaving, they were like "oh Project K, you gotta go in the bush and have no toilet and stuff" but then we told them what it was actually like, and …. they were kind of jealous that we got to go.

Further on, Alice's reflection revealed how her friends responded when she shared her WA experiences:

> I didn't get any encouragements, like pretty much from some friends … they were just like shame that you went on this, like at the start they were like have fun staying in a bush and all this. Yeah, they were like giving me all this stuff like shame and stuff, and I kind of told them that we went to the pools and a motel, and we did all those fun things, and they were just like "dammit."

Some of the youth participants expressed feeling "different and weird" after the WA when they were back in their comfort zone. Youth participants experienced differences within themselves as well as differences within their surroundings which can be seen from the following quote from Caleb: "It was like nothing is changed but also everything is changed at the same time." Some of the youth struggled to get back to their normal routines. A few of them found it difficult to get used to technology again. Caleb felt "wired" to use the microwave to cook his food at home. Another youth participant, Liam, shared his thoughts:

> Getting used to just being around Wi-Fi and stuff, just holding a phone, when I first saw my phone I was like what, what is this, it felt much different, it honestly did I was like wow it felt like I was getting it brand new again, and getting used to being with my family as well and used to sleeping as well in my bed as well especially sleeping on the floor of the tent.

Another youth participant, Adam, recollected that: "the first time when I jumped back in my bed, I didn't really like it, so I slept on the floor, I was like yeah uncomfortable in my bed for some reason."

Some of the youth participants experienced *isolation* when they returned to their normal routine. As mentioned in memory mode, some of the youth participants experienced interpersonal conflicts within their Project K group. These continued even when they returned to their school. Hence one of the youth participants, Zara, recalled: "I felt like I was separated

from them [Project K group] like I didn't really fit in with the rest of them [Project K group]." Similarly, her mother Donna also noticed Zara's loneliness: "she's feeling really lonely. She doesn't have one particular close friend."

Additionally, some of the youth participants experienced boredom due to a lack of novelty in their classroom and home. This can be seen from the following youth participants' comments: "like our classes were really boring" (Hazel), "like here [at home] the same thing over and over every day, dishes, washing, make your bed. It's boring" (Jordan).

Moreover, some of the youth participants also experienced differences by *comparing the two environments.* Some of the youth participants observed that their home was brighter and there were lights everywhere. Ayla recalled: "the place seems brighter like I don't know why but it seemed brighter." Other youths experienced their home and city as very noisy. They seemed to be very sensitive to the differences between the wilderness and home environment. Similar to youth responses, some of the parents also noticed their children's unusual response. Carolyn (mother of Adam) observed:

> Being away from his structured environment for 3 weeks and then to come back in it he did sort of, he took that time just to sit with his big smile on his face, you know, wow, wow and then he was saying it's so bright, it's so bright, you know, the light is everywhere.

The following comments from some of the youth participants indicate that the period of reaction can vary individual to individual:

> Like the first week I was home and then I just adapted to it, it got normal. (Ayla)

> It was in the first couple of weeks of coming back, I did miss the group a lot I did miss being and doing all the activities together and stuff. (Zara)

> It was kind of a challenge to get used to home for a couple days. (Liam)

> Not many difficulties [at home] really, it kind of just all fell back into place how it was just normal day life. I did kind of feel sad because I was so used to waking up at 6 and not having a shower and just starting our day together. But then again, I felt happy because I actually had showers and I had a nice toilet and I can make my own food. (Lucy)

> Honestly, I felt like I didn't even leave because everyone was just the same around me. Like some of them [at school] were oh I heard you did that Project K thing how was it and they didn't really care about my response. It just felt like normal kind of. (Lucy)

Similarly, some of the parents also observed that their children were unsettled during the first week.

> Actually probably for the first week like for that first night it was just nonstop and then probably every day of the week and she was wondering what we'd be doing if we were still on camp or we'd be getting up at this time now mum and we'd be cooking dinner or we'd be off on our tramp for the next 10 hours so yeah probably for the first week and I think she kind of missed it a little bit. Like she said she was really happy to be home but there was a little part of her that still did miss that, that adventure and being out there. (Donna, mother of Zara)

5.3.4 Coping strategies.

Coping strategies outlines the youth participants' actions and responses to cope with the challenges over the reaction mode as experienced, observed or perceived by youth and their parents and key informants during the initial stage of their return from the WA. It was evident that the sudden transition between the two different environments was challenging for some of the youth participants. The responses from youth participants showed that youth were able to adapt to the changes and difficulties by remaining positive and also by persevering. The following comments from some of the youth participants demonstrate the positive attitude and perseverance of the youth to catch up with the missed classwork:

> I had to catch up and I sacrificed my morning tea and lunch. So I couldn't hang out with my friends, so I could catch up. I had lots of homework as well. There was still like gaps in learning. There's still gaps in learning now but I'm still working on that to catch up. I'm more determined to keep doing it even if it is boring and I have more a purpose of doing it. (Ayla)

> I've been staying at school and coming home late nights because so I can like study and do my homework and try to finish my exam assessments. (Ethan)

Many of the youth participants derived support from continuous support from *wolfpack meetings*. Youth maintained bonding with their wolfpack by hanging out with them at school, through follow-up meetings during community challenges and mentoring support. Moreover,

some of the youth participants shared that they maintained connections with their wolfpack through the Facebook page.

> We just talk about it [WA] online sometimes because we have a group that we talk about, remember that time [WA] that we were laughing at the jokes that we said and we just carried on for a little while and then they said don't worry guys at least we go to the same school and then we just started talking to each other more and that. (Ethan)

> During community challenge, we met with other schools who had just recently finished their wilderness adventure. Yeah, we were just hanging out with them. (Jordan)

Similar to youth participants, some of the parents also mentioned the wolfpack contact. Carolyn (mother of Adam) demonstrated how she checked on Adam's wolfpack support:

> He seems to be, he's come back adapted into school. I have asked him if he's kept in contact with the group, you know, at school. He said yeah, we see each other around all the time we talk.

The responses from key informants demonstrate that youth participants go through an unsettling period and take some time to settle down with their normal life. Because the majority of the youth were accustomed to their WA routine, the sudden transition to their normal life could be confusing for them. One of the key informants described this period as the "bump after the wilderness" and added that it happens in the first 3 months and settles down once youth are paired with their mentors. Another key informant, Amber, noted that: "for some students …they don't know how to fit in …or whether they are going to fit back into their environment, …[it] can be a little bit unsettling for them."

One of the key informants, Barbara (programme manager), described the transition period as:

> It's like coming back from a long holiday to home or a stay in the hospital. The transition is always difficult …they are happy to be home and see everybody …there will be a high excitement returning and then …the hardest thing would be settling back into normality.

A few of the parents recollected that their children shared stories intermittently for more than a week, whenever they were reminded of their WA. Reaction mode illustrates the immediate reflections, reactions, and observations of the youth and their parents and key informants when the youth returned to the social environment. Reaction mode describes youth reactions experienced by youth and their emotional fluctuations and reflections when they return to their

old environment. As mentioned above, youth participants followed different coping strategies to overcome the reactions when they returned after the WA.

5.4 Adaptation Mode

Adaptation mode encompasses the findings from youth, parents and key informants about their experiences, observations, and perspectives of how the young people adjusted or adapted back to their normal life after the WA. Youth recollected their experiences at home and school approximately one month after they returned from the WA. Parents also shared what they experienced and observed during that period. Even though the key informants' responses were not tied to a particular time frame with respect to a recently completed WA, their responses helped to triangulate the youth and caregiver perspectives. The adaptation experiences one month after the WA are delineated within two subthemes: 1) nurturing environment, which outlines the supports received at home and school; and 2) challenging environment, which refers to the challenges and difficulties experienced by the youth in their home and school environment. The previous section on reaction mode elaborated the immediate supports and difficulties experienced by the youth participants at home and school. However, the nurturing and challenging environment subthemes describe the continued support and challenges they experienced when they returned to their normal routines after the initial adjustments period described in the reaction mode. The majority of the youth experienced both nurturing and challenging environments; however, the combination varied in terms of the degree of each experience based on their personal context.

5.4.1 Nurturing environment.

The previous theme, reaction mode, explained how the youth experienced emotional highs and lows upon their return and how they observed the difference between the two environments – the WA and daily life. However, as days passed, they got more accustomed to reality. Under this theme, *nurturing environment*, findings are categorised under two third-level themes as follows: *positive encouragement and feedback* and *academic support*. When the youth returned to their normal routine after their initial adjustments and excitement explained in reaction mode, many youths continued to encounter constructive feedback and support from others. In this sense, youth experienced a nurturing environment as a result of efforts from their parents at home, teachers, and friends, at school, and Project K programme staff. Youth talked about the various kinds of support they received, including support to catch up with missed classwork, positive encouragement, and recognition of their WA exposure from others.

The nurturing environment also captures the *academic support* they received from their teachers and friends to catch up with missed classwork. Some of the youth were provided with extra time and extensions to submit their assignments or opportunities to re-take class tests. Ayla pointed out that: “They gave me work and stuff. They just came to me and asked how I was doing and when we had tests, they extended my time and gave me time and my science teacher gave me notes as well.” Some of the teachers invited the youth to share their WA experiences with their class. The positive response from teachers made youth feel proud and recognised. The extra support from teachers alleviated the stress among Project K participants and helped them to catch up with their missed classwork after their WA.

The youth spoke about the support they received from Project K staff to assist with the transition back to home and school. One of the youth participants, Indie, briefly recollected details about the debrief that happened at the end of their WA: “the last day we had a revision day and we did lots of things in our little booklets just about how we can adjust at home, I can’t really remember what it was.” Some of the other youth participants added that when they returned to school, Project K staff motivated and encouraged them to apply the skills learned from the WA into their daily life. Jack explained, “they just made sure that I was catching up on my work.” Adam also recollected, “they were just saying keep going if you muck up just forget about it and learn from your mistakes and I was like, yep.” But it was interesting to note that the majority of the youth shared that, when they returned from the WA, they lost contact with their instructors, whom they missed. However, some of the youth were able to reconnect with the instructors and staff during the community challenge, the second component of the Project K programme. Youth participants were happy to reconnect with their WA instructors. Ayla recalled that: “they [instructors] were very encouraging. They were still the same people they were on the wilderness adventure.”

Only very few parents revealed how their children were supported by school teachers at school when their children returned. They shared that teachers acknowledged their child’s achievement in class and also supported them with extra time, missed class work, tests and assignments. Sophie (mother of Jack) remembered that:

> The teachers have been very good about it. They talked about his adventure in his class and they said “oh you can have extra time for whatever they did in that last week.” They had to hand in some assessments or they did some new work and they have given him time to complete that work. So they were very supportive about it.

The majority of the parents were concerned about their children missing classwork. Parents shared that they neither received feedback from teachers nor heard about what was missed from their children; hence they lived under the impression that their children had caught up with what was missed.

Some key informants also described the debrief organised at the end of the WA and highlighted the WA logbooks distributed to the youth participants to record their reflections. This was part of the *programmatic strategies* to facilitate reintegration. In addition, the majority of the key informants shared that they perceived the community challenge, the second Project K programme component, as the perfect context to support young people to transition back to their normal lives and provide them with an opportunity to check in on how they were adapting. Some of the key informants revealed that they had created a closed Facebook page for each Project K cohort, and it was being used as a platform to follow up with youth participants. Project K staff also visited the students at school and kept in contact with their parents through text messages. The key informants emphasised the joint effort required to nurture the youth participants when they returned to reality. They spoke of the role of parents, school liaison teachers and class teachers in nurturing the youth participants as part of a joint effort. Amber, one of the key informants, shared how she supported the youth participants when they returned:

> Just being there and knowing they've been through this programme and reminding them about school and making sure they are catching up on their school work because obviously, they've missed a bit of school work by being in the wilderness. Just ensuring that all those networks are working together to ensure that is coming together.

5.4.2 Challenging environment.

The *challenging environment* is the second subtheme of the adaptation mode. This subtheme describes the challenges and difficulties faced by some of the youth and the observations and perspectives of parents or key informants when youth returned to their realities. As mentioned in reaction mode, a few of the youths experienced discomfort in their comfort zone and outlined the immediate challenges they experienced upon return. This subtheme describes the ongoing challenges experienced by youth after their initial reactions. Few youth experienced difficulties in terms of a lack of understanding and encouragement from supportive environments including family, peers and schools.

The contrast between the two environments became evident when some of the youth participants reflected on the *lack of autonomy* afforded to them in their day-to-day

environments. Some of the youth were impressed by the experiential learning, *learning consequences in a natural way* in the WA. The once-in-a-lifetime experiences also provided them with opportunities to exercise autonomy, power, and responsibility. However, reentry back to the normal environment and learning in the structured classroom was difficult for some of the "kinaesthetic" youth participants, as can be seen from Jordan's recollection:

> You lead yourself; you're not told what to do. They [WA instructors] suggest it and you choose what you want to do. We had a lot of choices. We were treated more like adults. I enjoyed that…. At school, you don't really have a choice at all.

Lack of encouragement and support from family or school also challenged the youth participants. Kay (Jordan's mother) recalled the lack of positive encouragement experienced by her son from the school one month after his return:

> So again, it's nagging…. They [school] have suppressed the fact that his behaviour has improved, but they need the stuff. So what do you do as a mother….? What do you do...? You are shouting at your son again…. thanks for improving your behaviour really proud of you now get your homework done.

The above quote demonstrates the lack of encouragement and constructive feedback from the school teachers and lack of autonomy and power experienced in the structured school environment. Ayla experienced a lack of autonomy when it came to healthy eating habits at home. She recollected that:

> Once I started eating the food that I was eating …I felt like heavier. I felt like when I was at Project K fed really healthy food and then after like after 18 days with the same routine of meal and like same foods and that I started to feel really energised and I felt great. It was healthier compared to the lifestyle I usually have. So, when I went home and I had like regular meals that I had before I went to Project K. I started feeling like I felt I didn't feel as great as I did like after Project K. Like I felt lighter happier and now it's like….

Some of the youth encountered challenges in different contexts, but these *challenging experiences varied across individuals.* For example, some of the youth had a very supportive family but did not receive much support from the school. On the other hand, a few youth participants encountered challenges at home and school when they reentered their normal lives. A few of the youth also did not get any support from the school to catch up with their missed class work when they returned to school. Some of them struggled with having missed so much

classwork because it was the last week of their school term. One of the youth participants, Max, recollected that he was challenged with the missed classwork: “catching up with all the work or just with tests, because we had a few tests, and don’t know a lot of stuff. Because I missed it.” Further, he added, “they [teachers] could have given me like a big list of what I need to know, or what they did when I was gone and to leave my test, which I couldn’t learn at all.” Catching up and preparing for tests after the WA was stressful for Max and he did not get an extension for his test.

As mentioned in reaction mode, some of the youth got bored with the routine tasks at home and school. Some of the parents also shared that their children were not supported adequately to catch up with their missed class work and they were concerned about it. The majority of parents reported that they did not hear any updates or feedback from their teachers with regard to their children’s missed class work. Parents expected teachers to contact them and provide them with some guidelines, so they could follow up with their children. Nicola, mother of Caleb, recollected that:

> I suppose they could have made contact with us. Because it is quite hard for us parents to try and make contact with the school and say what is happening, how is going to do this, what he has missed. I think maybe the school could take a bit time out and just say, listen, Caleb missed test or exams, I have given him the copy of work or I expect that Caleb makes his own efforts to try and catch up the work or don’t worry about it or you know.

Some of the youth had *relationship problems with their parents or teachers*. One of the youth participants, Hazel, recollected that returning home was difficult for her. Further, she added that she was “going through a tough time right now” with her parents. However, she only spoke briefly about this. Due to the difficulties and challenges at home, Hazel avoided seeking support from others which can be seen from her responses as follows: “Project K staff always offered me help. I didn’t like accept it because I wasn’t feeling in the mood to tell them what was going on.”

Similar to the youth participants, one of the parents, Maria (mother of Alice), described the relationship issues that exist between her husband and her daughter and how this influenced the expectations they had of Alice when she returned from the WA:

> I don't know, Alice and her father are sort of hate each other quite a lot, but then her father oh it's hard to explain,… Her and her father tend to clash a bit more so that hasn't really changed when she got back, not all the time, but they are both strong personalities.

Similarly, Jordan recollected the relationship problem he had with his class teacher as follows: "we didn't really get along the last term because she [teacher] just started the last term and she was our new form teacher and yeah we didn't really get along."

A few of the youth shared that they did not receive much support from Project K staff when they returned from the WA. Youth participants experienced more support prior to their WA. Caleb added:

> I just didn't really get support,… we didn't even talk to them [WA instructors] after wilderness experience, that's part of except…. we went to community challenges. Before the programme you had a lot of arrangements and meetings likes that, but when I came back,… pretty much nothing.

Indie outlined the expectations some youth had of WA instructors after the WA:

> They [WA instructors] could come see how we are doing, instead of like we got here and we said bye to them, and they just left, we could have had a catch up with them, because everyone was like saying that they miss them, but we still get to see Nina [WA instructor], for our community challenge, that was cool.

Similarly, Nicola (mother of Caleb) reflected the *expectation gap* experienced by her as follows:

> In terms of communication, so around when your children come home these are the things that they should have with them with the adventure, maybe sit down and talk to them their expectations or they should talk to you about it or they themselves. Because I don't know except what Caleb really told me. I suppose I can go and find out, but you they could have been like of these things that told us like kind of one of the evenings or the week before they came back.

Similar to the youth participants, their parents also shared their observations and experiences of the challenges faced by their children when they returned. The aforementioned subtheme, nurturing the environment, described how parents supported their children to the best of their abilities. However, some of the parents described personal challenges that resulted in creating

a challenging environment for their children. Some of the parents were *overwhelmed with their parental responsibilities.* Others struggled to discipline their children. On the other hand, some struggled financially to meet the needs and demands of their teenage children. Hence some of the parents could not provide enough time for their children to attend the Project K meetings or drop them off for the meetings. Nicola, mother of Caleb, explained her concerns as follows:

> I don't know, it seems really really hard, because I am a single parent and we have got no other family in New Zealand. His dad lives in another country. So just me and his sister and Caleb. So it is really hard for me to try and do a lot at home you know, well I work in the city and I need to catch the bus, so I am only getting home only at 6 o'clock and half past 6 sometimes. And then you know and with his sister does, ballet and netball whatever so, it's quite hard to do anything more than I am doing now, and I don't know how to do, what I need to support him at home. Because I can try and make some changes, so don't do this and don't do that, but all that then does direct conflict at home, which doesn't necessarily help at all.

Parents were also confronted with *other external factors* including children's use of gadgets, social media, and negative peer influences. Lynne (mother of Hazel) added her concerns about social media and how she set boundaries for her daughter, saying:

> I think every household struggle with their children being on social media and the only other way to actually prevent or to actually stop them from using it is to either put time limits on how long they're allowed on for or taking the Wi-Fi away.

Hence, the responses from youth and their parents and key informants demonstrate that the adaptation period can vary from individual to individual and again it depends on individual characteristics and the contextual factors.

5.5 Transfer Mode

The fifth major theme, *transfer mode,* illustrates the insights and reflections on the transfer of learning, or application of the skills, and changes or personal growth experienced, observed or perceived by youth participants and their parents and key informants one month after the WA. The findings under transfer mode are reported under three subthemes: 1) transfer success, 2) transfer failure, and 3) personal growth. The first subtheme outlines the evidence of transfer of learning from the WA into their home and school environments and the opportunities they had to apply their skills in daily life. The second subtheme depicts the evidence of transfer failure and adverse outcomes experienced or observed or perceived by youth and their parents. The

third subtheme illustrates the personal growth and positive change experienced or observed by youth and their parents 1 month after the WA.

5.5.1 Transfer success.

Findings under this subtheme are categorised under three third-level themes as follows: *transfer at home; transfer at school; and opportunities to apply skills.* Youth and their parents and key informants shared that youth were able to *transfer* the skills learned from the WA into their home environment. Many of the youth participants and their parents recollected the increased responsibility the youth took on at home, especially doing house chores. The following comments demonstrate the transfer at home:

> Just do all the chores by myself because at camp I usually pack down the tents and help other people and like at home I do the same and like I don't pack down tents I pack down my room like just clean it. (Ethan)

> She wants to cook what she cooked, you know, while she was away, stir-fries and stuff like that and she made a meal the other night that they had made while they were away. So she has taken on that I'm going to cook dinner tonight role. So that was quite good. (Maria, mother of Alice)

Similarly, youth participants were able to transfer the skills into their school environment. A few of the youth participants disclosed that they were able to transfer life skills including communication skills, leadership skills, time management, goal setting and social competencies into their school and classroom environment. The following comments from Lucy and Jordan demonstrate how they transferred the skills explicitly and implicitly. Lucy transferred the leadership skills learned in WA into the classroom environment. On the other hand, Jordan transferred the physical activities in the WA into school physical education activities.

> It's like the teacher will ask a question I'll just be like oh yeah and then if like the class is being disruptive, I'll just be like guys…. like I'm more leader even though I wasn't really a good leader during wilderness and after that, I got those skills from that. (Lucy)

> I'm more enthusiastic about what I do. Like I don't think oh this is too hard I can't do it because, you know, if I can climb a mountain 30 pounds and 12 other people then I can, you know, run around the court. (Jordan)

It appears that youth participants were able to transfer the skills only when they identified or received the *opportunity to apply the skills.* In order to practise the skills, they internalised and reflected on their learnings. Some of the parents created opportunities for their children by providing autonomy and opportunities so youth could transfer their new skills, as can be seen from following statements from some of the youth and parents:

> They [parents] knew I'd gained more confidence in myself and they just supported me through that. Like letting me step up more and do my own thing. Like in the mornings they'd have to wake me up because I'm not a morning person. But I am able to get up now surprisingly. I've stepped up. (Olivia)

> Just giving her the freedom to make her own decisions and where she spends her time because we've noticed that she has become a lot more responsible in her thinking and where her time should be placed. Whereas before we would have to tell her to do your homework or no you are not going to training tonight because you haven't done your training. She is deciding all that stuff herself: I can't go to training tonight I have got a project that I have to hand in. So yeah just giving her that freedom to make those choices on her own, I mean we will step in if we need to but at the moment she is doing really, really well at the time managing all her stuff. (Charlotte, mother of Olivia)

> I've always been in the background and always sort of guided her through it but when she's come back I've let her do it all on her own so in that respect she's yeah, because she'd say I can't do it by myself, like I need you to help me and to tell me and to show me what to do and this time I've told her what she needs to do but then just left her in the kitchen by herself and she's done a whole meal from start to end. (Donna, mother of Zara)

5.5.2 Transfer failure.

The second subtheme of transfer mode, *transfer failure,* delineates the evidence regarding the lack of perceived effect of WA learning outcomes and observed adverse effects after the WA. During the first phase of data collection, some of the parents had concerns regarding their children at school and home. However, they pointed out that some of their children's behaviours were generally related to their adolescent stage and not Project K. Hence, some of the parents and teachers presumed that they would see positive changes within their children. Similarly, a few of the youth participants also shared that teachers and parents had high expectations of positive change when they returned from the WA. However, it appears that

those *presumed expectations* had an adverse effect on some youth participants, as can be seen from Alice's words:

> I am just like losing like, because I was always late to school and when I went on this like Project K thing all the teachers and my parents think that like that will change me, so like not being late to school so much but it hasn't changed, because I have been late to school so much so yeah.

Kay (mother of Jordan) was happy to see positive changes in her son; however, she was concerned about how Jordan transferred the skills back to his school environment. She shared that, overall Project K helped Jordan to increase his confidence and life skills and helped him to believe in himself. However, he channelled his confidence and self-belief in negative ways as well. Kay was concerned about his negative response towards his teachers and friends. Kay received complaints from school in relation to Jordan's fighting, as she explained:

> Going away on Project K helped him realise that it is a bigger world than getting the best marks or conforming and we have always had a problem with that, conforming to just give the teachers what they want because you can do it, but he'll resist it… Critical thinking is everything, question everything and that's what he's doing at school unfortunately and I can't knock that out of him. And so that's why he loses confidence because he loses faith in his leaders and when he raises questions to teachers, of course, they are going to get pissed off that is human, but it is not going to stop him. So the Project K kinaesthetic emotion, practical, life skills that is all drill something home to him and going back to school he has seemed to have lost even more faith. So it has given him confidence certainly to stick up for himself…. He is setting himself up for more fights…. the one that happened last week where this boy ended up with stitches.

Responses from Amber, one of the key informants, also substantiated the above perceptions of the parent:

> Then, as time progresses, some students go into school and they might be a little bit disruptive because they've got this new found confidence and so they want the world to know about it. So they might disrupt a little bit more in class just because they want to share their experience and they want to show the others in the class, you know, how much confidence they've got and, you know, they are willing to do that.

5.5.3 Personal growth.

The subtheme *personal growth* illustrates the various positive changes experienced or observed by youth and parents 1 month after the WA. The findings under this subtheme are categorised under seven third-level themes as follows: *positive self-concept, skill development, academic success, social competence, outdoor orientation, healthful choices,* and *cultural and spiritual connectedness.* Positive self-concept references the findings regarding change experienced or observed in youths' self-attributes.

After a month, the majority of the youth experienced a change in their self-concept. Ethan reflected: "Project K has helped me a lot because it made me a new person and I'm feeling better now." Youth showcased positive self-concepts that increased their awareness of who they are, what they want, need, sense, feel, think, and do, which was carried out through self-reflection. The first phase of data revealed that youth observed changes within themselves and self-reported positive outcomes. When they returned to their normal life, they continued their self-reflection. The WA was an opportunity to increase positive self-concepts and they continued to practise what they learned by referring back to the intensive experience through self-reflection when they were confronted with adversities. This was evident in Zara's reflections:

> When I think that I can't do things, I just have to like tell myself that I can do it, and I learned that I actually can do things that I didn't think that I could do before …. I am happy that I did the journey.

One month after the WA, Adam revealed "I can talk more deeper in my life… I feel like fit and I feel good." The youth gained a positive outlook and started to recognise the strength and resources around them rather than being negative. Liam recalled: "I'm definitely more positive than I was when I first, before wilderness adventure, but yeah just keep looking to be as positive as I can." They learned to appreciate things more because they learned from their difficult experiences. When they were in the WA, they did not have any facilities, they learned to manage with the basics. The transitions back to their normal life made them realise the privilege they had at home. The youth evaluated how their perspectives and personalities had changed after their WA experience. They started to view their lives in a very positive way. Zoe recalled that: "I'm not going to lie but before I left like our family was like stressing everywhere like arguing with one another and when I got home it was just so calm." The WA provided ample occasions to carry out self-reflection which helped them to recognise their own strengths and

weaknesses. WA exposure provided a greater understanding of themselves. Some of the youth shared that they have grown and increased their maturity. They shared that the WA helped them to regulate their emotions or increase their control of their emotions.

Youth also experienced increases in self-confidence, resilience, and a sense of achievement; it also helped them to overcome challenges with perseverance. The adventurous activities and difficulties experienced in the WA increased their self-confidence to face and overcome the hardship and challenges in their daily life. It enabled them to cope with adverse situations at home and school with self-confidence. The WA provided mental resilience to adapt to novelty, new environments with strangers and difficult circumstances, as can be seen from Liam's reflections: "I'm determined to just keep going when things are tough like walking to school and walking to the bus stop and stuff sometimes that's hard cause yeah just things like that just determination and yeah."

It also enabled them to be open and confident to express their feelings as can be seen from Jack's comment:

> When people come in to do things I am more positive towards my response, like when I, at school I'm in PE, and if it's something that I am not comfortable with doing I will explain to the teacher why, and then she will let me do something else that I am more comfortable with, like its more positive, like instead of me saying I'm not doing PE all together.

Oliva remembered how she relied on her parents to wake her up in the morning prior to the WA. However, after the WA, she kept up her motivation and continued to practise the discipline she learned from the WA. Zoe recalled: "I gained my confidence and trust because like I'm a shy person, yeah and like going like when I went through it my confidence just kept on growing and it still is growing."

Parents also observed their children as thoughtful or "thinking for themselves" once they returned. Some of the parents observed that their children were "completely different." Donna (parent of Zara) was amazed and exclaimed: "where is my child?" when she observed the positive difference in her daughter upon her return. Others reported that their children became more mature and grown up after the WA. Kay (mother of Jordan) recollected that, through the WA, her son "discovered himself who he was." Parents recognised their children's positive outlook or attitude at home and school. Some of the parents also observed emotional stability

in their children. They described their children as “more calm.” They shared that their children had started to appreciate things more. The majority of the parents disclosed that their children had increased self-confidence. They recalled that the WA helped their children to realise that they could achieve things that they did not think they could do by themselves. The WA provided mental toughness and resilience to face challenging situations. It provided passion and enthusiasm to excel in whatever their children wanted to achieve in their life. Lynne (mother of Hazel) proudly talked about her daughter’s achievements:

> Well, if you look at her in there, she’s actually a lot more confident. She has got so much more confidence within herself and I hope she actually does use it to be able to strive and succeed in everything that she does. At the moment ….she’s full on with netball. She coaches a team at the school. She plays in their top Year, 10 team. She’s also a trialist for Auckland under 15s and she’s also an umpire.

One of the key informants, Janet, described how WA helped them to learn new skills which enabled them to apply their abilities and realise their capacities:

> From the wilderness adventure, they gain a lot of the wilderness outdoor experience about learning how to cook, how to clean. It is things that they don’t really necessarily do at home. That they can do they don’t want to, but they learn they can do it. So, a lot of what comes out of that is they learn there is so much potential in them.

Parents were thrilled to observe the difference in their children with regard to responsibility. They reported, after the WA, their children are more responsible for doing house chores and they didn’t need to be reminded or nagged to do anything at home. Prior to the WA, parents had to remind them repeatedly to do the house chores, as Liam’s father, George, related: “before he went he didn’t really like oh mate clean your room and make your bed. He didn’t, it was a bit of a hassle to get him to do anything. Now he just does it, so it’s really good.”

Youth improved their abilities to regulate impulsive behaviours. Some of the youth learned to be patient and listen to other people’s conversations without any judgements. Some of the youth learned to control their anxieties, Jack revealed: “in big groups … I would always be nervous, and I would pretty much separate myself just automatically. Now I don’t do that.” Youth experienced happiness and inner peace.

Youth also achieved *skill development*. The response from youth and their parents indicates that the WA enabled them to improve life skills including communication skills; decision-

making skills; goal-setting skills; leadership skills; time-management skills; problem-solving skills and critical thinking. Moreover, they also developed specific skills and abilities, such as cooking skills and outdoor-specific skills, after the WA. Youth acquired life skills through experiential learning in the WA. Some of the parents also appreciated the decision-making skills of their children. The self-awakening experience motivated youth to practise the newly learned skills when they returned to their normal social environment. The WA helped them to analyse how they were before and what needed to be changed in different aspects of their life, including personal and interpersonal components. They learned to manage their time effectively. Jack recalled what he could improve upon:

> Stop wasting as much time as I normally do. I spend a lot of time just sitting staring into space. So yeah and I've been making some progress on that like I don't do it as much anymore, ….and I want to stop doing it completely.

They learned to set goals, prioritise their goals, solve problems and achieve their goals with enthusiasm. When they returned, some of the youth worked hard to catch up with their missed class work. It was evident from Ayla's response how she set her goals, prioritised and solved her problems:

> I had to catch up and I sacrificed my morning tea and lunch. So I couldn't hang out with my friends, yeah so I could catch up. I had lots of homework, …there was still like gaps in learning …but I'm still working on that to catch up.

Parents also observed how their children set their priorities and managed their time wisely. Charlotte (mother of Olivia) added that: "we've noticed that she has become a lot more responsible in her thinking and where her time should be placed."

Youth also gained leadership qualities as can be seen from Adam's reflection: "I gained how to become a good leader, and like talking to big groups and knowing more about like things I don't really know about."

Some of the youth reported that they had learned special skills and experiences which they could not learn in the city. This included putting up tents, cooking with river water, bathing and washing in a stream, using long drops and coping with the absence of technology. Parents added that their children improved their cooking skills and cooked more at home.

Youth also achieved *academic success.* The findings showed that youth improved academic engagement and success after WA. After the WA, Ayla recollected: "I actually felt good to be

back at school, I felt good being there," Prior to WA she thought "school sucked." Parents also reported that after the WA, their children started to focus on their school work and studying more. Parents recollected that their children worked hard or stayed back at school to catch up with the missed class work. Charlotte added how the WA made Oliva prioritise her goals to improve her academic life:

> It has made her realise because she is always known ….as a good sportsperson. So her academics she struggles …but she knows that …she has to work really, really hard in order to stay at that particular level. I think she has found that out recently. So before she used to worry about what training she was going to next, but now she is worried about I have to complete this homework and I have to do this and this and this as well as doing her training.

Another positive change experienced or observed among youth participants was *social competence.* Youths' improved social abilities included relationship skills, teamwork and empathy after the WA. The WA made Indie realise that she did not need to be shy in front of new people, "it made me to think that it's cool to meet new people and have new friends and pushing myself more." Ethan shared that: "I'm making a lot of friends at school too."

One month after their exposure, youth reported that they increased their social skills, and this helped them to improve their relationship with others. The earlier section, memory mode, showcased how youth became a wolfpack, and continued their bond with their Project K group. Jordan referred to them as "lifelong friends." Moreover, some of the youth started to extend their friendship circle. Alice recollected: "I'll be around my friend's friends, that I don't know, and I'll be quiet and now I'm talking to people like at the school more and making more friends." It was also noted that youth improved their relationships with their parents and teachers. Jordan disclosed that he did not get along with his teacher in the last term but after the WA they started to get along. His school teacher and friends acknowledged his positive changes. They also learned to communicate with others without technology. Youth shared that they improved their cooking skills and learned to take on responsibilities at home by helping parents by doing house chores. They also learned how to be a role model. Lucy recalled:

> I'm just trying to keep the initiative one up just to take initiative and show it and there was one called practice where you yeah practise what you preach. So when I say something to others, I actually do that like follow by example and stuff.

Youth learned that it is okay to ask for help from others. Ethan recognised the importance of teamwork. The WA reinforced how he could achieve difficult tasks through teamwork.

Parents shared that the WA helped the youth to improve their interpersonal skills. Some of the parents observed it also assisted them to improve their child–parent relationship. Some of the parents shared that they now had more open conversations with their children. Some parents reported that, prior to WA, their teenage children hardly talked or shared with their parents and now they were having more conversations. Parents had the impression that their children were more respectful and politer towards others. Some parents were stunned at seeing their children initiate conversations with strangers. For example, Caroline recalled how Adam took the initiative to contact the banking customer service to install online banking on his new phone. Caroline knows that Adam has "difficulty in expressing words he uses." However, Caroline added the customer service person bore with him, while she was orienting Adam:

> There was a little bit of time in there, "just put you on hold while I do this," and she said "oh how is your day going?" Adam said "oh, really good, I just come back from a camp and we did…" and they're like wow this kid is talking, you know. Then instead of leaving it at that he then turned the conversation around and said "how is your day going, how is your weekend going?" So I thought brilliant, that is such a change that I haven't seen in Adam ever. So, tick, tick Project K.

It appeared to parents that their children developed a new friend circle including the Project K group. When they returned, some of the youth started to get along with some of their friends whom they had never talked with much before. Charlotte shared that the WA provided an avenue for her daughter, Olivia, to build strong relationships with other people and to learn from others and acknowledge other people's backgrounds. She learned to understand "the difference that people have." The WA also removed shyness in youth, so that their children found it easier to relate to new people. Some of the parents shared that the WA aided their children to work as a group or a team and increased their social skills. They also observed the close bonds or family feeling of the Project K wolfpack.

The WA helped some youth participants develop connections with nature. Accordingly, another positive change among youth was an increased *outdoor orientation.* WA helped youth to increase their orientation towards the environment and outdoors. Youth experienced nature closely during the WA. Hence, when they returned, they had developed a connectedness to nature and the environment. Some of the youth started to enjoy outdoor activities. Ethan

revealed how he transferred the skills to daily life and how it changed his orientation towards outdoor activities:

> We'd been to different places I hadn't been before and like it was tough because I didn't usually like tramp for that long like walk for a whole day and like carry heavy bags. But now I like going the gym and working at health and that and usually, I just sit at home yeah and just watch movies. But now I'm outside mostly everyday yeah.

Parents shared how their children oriented themselves into different sports activities. They recalled that they were impressed about their children's orientation towards outdoor activities. Some of the parents reported that when their children returned, they took the initiative to join new sports. Gloria (mother of Zoe) shared "it was surprising to see Zoe joined for the school rugby team. Previously she played only netball and she wanted to try rugby soon after the WA." Additionally, Sophie (mother of Jack) added, "Jack requested a bike as his birthday gift and he started to go outside riding his bike everywhere."

Healthful choices was another positive change experienced or observed by youth participants and their parents. Some of the youth made up their minds to strive towards health and fitness by avoiding unhealthy foods and by doing physical exercise. Parents also observed healthier eating habits among their children. It was interesting to note that when their children returned, some parents reported their children had lost heaps of weight. On the other hand, Gloria (mother of Zoe) recalled that her daughter put on weight because, prior to WA, Zoe had starved herself. She did not eat food at home, instead, she spent more time on her phone. But the WA helped her to get used to the healthy eating habit of eating three meals a day and she continued her WA routine once she returned home. Moreover, some parents reported that their children started to avoid junk food and ate healthier foods like fruits and vegetables.

WA enabled youth participants to increase c*ultural and spiritual connectedness.* It was interesting to note that one of the parents, Kay, shared that the WA helped her son to "reignite" his Māori cultural identity and their closeness with mother earth which was highlighted under the spiritual and cultural connection subtheme of the memory mode with quotes from Kay, mother of Jordan. Similarly, Gloria (mother of Zoe), shared that Zoe started to go to youth prayer meetings in their church when she returned from the WA.

The findings under this subtheme exemplify that the unique experience in the WA enhanced the overall personal growth of the youth participants. The triangulated response from parents

also validated the positive outcome 1 month after the WA. It appears that youth participants were able to reflect and internalise the newly learned skills and transfer them into their home and school environment even after a month. Furthermore, the data revealed that all youth who participated in the research talked about some kind of personal growth as a result of their participation in the Project K WA intervention.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter has described the reintegration experiences of youth and the perceptions and observations of their parents. Even though there was no time frame attached to the key informants' data, their perspectives were embedded throughout the chapter to strengthen and validate the findings as another source of evidence. The chapter has provided in-depth insights into reintegration experiences of youth 1 month after participating in a residential positive youth development wilderness adventure programme. The following chapter outlines the youths' and parents' experiences and reflections of the reintegration process 7 months after the WA (that is 6 months after the first phase of data collection) as well as the contextual factors that promoted and impeded the youth participants' reintegration experiences, especially the transfer of skills.

Chapter 6 – Reintegration Experience – Seven Months After the Wilderness Adventure

Introduction

This chapter describes the differences in reintegration experiences of Project K youth over a period of seven months. The voices of key informants are included to triangulate the youth and parent data although there was no time frame linked to their responses. The second-phase findings only depict three major themes of the reintegration process described in the first phase: memory mode, adaptation mode, and transfer mode. It also includes further details about the context and factors that promoted or impeded the learning transfer of youth participants at home and school.

The key difference between the first- and second-phase findings is the absence of preparation mode and reaction mode as well as the inclusion of contextual factors that influenced the reintegration process. Five new major themes related to contextual factors were identified, namely: individual characteristics, family contextual factors, school contextual factors, Project K programme contextual factors, and other contextual factors. Figure 6.1 visualises the conceptual and thematic framework of the findings from the second phase. Each of the major contextual factor themes are categorised under subthemes that represent either promoting or impeding factors which are portrayed in green and brown, respectively, in Figure 6.1.

6.1 Memory Mode – Seven Months Later

The post-reintegration experience after 7 months showed considerable differences in memory mode. In the first phase, memory mode included five second-level themes. However, it appears that the youth participants' and their parents' memories of the WA changed considerably over the following 6 months. The findings related to memory mode from the second phase of data are categorised into two new second-level themes, as shown in Figure 6.1, as: 1) WA as a milestone, and 2) fading wolfpack memories. The first subtheme describes youths' and their parents' memory of the WA as a breakthrough and considered it as a once-in-a-lifetime achievement. The second subthemes present the fading wolfpack memories compared to the first phase of memory mode reported in Chapter 5.

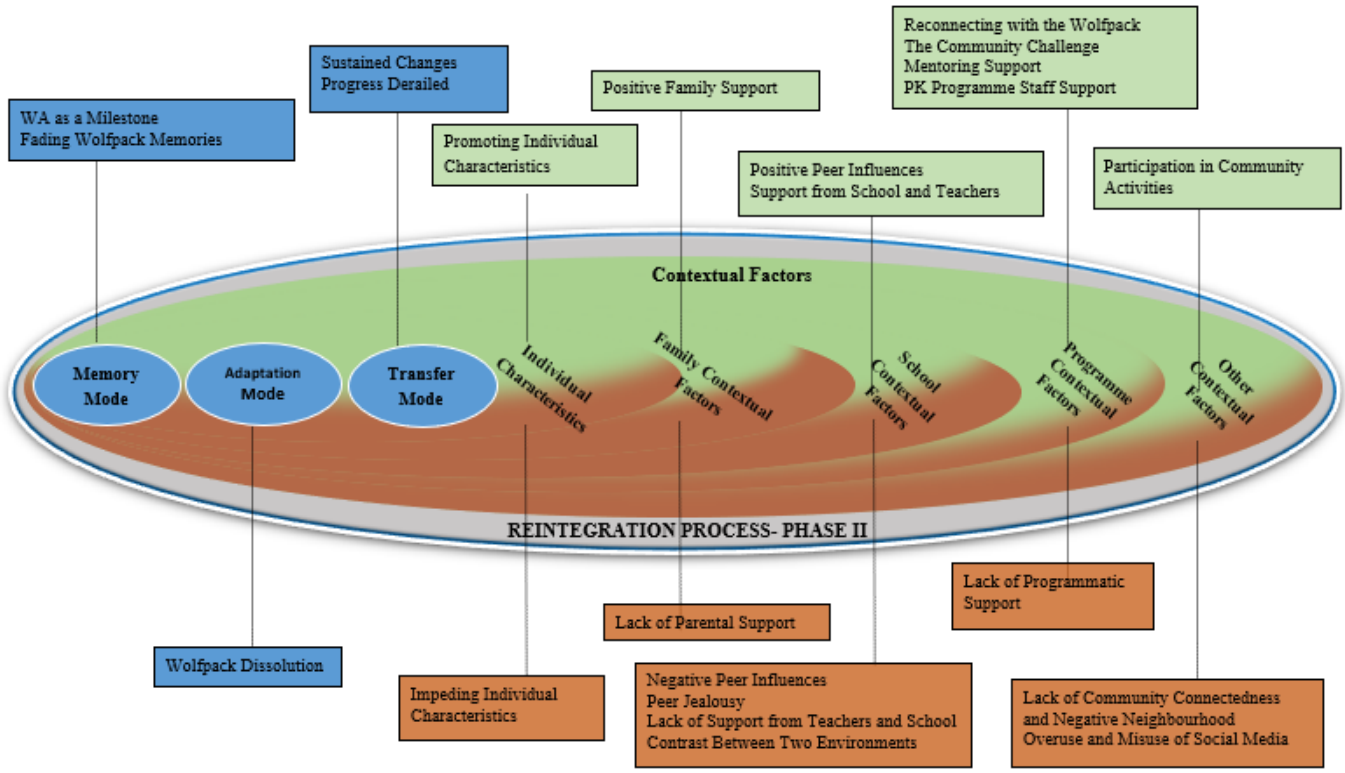

Figure 6.1. Conceptual thematic framework of Phase 2 reintegration experiences.

6.1.1 WA as a milestone

Although youth participants and their parent's recollections faded over the six months after Phase 1, a few of the research participants recalled the WA as milestone in their life. They still considered it as a once-in-a-lifetime achievement. Some youth recollected the challenges and support received from their wolfpack team, including facilitators, and considered it as their breakthrough. This can be seen from Ayla's response:

> We achieved such a big pinnacle walk because when we started it, we didn't think we could do it but we kept talking to each other and encouraging each other and the facilitators helped us and it was a pretty big achievement for both of us. It just felt like it was a special experience to remember. It was like a milestone.

Moreover, a few of the youth remembered WA as an inspirational experience that they relied on or referred back to whenever they were challenged with fear, loneliness or lack of confidence. It can be seen from the following, from Ethan:

> I just flicked through when I feel lonely …but I flick through to remember them just to like if I feel scared, I will get one of the photos look at them and they will give me back memories and just said to myself that I can do it. When I was like attempting to be a

> leader for our youth group, I was feeling scared but when I came back home, I flicked through our pictures and seeing us like challenging the wildness and the wilderness and that and then realised that I did actually. So I can do it.

The above-shared experience from Ethan demonstrates how he reviewed WA photos whenever he felt lonely or scared or lacked confidence to restore his positive spirit. WA memories always resonated in his mind as a ready reference. Hence for some of the youth, WA memories were an uplifting referral point. Similar to the youth participants, a few of the parents also recollected their observations of their children's WA memories. Anna, mother of Lucy, remembered that her daughter did not like the discomfort of the WA when she got back from the intervention. However, the following seven months had helped her daughter realise the positive impacts of the WA. Hence, Lucy felt better about her WA experience seven months later.

6.1.2 Fading wolfpack memories.

The subtheme fading wolfpack memories delineates the differences experienced or observed in the recollections of the WA 7 months after the youth participated. The degree to which the memories faded differed across three levels. A few of the youth participants reported that they were reminded of WA constantly. Zoe continuously longed for the WA experience. Being in the company of their Project K friends rekindled their WA memories. For example, Ayla shared that:

> I'm still grateful that I got the chance to do it and I appreciate, I still appreciate things that I didn't have while I was in the wilderness and I always look back on the wilderness adventure when I'm with my friend that went with me and we always talk about it, we still talk about it.

It was interesting to note how Liam's father, George, maintained his own memories related to his son's WA experience. He preserved all the text messages he received from Project K facilitators: "I haven't wiped them off my phone, still have from Day 1 to Day 17…. all the challenges they did and thing like that, so yeah it's good."

Other youth participants shared that they generally did not think about their WA after they returned. However, they were reminded of it whenever there was reference made to it or during family get-togethers. Responses from some of the parents also supported youths' experiences. George, father of Liam, mentioned that the WA memories often come out whenever they had a family get-together or whenever they went out. Similarly, Heather, mother of Indie, also

mentioned that the WA came up when they had a family get-together and Indie motivated her sister to replicate similar outdoor experiences during their family time. Additionally, Jack was reminded of his WA when his family friend's son brought a kayak to their house. This pattern of memories can be seen from the following quotes: "When I think about it is mostly because my friends ask me about it and stuff" (Zara, youth participant).

> I went with my mum and dad we went to the beach and we rode past the same place I thought of Project K memories, because we rode past that and that is when I was in the car I was looking and it just clicked in my brain I was like I wish I could go back and redo the Project K again because it felt really good to me because I wanted to do it again with the same people. (Ethan, youth participant)

> He doesn't talk about his adventure anymore, but he was getting excited because the friend's son came yesterday has bought a kayak and he was busy telling him how he was throwing up in the kayak during the adventure and my friend's son said I'm not taking you in my kayak. He remembers bits of it. He's thankful he doesn't have to go back where there is no shower and no proper toilet. (Sophie, mother of Jack)

On the other hand, a few of the youth participants shared that they did not have any memories later on. Eventually, they lost interest in WA and completely forgot about it or did not want to remember it for various reasons including the tough physical nature of the intervention, challenging natural environment, interpersonal conflicts and the dynamics which occurred during the WA or after the WA within the wolfpack, which will be described in the following major theme. Similarly, some of the parents also shared that their children only made references to the WA during the first month of their arrival at home. Later on, they never heard anything from their children.

> Just lost interest. I kind of forgot about Project K. I completely forget about it. (Alice, youth participant)

> I just didn't really remember about it afterward. (Jordan, youth participant)

> Only within that first month of being home, but apart from that, no. (Donna, mother of Zara)

The responses from youth participants and their parents evidence that memories about WA change over a prolonged period of time. However, these memories vary from person to person based on their individual characteristics and also on their contextual environment.

6.2 Adaptation Mode – Seven Months Later

Adaptation mode from the first phase findings described in the previous chapter demonstrated how youth participants adapted to their normal environment one month after the WA. It also described the supports and difficulties experienced at home and school over the one-month period. Many of the youth participants, and their parents and key informants, confirmed that they experienced or observed the reaction and reentry challenges over a period ranging from a couple of days or weeks up to a maximum of three months. The data from the second phase showed that, as time passed, youth participants largely adapted to their normal life and did not discuss their experiences of adaptation after they returned. Even though the second-phase findings revealed opportunities and challenges youth had faced over the previous six months, the research participants described these in terms of their learning transfer, which is discussed within the following major theme of transfer mode in this chapter. Nevertheless, the youth participants and their parents still talked about their connections with their wolfpack, which was identified as one of the coping strategies under the reaction theme in the previous chapter. Similar to memory mode there was some evidence that continued connection with their wolfpack helped some of the youth participants to enhance their WA memories. However, many of the young people lost their strong connections with their wolfpack over the seven months after they returned from the WA. Hence, these experiences are described under the subtheme wolfpack dissolution to enable comparison with the adaptation mode findings from the first phase findings.

6.2.1 Wolfpack dissolution.

The subtheme wolfpack dissolution illustrates the weakening of the connection and family feeling experienced and observed among youth participants over the seven months that followed the first phase of data collection. During the second phase, the majority of the youth participants shared that they could see differences in how they related to their Project K cohort. Overall the findings from the second phase of data collection demonstrate that their wolfpack bonds diminished over time. However, there were variations noted among the research participants' responses. These are categorised into three groups: the first group of youth wanted to maintain their bonds and connection with their wolfpack and continued their relationship through follow-up Project K meetings and also by catching up at school and via Facebook. However, they experienced difficulties either due to less-frequent meetings or could not spend time with Project K members who were in a different classroom in the same school. However,

one of the youths mentioned that some of his Project K mates still met at school but some of them had forgotten about their time in WA. Youth responses were supported by some of the parents' responses. The following quotes evidence the findings: "Project K after I think we only talk like communicate when we have like meetings and stuff" (Zoe, youth participant).

> They have a get together every now and then and he still friends with Sam in his friends well he's friends with all of them but still hangs out with Sam which was in the Project K with him and the rest of them I think they have a bit of a get together and sees them at school and everything. So they still see each other and everything like that yeah. (George, father of Liam)

Another group of youth participants shared that when they returned, they were very close and talked to each other more often at school but, over time, some of the youth stopped talking to each other. Some went back to their old circle of friends; however, they identified one or two like-minded friends from the Project K group and avoided the rest of the Project K members due to a lack of friendship or past interpersonal conflicts experienced in the WA. It was interesting to note Ayla's response in this regard. She had experienced bullying from some of the boys while she was on WA; however, she shared that she forgave them and got along with them when she returned to school. But later on, she stopped talking to them completely "some of them are in my class but I just don't talk to them. We just don't have anything in common." Lucy shared how she decided to hang out with only one of the boys since other boys were not nice to her and they had bullied her and her friends during the WA. This shows how they lost the family feeling they had with their wolfpack over time. Caleb also expressed similar views about his connection with his Project K group. He stopped hanging out with his Project K cohort due to personality differences. Ella also shared that she had a similarly distanced relationship with her Project K group members. Nevertheless, she added that she kept in contact via Facebook by commenting and liking the posts by her group members. Indie, another youth participant, mentioned that she stopped hanging out with other girls with whom she was close during the WA. One of her friends started to hang out with the wrong crowd and the other one had her own circle of friends at school and ignored Indie.

Liam, another young participant, recollected that he identified with only a few Project K members who had similar interests and more things in common to talk about. This evidenced that during the WA, they did not have the choice to choose their cohort and they had to get along with them. The WA helped them to know and understand each other in a better way. But

once they returned from the WA, they had the freedom to choose the friends with whom they got along very well from their school outside of Project K. So, naturally, they became distanced from their Project K group.

Similar to the youth, some of the parents also reported that their children experienced bullying during the WA and pointed out that this was one of the reasons their children did not hang out with the Project K group. Donna recalled how her daughter, Zara, stopped talking to her Project K friends. She added: “she doesn’t have anything to do with because... she doesn’t associate herself with them and she has got no reason to.” In the same way, Heather, mother of Indie, also referred to relationship problems among her daughter’s Project K peer circle: “She doesn’t talk to that girl anymore…. apparently, there was some jealousy going on there even the mum jumped on Facebook and stuff.”

Anna, mother of Lucy, also reflected on the wolfpack and recollected that some of the boys were naughty and mean to her daughter during the WA. She shared that Lucy is close to only one of the Project K group girls and only says “hi” to her wolfpack when she sees them.

The third group of youth completely avoided the Project K group due to some of their personal challenges. Kay, mother of Jordan, was sad to share her son’s current situation. Kay shared that her son had been suspended from school based on an incident that happened with his friends outside of the Project K circle. Hence Jordan was ashamed to go back and face the Project K group. She added that what “young teenage boys don’t realise is those young people will always support him, he has to come to that realisation, and he has to humble himself to go back and say hello.”

Maria, mother of Alice, also recollected that her daughter got along with her Project K friends. But due to Alice’s association with the wrong crowd, her parents pulled her from school for six weeks. After that, Alice found it a little tough to get back into her friend group or bond again with Project K friends.

6.3 Transfer Mode – Seven Months Later

Transfer mode in the first phase findings described in the previous chapter illustrated the insights and reflections on the learning transfer and personal growth experienced and observed by youth participants and their parents one month after the WA. The findings fit under the three subthemes of transfer success, transfer failure, and personal growth. The second-phase findings

provided in-depth insights on transfer success, failure and personal growth over a period of seven months, which are categorised under two subthemes 1) sustained changes and 2) progress derailed.

6.3.1 Sustained changes.

The subtheme sustained changes outline how youth maintained the positive changes initiated during the WA, described, in the previous chapter, as personal growth experienced in transfer mode one month after they returned. In order to provide a comprehensive view of the positive outcomes, the findings under this theme highlighted each youth participant's sustained changes over a period of seven months.

Ayla recollected her positive gains from the WA after seven months as follows. She shared that WA helped her to become more positive towards life. She observed herself as more encouraging and provoking motivation in others, especially if her friends were feeling sad or down. Further on, she added she learned that from the Project K programme. So she transferred the motivating and encouraging attitudes gained from the WA to her personal life with her friends. She started to do more cooking at home. Ayla also made an important decision in her life to move to another country to stay with her mother. She pointed out how she has transferred the risk-taking approach she practised in WA to her current context.

> It was risky going up the Pinnacles and sometimes I didn't think I could do what I did, like climbing branches and stuff. So I had to push myself to just, jump from a rock to a tree branch or something or like hold onto a rock instead of a railing that wasn't even there. So I guess just pushing myself because I don't know what could be over there [in the other country].

She has taken the risk to rebuild her relationships with her family members in the other country. But again, she shared that the skills she has learned from the WA enabled her to make the big decision of her great move. She compared her move to the new country to the WA, saying:

> How it is a big change being in the city around all the noise and stuff and then all of a sudden being in this muddy camping ground with just a hole in the ground for a toilet and no water supply just a lake at the back. So I guess that was a big change which kind of like being in the country where I know everything and then going over there where I don't know much, like how I didn't know much in the wilderness.

Ayla's grandmother Marion's response also supported Ayla's response. Marion observed a huge difference in her granddaughter after seven months. She shared that Ayla had become

very confident and improved her cooking skills and healthy eating habits at home. Ayla had been brought up by her grandmother since her childhood and Marion shared that Ayla's decision to move back with her mother in a different country was the direct positive impact of the WA. She said:

> If she hadn't had gone through Project K I don't think she would have even moved. I don't think she would be confident enough to leave me. It was just pushing her on in life helping her move because I doubt she would have had that confidence.

During the second-phase interviews, Caleb shared that he planned kayak across to Coromandel with the support of his mentor. He also shared that he started cooking at home when his mum is not at home and also carries out house chores. Nicola, mother of Caleb, talked about her son's increased interest in OA activities. She recalled that:

> Him and his mentor they want to kayak from Auckland to Coromandel. So they plan to do something over Easter, and you have to arrange everything and, you know, whereas before he would never have thought about doing something like that.

Ella, another youth, observed a huge difference in her communication skills. She learned to build relationships with people: "I just feel like I talk to more people, I don't shut people out in conversation." She narrated that:

> If I meet a person, I talk, like I will say hi and then if the conversation keeps going, I will keep on talking I don't just say okay and then I will go walking like I used to do it. When people talked to me, I would be like okay and I would feel awkward and walk away, but now I bring up topics and explain things.

Ella started to do more activities at school and home. She got involved with the youth group at church and also started to do exercise three times a week by watching fitness videos. Ella also improved her communication skills and widened her friend circle. She set goals in terms of achieving good marks for all subjects. For social studies, she memorised all her notes and she knew everything when she wrote the exams. Ella also decided to make a small vegetable garden at her house. Ella's dad, Stephan, was highly impressed by his daughter's progress. He reported that Ella became more career-oriented, more focused on her school work and started to work to save money to buy her first home. He added that: "that's the change I have seen…. if you look at her school work also the way she studied for the exam or test she is very focused on her goals that she sets for herself."

Seven months after the WA, Ethan felt great about his experience. He revealed that he improved his confidence, extended his circle of friends, improved his communication skills, and became more mature. Prior to the WA, he was too shy to seek support from his teachers at school and always mumbled and hid away from them. Now he is open to ideas and has started to answer the questions and talk to people more. He portrayed his changes by highlighting "I just feel good not like last time because I was too shy and nervous hiding away from people." He also shared that he learned to control his anger and emotions. He has got the ability to calm himself down. He recognised himself as lot calmer than last time. The following comment shows the changes in Ethan, "if someone makes fun of me, I go really mad, but now I just stop, think and just walk away." He also started to get involved with community youth activities in his neighbourhood. Previously, he was too scared to go and participate in the programme. But recently, he signed up for the activities and he is to going to become one of the leaders for that group and help them to succeed in life. Ethan was inspired by the WA and he decided to help others. He also initiated healthy eating habits at home: "we don't drink fizzy drinks and stuff, now we eat veggies a lot." He started to cook for his family. He also set goals to pass his exams and, in the future, he wants to become a physical education teacher because he is good at sports and feels happy when he gets the opportunity to motivate others.

Susan, mother of Ethan, also noted that her son had become more responsible at home. She also reported that Ethan is very considerate at home. He is interested in studying and stays back at school to complete his homework. Susan also recollected Ethan's job-hunting efforts. She was surprised to observe his initiative because she never asked Ethan to look for a job. Susan revealed that Ethan took the initiative to look for a job in order to help his parents to alleviate their hardship, "because he really knows, sometimes we struggle about money."

Indie shared that the WA helped her to improve her confidence. She also made a crucial decision to change her school to focus more on NCEA (National Certificate of Education Achievement, which is the secondary school qualification in New Zealand) due to the fact that the new school had more opportunities. Indie also took the initiative to bring OA ideas to her whānau [family] and motivated her mother and sister to plan a tramp to do an overnight stay in a tent within a couple of months' time.

Heather praised her daughter Indie's achievement of getting excellence in graphic design and art even though she knew Indie failed to pass maths. But Heather encouraged her daughter to focus on her achievements rather than her failure. Heather was also pleased about Indie's

decision-making skills. She shared that it was Indie's choice to change schools because of the better opportunities. Again, Heather acknowledged the direct influence of the WA: "if she hadn't done the wilderness, I don't think she would have…. it was her idea. I don't think she would have had the confidence to start a new school at her age, but she is so confident."

Another youth, Jack, was very proud of passing his English exams. He struggled with the subject, so the WA helped him to set achievable goals and he applied his goal-setting skills to make academic progress. He shared that, after the WA, he started to take responsibility for doing his school work. He recognised that he finds it difficult to focus on one activity, and after 10 minutes, he gets easily distracted. Now he is trying to overcome the problem and make progress with his time-management skills. He also added that the WA helped him to overcome his fear of heights. He had planned to do rock climbing with his friends on his school activity-day trip even though he is afraid of heights and does not like them. He decided to do it by saying: "I have got to get past that fear at some point, so why not sooner rather than later?" He also practised healthy eating habits and physical exercise following his participation in the WA.

Sophie, mother of Jack, observed heightened responsibility in her son while she was away from home. Sophie, along with Jack's elder siblings, noticed that Jack was doing house chores and his studies without anyone reminding him. She also observed Jack's confidence in seeking support from his teachers at school. He was also focused to get through Year 10 and pursue higher studies in computer engineering as well as taking up car racing.

It was fascinating to see the changes in Liam. He revealed that the WA helped him to increase his confidence and enabled him to set some goals for himself. It helped him to think and focus on his future. He started to go to the gym three times a week and initiated healthy eating habits at home. He shared that the WA experience motivated him to obtain a Merit endorsement for his NCEA. He also set goals to get a job and save money to buy a car when he turns 16, and to join Muay Thai martial arts along with his Project K friends. He also improved his time-management skills and learned to reduce and monitor the hours he was spending on Xbox.

Lucy demonstrated the leadership skills she learned from the WA in her classroom. She was confident and upfront enough to raise her voice and requested that her classmates be quiet to support her teacher when the class was disruptive. Lucy also set goals to learn about her own culture and language – te reo Māori. She shared that she also aimed to learn her pepeha (Māori form of introduction that establishes identity and heritage) and decided to add it whenever she

gets an opportunity to do a speech. She also started to study a Korean language Level 4 course (which focuses on being able to perform linguistic functions in Korean language at some degree to perform daily ordinary tasks) and was completing it by doing an online test. Lucy shared that Project K helped her to change her attitude towards her mum, adding that:

> At home I was like kind of mean to my mum, but now I am like fine because at Project K we had to do a lot of individual things and a lot of group things and we had to… so I just do it without complaints so like I don't really complain anymore at home and I don't show my attitude and try and stop my sister from doing that.

Anna, mother of Lucy, was happy to see the improvements in Lucy. She was impressed with how her daughter did well in all school exams and achieved Merits. She shared that Lucy became very confident as a result of participating in the WA. She learned to relate to others and had made new friends. Anna noticed that her daughter started to set goals to achieve and she met the goals by getting good scores and learning Korean.

Donna, mother of Zara, explained about how her daughter became more positive and responsible for doing house chores including cooking and washing. She also shared that Zara gained confidence and stepped out of her comfort zone. She observed her daughter was happier and became prouder of her achievements. Donna also shared her daughter's academic achievement of becoming top of her class in fabric sewing and scoring first place in her class overall. She also made progress in maths and learned to become more attentive in class. She also reported that Zara was active in classroom learning and participation. Donna was impressed by her very good school reports.

Seven months after their WA, Gloria, mother of Zoe, observed her daughter was a very active teenager who got involved with sports and outdoor activities. She also noted her ability to solve problems by writing them down or seeking support from other people.

6.3.2 Progress derailed.

The subtheme progress derailed outlines how some of the youth could not maintain the personal growth gained during the WA due to various factors. During first phase, one of the youth participants, Alice, shared that she was demotivated by the high expectations of teachers and parents that she would improve her lateness to school as a result of her participation in the WA. Moreover, she also experienced peer jealousy from her friends upon return from the WA.

Additionally, her mother also mentioned the relationship problems that existed between Alice and her father.

The second-phase findings extended further details about her challenging experiences. Both of her parents shared that they had witnessed risk-taking behaviours in Alice which resulted in school interruptions. Alice's mother, Maria, provided a detailed description:

> She has actually really put us through the wringer. We had problems with Alice running away, they [Alice and her friends] broke up from school…. she was running way on the weekends and going to all sorts of places and the police were involved because we didn't know where she was and it was with a friend of hers down the road….It got to the point where Alice couldn't be trusted like we would go out and say we would bring some tea home and she would just disappear and that would be it for the weekend and we'd never see her again all weekend… She didn't go to school, we pulled her out of school a couple of months earlier, 8 weeks earlier…. we've had plenty of contact with the school last year. Alice just was not; she was a bit of a nightmare at school…. it has really quite rough and just the attitude and everything we had going on. It was mixing with the wrong crowd…. when she's hanging out with the wrong sort of girls yeah definitely and also when she is down because she hasn't got any friends and we get the attitude, but yeah, it's her friends certainly do rub off on her which rubs off on us, you know, we get the attitude and the negativity…. So it's been a really tough year last year the last 3 or 4 months… it was just a horrendous time.

During the first phase, Maria reported increased confidence and skill development, especially cooking skills, in her daughter. However, during the second phase, the researcher queried the positive influence of the WA on her daughter and Maria responded as follows: "Not really I don't think it's made a difference really to Alice." Due to Alice's risk behaviours, Alice had a break from her parents and stayed away from home with her relatives for some time. Even though both parents were hugely concerned about their daughter, they believed that Alice has learned lessons from her mistakes and bounced back onto the right track. They related:

> We just want to get her into a good space in the next 6 to 8 months because she hits 16… that is when the world changes because she is legally liable for any idiot thing she does. So if she's off the rails in [birthday month] she is relatively on the rails. I think we'll make it. She has made a lot of progress since she's been down [at her relative's]. So…she is good at the moment. (Nathan, father)

> I'm hoping we can put all that behind us now and hopefully, she realises these friends that get her into trouble and don't show any respect aren't worth it and I think Alice is slowly realising that you know, these girls aren't worth it. (Maria, mother)

The above observations from her parents were supported by responses from Alice. During the second phase, she disclosed that she was disengaged with the Project K programme. She hung out with the wrong crowd and her parents pulled her from school. But Alice was able to realise her mistakes. Her parents decided to move her to a new school. She shared that when she returned to the new school, she decided to make a fresh start and not to hang out with friends who were a negative influence anymore:

> I don't like them because they [her friends] don't see their future so right now they get in trouble with cops and everything. They are basically making bad choices for their future and when I was friends with them I kind of saw that. So I was thinking I don't need that.

Even though she did not want to participate in the rest of Project K programme, Alice wanted to "start afresh tomorrow, score good grades and do well in new school."

Similarly, another youth participant, Jordan, was invigorated when interviewed one month after the WA during the first phase of data collection. Jordan reported that his teachers provided positive feedback on his improved behaviour. Likewise, his mother Kay also highlighted his learning outcomes in terms of developing a positive self-concept, skill development, and an outdoor orientation. However, Kay also shared her concern regarding Jordan's negative responses to friends and problem behaviours at school. Jordan questioned his class teachers and resisted doing his homework. Moreover, he got involved with fighting at school and physically injured his school mate. During the first phase, his mother was asked to come to school for further meetings and she was worried that Jordan would get suspended from school as a result of his school fight.

During the second phase, Kay made reference to Jordan's first incident at school, described in the previous chapter, which unfolded because of peer rejection and jealousy and resulted in further consequences like school suspension and risk-taking behaviours by Jordan. His situation is detailed by Kay:

> It [WA] raised jealousy amongst his class peers on who got to go on Project K…. He didn't hand in homework, they [his classmates] didn't think he deserved to go, but he still got the grades and that was where this boy came in… it was something the deputy

principal and his house leader were telling me when we had the meeting that his classmates weren't keen that he got to go on this Project K when they had all put in their names and he was selected. Yeah so that created a bit of conflict.

He was being bullied and this was after the wilderness trip. It was caught on CCTV and he stuck up for himself where he would never have done that before and this boy got a split lip and sent to the hospital. They were both reprimanded and both suspended at that time.… as a result of that because he was shown no support [from school] he was given no avenues for care. He joined an opposing group as help and that is how it started to escalate and because he likes to hang with the older boys, being young he has to prove himself. He just got involved with the wrong type of kids… not positive, not positive at all…. its siren kings. It's like a group of young boys and goes up to about 22 I think and what they do is they battle with sirens music. They will go to industrial sites and they will play this loud music and that's the battle. It is the beats, the music and the way they hook up these electronics to their bicycles. And they ride for miles to go to these battles. When he didn't have a bike, he was caught by police and they would bring him home. The police said he's not a bad kid but it is the people around him that are influencing him… I think he has dug himself into a hole that he can't get out of and he needs a new start because it is local. It's kids between here and there they are either his friends or his enemies.

I actually think all of this trouble, this type of trouble stemmed from that fight and it was the person that did it came hit him from behind and he had no way of defending himself really and it wasn't until he did fight back that the other boy got hurt quite badly. Now he's never done that before he would have just taken it and lay down… But because it was caught on camera, they saw what it had happened… the kids that king hit like that this isn't the first time, this isn't just a bullying thing. This could have been going on for a while… So it was from that incident everything just started to snowball out of control and I said to him why is this happening and he said I don't trust them, I don't like them and he said I feel when I turn up to class there are already things that have been said about me there's been a change…. when this incident happened everything just changed. It went from happy, happy, happy to really angry, really angry, angry at school, angry at me, just angry.

During the second phase, the researcher observed differences in Jordan's responses. He was very excited and happy during the first phase; however, in the second phase, he was demotivated and sad. He appeared reserved and did not share much with the researcher. Nevertheless, he shared that the WA experience influenced him to carry out more house chores at home. He also mentioned that he started cooking at home as well. Even though Jordan dropped out of Project K, he transferred some of the skills learned from the WA into his personal life. He revealed that he enjoys "riding a bike with his friends anywhere for the whole day" which he learned it from the WA mountain biking where they rode a bike for the whole day.

The above-mentioned experiences of Alice and Jordan evidenced the derailed progress of youth seven months after their WA. Additionally, the findings also demonstrated how youth participants relied on the newly learned skills from the WA to bounce back or channelled these skills to defend themselves when they were challenged in their personal lives. The findings also demonstrated the contextual factors that influenced or hindered the transfer of their learning outcomes. The contextual factors that promoted or hindered the youth learning outcomes are discussed in detail in the following major theme.

Contextual Factors of Reintegration Experiences

The major theme of contextual factors of reintegration experiences primarily outlines the environment in which the reintegration process occurred. This major theme provides in-depth understanding of the context of the youths' reintegration process based on the experiences and observations of all three research participant groups. It elaborates on the elements that amplified or weakened the youths' process of reintegration and their learning transfer. Contextual factors include the overall micro- and mesosystemic conditions which are embedded within the individual and the family, school, programme and other social environments. Each of these contexts are subthemes described below with details regarding relevant promoting and impeding factors. As mentioned, Figure 6.1. provides a visual representation of the reintegration experiences as well as thematic representation of each contextual factor.

6.4 Individual Characteristics

The theme individual characteristics represents the data which referred to all three participant groups talk about youth personality traits which positively or negatively influenced the reintegration process and their learning transfer. The promoting factors of individual characteristics are coded under the subtheme promoting individual characteristics and adverse factors are coded impeding individual characteristics.

6.4.1 Promoting individual characteristics.

The triangulated data from all three groups emphasised several individual characteristics including personal attributes, a positive attitude, and internal motivation that positively influenced the reintegration process and youth developmental outcomes. The second phase of data collected from youth revealed that learning transfer and positive outcomes appeared to be influenced by these individual characteristics. The first phase findings under transfer mode and the subtheme *personal growth* evidenced youths' increased self-confidence after the WA. Hence, the outcomes described in the second phase appeared to be influenced by the programme as well. However, during the second phase, a few parents spoke about youth outcomes as though they had existed prior to the WA.

Youth participants stated that they were open and positive when they were faced with challenges in their family and at school. Participants also talked about having self-belief, confidence, perseverance, internal motivation, self-control, determination and self-reliance to

overcome the challenges they faced. For example, one of the youth participants, Jack, shared that he learned time-management skills from the WA and managed his time well by reducing time spent on social media, which reflected his self-control. Another youth, Caleb decided to distance himself from the negative influence of his friends by moving away from his disruptive peers in the classroom so he could focus more on studies. He improved his academic scores and participated in robotics and mountain biking competitions when he returned from the WA. The following excerpt from Caleb reveals the internal motivation behind his achievements. When asked to share the reason for his academic and other achievements, Caleb shared that it was "mainly because I want to do good in English and I want to do good in robotics and I like mountain biking so that is what made me want to do those." It is interesting to note that Caleb and his mother identified a mentor outside the Project K programme for himself when he did not receive support from his assigned Project K mentor. This showed his ultimate motivation to succeed. Caleb's mother disclosed that Project K assigned him a mentor; however, he did not meet him during the first night when everybody was introduced because the mentor could not make it. He was then allocated another one, whom he had met, and who did want to be his mentor, but that mentor had some issues, so he could not be his mentor anymore. Nicola, Caleb's mother, noted that: "So what we actually did, Caleb had a big buddy and I asked him if he wanted him. So his big buddy through a different programme actually became his mentor in Project K."

Several parents also talked about positive characteristics being one of the reasons for their children's achievements. Many of the parents identified their children as confident, competent and having a positive attitude which helped them to achieve the goals they had set in the WA. Many parental quotes reflected their children's internal motivation and self-reliance as the key qualities that helped them to overcome their challenges. For example, George, father of Liam, explained: "It has always been in him to be a go-getter; it is built in him. He has always if he's wanted to do something, he's always tried his best to achieve it. So he's set in his ways."

Some parents were also surprised to see how their children maintained and utilised their positive attitude, self-control and internal motivation to stay focused on achieving their goals without any parental guidance or advice. Some of the parents were astonished to witness their teenager's hard work in terms of academic achievements, getting a part-time job, saving money to buy a first home, staying away from distracting and negative peer groups, and taking the

initiative to participate in sports and community activities. Parents identified their children's individual characteristics as the main driving factor for their achievements.

Similarly, some of the key informants identified Project K participants' positive individual qualities as one of the key factors which influenced the transfer of learning and achievements after the WA. Several key informants, including Project K staff and mentors, reflected on the individual differences they had observed among students in terms of positive attitudes, motivation and personal responsibility which differentiated the levels of achievements they observed in the youth after the WA. One experienced Project K staff member highlighted the differences in individual character and how it hugely influences youths' overall participation in the Project K programme and their positive outcomes. For example, she pointed out the differences in their communication with their mentors. Some youth naturally keep in touch with their mentors through constant text communication because they always do that. On the other hand, some youth may not respond to mentors' texts due to their reserved nature. Barbara noted that "there is such a lot of individual difference… because you might have the same programme, but it is how they respond to it."

6.4.2 Impeding individual characteristics.

In contrast to the above-mentioned subtheme, this subtheme essentially elucidates the youth characteristics which negatively influenced the reintegration process and transfer of learning outcomes after the WA. Lack of engagement and motivation is reflected in comments that refer to the youths' lack of positive attitude, lack of self-regulation, lack of internal motivation and lack of responsibility, which all resulted in a lack of engagement. This subtheme also denotes the youth participants' age as another factor that impeded positive outcomes. Although some of the youth actively participated in the WA, they were not internally motivated to apply the new skills when they returned. This can be seen in the following comment from one youth participant about how she responded to the healthy cooking and eating habits she learned during the WA:

> We got …a booklet like all this stuff how to cook and it shows you. I didn't really want that stuff I guess I didn't really care; I don't really care. I think no one really wanted this stuff because we got a plate – like a weird looking food plate and all these books and stuff like how to be healthy and cooking. …I don't really bother doing it at home and looking at all the books and stuff.

Some of the youth were easily influenced by their impulses. They lacked self-regulation to resist their negative instincts which deterred them from achieving the goals they set during the WA. For example, Alice did not participate in many of the Project K group get-togethers or the mentoring activities. The following excerpts evidence that, despite all the support she received from her mentor, she found the mentoring process "boring."

> I just wanted to sleep in bed and relax or go and hang out with my friends but then when it came to mentor thing Project K thing, like you go out somewhere and do stuff and you can't, just don't feel doing it because you feel like relaxing and not bother about people talk about life and school.

Alice admitted that "I got support and stuff, but I didn't pay attention to it like it was just boring and I didn't want to do it, I didn't want to do this Project K thing." Similarly, another youth participant, Jordan, described himself as "too lazy" and disclosed that he did not bother even though it was good. Additionally, another youth participant, Lucy, recollected the negative responses heard from one of her Project K friends who told her, "I don't care, and I can't be bothered" when Lucy attempted to motivate her to participate in Project K activities. These comments illustrate how some of the youth lack motivation and poor self-regulation in executing their goals, although they knew the positive impact the Project K programme could have and demonstrate that some of the youths' characteristics can impede the goals they set in the WA and curtail learning transfer.

Similar to the youth participants, some parents and key informants also identified a lack of motivation and engagement as one of the key influencing factors that impeded youth from achieving their goals. These parents also found it hard to convince or motivate their teenage children and highlighted the attitude they observed in them. A couple of parents were overwhelmed and disappointed by their children's risky behaviours, which resulted from impulsive actions. Two of the youth participants (described above) got into trouble and were suspended from school. Responses from their parents suggest that their children lacked the self-regulation to make better decisions and stay away from risky behaviours and stop hanging out with the wrong crowd. However, some of the parents rationalised it as a teenage issue. Maria, mother of Alice, observed an "I can't be bothered sort of attitude," and lack of openness to seek help from others as her daughter's major pitfalls. Alice's father described Alice as a "rude teenager and self-absorbed person." The observations shared by parents illustrate that negative individual attributes can adversely affect the process of reintegration and the transfer of skills after the WA. In a similar manner, key informants also identified negative personal

attributes as one of the key factors that influence youth development outcomes. Moreover, one of the key informants observed a gender difference in terms of motivation and openness. She observed that boys are very focused and more motivated than girls and easier to work with. She compared and generalised girls as more mature but distracted by external influences. However, no other key informants had similar observations. An example to illustrate the significant role of individual characteristics in influencing the achievement of youth goals after the WA can be seen in Robyn's response: "some students are very good; some students get offered all that and they don't take it up."

6.5 Family Contextual Factors

The second major theme family contextual factors represent the experiences and observations of all three participant groups about the factors that facilitated the reintegration process and youth development outcome within the context of the family when youth returned from the WA. As shown in Figure 6.1, positive family support and lack of parental support are identified as the subthemes promoting and impeding family contextual factors respectively. The subtheme positive family support describes the positive encouragement, emotional warmth, parental involvement, trust, and monitoring that family members engaged in or demonstrated to the youth and how positive family functioning, like open communication and positive relationships, facilitated learning transfer and sustained the outcomes of youth participants. In contrast, lack of parental support describes the absence of parental involvement, alienation, strict parenting styles, youth–parent conflict and communication gaps identified by research participants, which they felt impeded the reintegration process. Many youth participants referred to supportive, encouraging, and motivating family members as the reason for their achievements. This includes positive relationships with their parents, siblings, and grandparents.

6.5.1 Positive family support.

Data from all three research participant groups consistently showed positive family support was vital to the reintegration process. The majority of the youth participants acknowledged how their parents supported them to stay on track when they returned. Many of the youth stated that they were motivated and encouraged by their parents and grandparents during difficult times, which helped them to remain positive. Returning to school after the WA was challenging for Zara. The previous chapter provided details of Zara's reaction when she faced peer conflict and bullying from her Project K friends. During the second phase, Zara appeared very confident

and she shared that her mother and grandmother helped her to stay positive. She reflected her grandmother's support as: "Nana tells me that I need to keep positive and don't think negative and stuff, don't think about the negative things that happen." The response from Zara's mother, Donna, also substantiated the findings as follows:

> I think it comes down to more parenting and family that are helping her and guiding her. Just your everyday parent stuff that you do, remind them they are who they are and that they are ok being who they are and just to keep having a positive outlook and not to worry about what other people are saying or other people are doing.

Zoe, another youth participant, reflected how she relied on her mum and grandmother to overcome her personal challenge when, on her return from the WA, her boyfriend broke up with her. Further on she added:

> He didn't like it that I went on the wilderness. Like he did but then… I went long then I couldn't keep up contact with him I found out he cheated on me.… I just felt weak. I had all this negative stuff. I thought I was alone I always think that I didn't want to be here, but I had support from my mum and my best friend and family. So, we keep going.

As can be seen these quotes, open communication and positive relationships between youth and the family members facilitates the reintegration process and helps young people overcome personal challenges. Close parental monitoring, a clear set of boundaries and constructive feedback in a timely manner were also significant supports for youth reintegration. Some of the parents mentioned the goals set by their children as part of the Project K programme after the WA and that they monitored their achievements. Anna, mother of Lucy, assisted her daughter by setting alarms on her calendar and encouraging Lucy to achieve her goals. Similarly, Heather talked about how she motivated and pushed her daughter, Indie, to get out of her comfort zone and onto their farm to help out. Heather also mentioned Indie's stepfather's positive influence on helping her focus on her goals. George, father of Liam, acknowledged that the WA helped his son to do well in school: "he is doing well at school and I'm doing my best keeping him in line." However, he was concerned about his circle of friends more recently, so he grounded him and provided constructive feedback on social media and computer usage and set limits:

> If it's too late at night I say get off that computer thing and get to bed or read a book or do something. We communicate very well and if I have a problem, I will just let him know and I think vice versa as well.

The majority of the key informants also highlighted the importance of parental involvement and support throughout the Project K programme, although they acknowledged the programme is only meant for youth participants and not for their parents. Key informants, including project staff, liaison teachers and mentors, reflected how parental involvement and support positively influence the learning transfer and sustain outcomes from the WA. The following quote from Sandra (a key informant) captures the essence of this:

> Some of the parents do get involved and those that get involved, the kids get the most out of the programme. It doesn't matter whether it's Project K or it's sport, you know, it's the parents that coach the teams that put the extra time in and then their kids excel.

6.5.2 Lack of parental support.

The subtheme lack of parental support describes the difficulties and challenges youth experienced at home that interrupted the transfer of learning and ultimately limited the youths' positive gains from the WA. Many of the youth participants were reluctant to talk about a lack of parental support; however, a few did talk about it. The subtheme lack of parental support outlines youths' references to stressful family situations, lack of encouragement and understanding from parents, lack of quality parental time and the communication gap experienced between youth and their parents. One of the youth participants, Ayla, talked about how she could not practise healthy eating habits because her family's eating habits at home, which included a lot of takeaways, were beyond her control. She also mentioned the adverse situation of her parent's ill health, which stopped the transference of learning at home: "I wanted to be more open-minded like how I was in Project K, but I couldn't because it was just too hard with the situation because everyone was just stressed in the situation. So, I couldn't really apply anything."

On the other hand, another youth participant mentioned the lack of her mother's presence as a reason for her boredom and loneliness. She shared that her mother moved to her uncle's house with her younger siblings and she had to stay back with her grandma. Another youth participant, Caleb, revealed that he did not get any support from his mother. However, he hesitated to elaborate on this. Exploration of parental views provided some rationale for youth frustrations. Some of the parents were overwhelmed with parenting responsibilities, including

being a single parent, and struggled to make ends meet. One of the parents admitted that she could not support her son in terms of taking him to Project K activities due to a lack of time. Further conversation with Caleb's mother, Nicola, revealed a communication gap and the conflict that exists between her and son. She shared that Caleb had been very helpful around the house for three to four months after completing the WA, but had gone back to his old ways of "moaning" and "not wanting to do any house chores;" however, she did not talk to him about this. Parent interviews also evidenced parent–youth relationship conflicts which appeared to be negatively influencing youth. One father said: "She [daughter] sparks me up and I just grr and we just go at each other… I've threatened to take the door out of her bedroom…, take the door out" on occasions when his daughter had isolated herself, by closing the bedroom door, whenever she was emotionally down or to use the computer to access social media, which he was against.

Additionally, reflections from key informants portrayed the challenging family contexts of some of the Project K youth participants. Some of the key informants talked about the "tough family environments" some of the youth experienced, including parental separation, dysfunctional relationships, substance abuse, gang affiliations, and health and financial crises which inhibited youth from transferring the skills they learned from the programme. One of the key informants reflected on the challenging family experiences of youth participants during his mentoring experience:

> One of them, his parents were separating at the time of the whole thing…. they hadn't separated before the programme… but the fact is that this boy had to swap between households. He is a 14-year-old boy, he has come back from wilderness, he's got all these family dynamics. It was quite difficult…. The third one, a really nice boy but had a lot of dysfunctional family life. The same mother who had been with many partners and lived in many places, not just suburbs around…. all sorts of strange places…. They are all really nice kids,… but they do have some challenging backgrounds.

Another key informant, John, also identified the family as the biggest challenge for youth participants. He recollected a few of the youth participants coming from families where members had drug and alcohol addictions including to methamphetamine, cannabis, synthetics and alcohol. The majority of the key informants reported that most of the parents supported the Project K programme and their children despite all these challenges. However, they also

showed concern about the lack of appropriate parenting skills in some cases. Sean's response substantiated it as:

> Although the parents will support them in the whole Project K thing it doesn't mean that necessarily the parents have got the appropriate skills to discuss and go through things or setting the sort of examples that they need in order to do the right things.

The majority of the key informants reported that many of the parents lacked understanding and knowledge about the Project K programme despite all the orientation and information evenings provided by the organisation.

Youth participants and key informants made recommendations as part of their reflections on their experiences. The findings revealed a gap or disconnect between youths' and parents' level of understanding of the WA. Youth participants expected their parents to have a more in-depth understanding of their WA. This could have been achieved by spending more time with youth, listening to their stories and showing genuine interest. Youth expected more encouragement, care, and acknowledgement from parents. Some of the youth participants wanted their own space and time to settle down. On the other hand, some youth wanted opportunities and the autonomy to transfer the skills they learned into their family environment.

Consistent with youth recommendations, key informants also emphasised the parental commitment and support required for the 14-month programme by signing up their children. This includes making sure their children turn up for meetings, providing material support and time to listen to their experience. They also highlighted the importance of parental support for the youth–mentor relationship. Although all the key informants accentuated the youth-centered features of the Project K programme, a few identified the youth–parent WA experience disconnect as the biggest challenge for the programme. Sandra recollected:

> The challenge that we always face…. throughout the programme and I don't think it has been addressed at this point in time. We change the kids but we don't change the parents… in an ideal world you would educate the parents at the same time as you do the kids and that is an ongoing challenge for the programme.

Further, she noted the funding constraints of the organisation that restrict extending the services to parents. Responses from key informants revealed that the organisation supports the parents by organising meetings, sharing videos and letter writing during the WA. However, some of the key informants suggested providing more resources to parents to facilitate the reintegration process. This includes follow-up emails to parents; encouraging parents to refer back to the WA to motivate youth, using photographs as a reminding tool; educating and preparing parents

for the reintegration process; explaining the “high and lows” typically experienced when youth return; and organising follow up meetings for parents. Additionally, Wendy highlighted the importance of developing some keywords in multiple languages to overcome language barriers during the follow-up meetings. For example, “perseverance, self-belief, stickability and explaining what those words mean because many parents wouldn’t know what they mean and how they can help support that at home.” The subtheme demonstrates the paramountcy of the parental role in sustaining youth development outcomes. To reduce the disconnect between youth and parents around the WA experience, key informants recommended more parental involvement and participation in the programme.

6.6 School Contextual Factors

The major theme of school contextual factors describes the circumstances related to school and peers at school that positively or negatively influenced the reintegration process of the youth participants when they returned from the WA. Under this major theme, two subthemes were found related to both promoting and impeding factors, as shown in Figure 6.1. First, positive peer influences at school helped ease the reintegration process. Support from teachers was also beneficial as well as achieving positive outcomes at school, including academic excellence. The data also revealed the presence of negative peer influences and lack of teacher support at school which had repercussions for a few of the youth participants and resulted in their dropping out of the Project K programme and being suspended from school.

6.6.1 Positive peer influences.

This subtheme depicts the encouragement and support received from peers and friends at school who were mainly outside of the Project K peer group. Support from the Project K group is described in the next major theme – Project K programme contextual factors. Through positive peer support, some youth participants were able to reintegrate back to their classroom and school. Many of the youth participants described how they were able to catch up on missed school work with the support of their friends. Jack, one of the youth participants, remembered that he stayed back with his friends after school for four to five days, across two or three weeks, to study the subjects he missed during the WA. The following response from Ethan demonstrates the positive influence of peer support in the transference of his skills:

> They helped me out because I was struggling in maths, they helped me out by telling me I could do it and just answer the questions even though you don’t know the answer

> to it and I tried hard to answer it and I actually got it right. So I went back and helped them back, like, if they struggle, I help them because they helped me.

Many of the youth participants' responses show they derived inspiration and motivation from their friends. When youth participants returned from the WA, many of their classmates and friends were curious to hear about their experience. Peers appreciated their achievements, which boosted their confidence, and provided a sense of achievement and pride among Project K youth participants. However, Zara had not enjoyed the WA due to the conflicts she experienced with Project K peers which continued even after the WA, in the school context, but she overcame this negative experience with the support of her close friends. They made her happy when she was sad. One of her friends even interferred to sort out the relationship issues:

> One of my friends is really close friends with her [Project K mate] so she kind of talked to her and told her like how it was like it was not very nice don't do it and then my friends were like trying to make me happy at school, so I wasn't sad.

This subtheme also depicts the in-depth influence of peer relationships in terms of future orientation and achieving their goals. One of the youths, Ella, recalled how she and her best friends shared similarities in their career goals of "travel and journalism" and "photography" which motivated them to work together to achieve their goals. Zoe recollected how her best friend kept her going when she was hurt and completely lost after she found out her boyfriend cheated on her when she returned from the WA. Moreover, another youth participant got into trouble and was suspended from school during the second-phase interviews. She was sent down to live at her uncle's home. During that period, she spent some time with one new friend who helped her to regain her positive attitude. Her mother described this: "now she has got this lovely friend…. she seems to be back to her old self again." Except for the above-mentioned parent, other parents and key informants did not mention the positive influence of the peers, other than references to the Project K group.

6.6.2 Support from school and teachers.

Support from school and teachers was also identified as one of the key promoting factors that facilitated the reintegration process of the youth participants. All three groups of research participants referred to the notion of support from school and teachers in terms of assisting youth to catch up with missed schoolwork, providing opportunities in the classroom to apply the skills learned in the WA, encouraging and motivating them, and supporting youth when they faced challenges by providing instructive and constructive feedbacks. Youth participants

explicitly described the academic achievements and catch up with missed classwork that could only have happened as a result of support from their teachers when they returned. For example, Ethan talked about positive encouragement and trust from his teacher that helped him to pass his exams during his reintegration.

> Just in my exams, I felt really stuffed because I was thinking that I couldn't pass, and I just left everything on the table my teacher came over and said just give it a try it doesn't matter if you don't make it or don't get the score just as long as you try. So I tried my best and I passed and so he was really proud of me because he had heaps of faith in me and he knew that I could do it.

Zara also acknowledged the support she received from her teachers and school to solve the bullying conflicts that occurred within the Project K group even after the WA. Zara's mother, Donna, also recollected the school's involvement and support to sort out the issue. Although another youth participant shared that she did not get much support from her teachers and friends when she returned, she emphasised the positive encouragement and genuine interest received from her school counsellor. She recalled: "we were at school and she was like she was so interested what I did in Project K and she was like coming to help me all the time." The positive expectations from teachers also appeared to be a positive influencing factor for some youth participants. Lucy talked about how she worked hard to maintain the image of being a role model in front of her teachers and classmates, which motivated to her to obtain academic excellence and improve her leadership qualities.

The responses from key informants also outlined the support from school and teachers that fostered the reintegration of the youth participants. The majority of the Project K staff key informants highlighted the significant role of liaison teachers at school as the focal person who provided solid support to Project K youth participants in terms of catching up with missed class work, coordinating Project K follow-up meetings and monitoring the Project K youths' progress at school. One of the liaison teachers shared that she asked the school teachers to acknowledge and appreciate the Project K youth participants when they returned from the WA. She added that she receives feedback from teachers if they have any concerns so that she can follow up with Project K youth, mentors and facilitators. Key informants also talked about opportunities given to Project K youth to share their experiences in front of the class and even in school assemblies. It was also evident that teachers referenced the WA when they observed

unacceptable responses or behaviours from Project K youth, as a strategy to motivate them. This can be seen in the following comment from David:

> They use it in that regard, referring back to it and saying… hey look what you have achieved. This behaviour isn't becoming of you based on what you have achieved in the past…. I think it's sort of name-checked and used in that manner.

6.6.3 Negative peer influences.

This theme refers to the instances where peer relationships negatively influenced the youth reintegration process. Only a few youth participants openly shared the negative effects of their peer relationships. They highlighted peer distraction and other influences as the reason for not achieving the academic goals they set as part of the WA. As Caleb states:

> I got just a little bit behind on my maths and science which is what I'm really good at … I just wasn't listening to the teacher a lot and with science, I skipped a few classes … because I was with friends… they [were] really influencing me to do… [was] not listen to the teacher …. like all the time.

Caleb's mother, Nicola, also reported that Caleb did not do well in his exams and was playing online games or talking to friends over the phone most of the time. She also noticed that his circle of friends had changed based on his online gaming. Similarly, Indie, another youth participant, could not achieve her maths goals because she was distracted in the classroom. Many of the parents were concerned about their children's circle of friends and peer pressure.

School disengagement was noted when two youth participants got into trouble at school and this resulted in school suspension. As described in transfer mode, Alice's parents reported that she ran away from home with a friend and the police were involved. They also highlighted that their daughter was down because she did not have friends when she returned from the WA. This resulted a lot of attitude at home. Her parents reasoned it as:

> When she's hanging out with the wrong sort of girls yeah definitely and also when she is down because she hasn't got any friends and we get the attitude, but yeah it's her friends certainly do rub off on her which rubs off on us, you know, we get the attitude and the negativity.

Jordan described school as frustrating and found happiness when he hung out with friends to ride bikes anywhere for the whole day. He connected it to his experience in the WA when he did mountain biking for a whole day.

Reflections from key informants also elucidated the context of peer dynamics. Youth participants could be distracted by their old circle of friends upon their return which enabled them to revert back to their old behaviours. This can be seen from the following quote from one of the key informants, Janet (programme coordinator):

> He changed quite a bit on wilderness, but once he came back, he had friends outside of this group which obviously he had before he went on the wilderness…. I got so much positive feedback from the instructors and facilitators and then once he bounced back into normal life and back home and, hanging out with his normal friends like that he kind of bounced back to what he was doing before he went onto wilderness. So not positive things, getting off track.

6.6.4 Peer jealousy.

When the youth participants returned to school, many of them experienced an envious response from their school peers as described in the previous chapter under reaction mode, in some cases this led to peer rejection and loneliness. Jordan's experiences of *peer jealousy* which resulted in occurrences of physical fighting have been detailed in the earlier section on transfer failure, under transfer mode. Some of the youth participants either created new friends or they went back to their old circle of friends. Some of their friends were not interested in listening to their experiences, hence participants did not get the opportunity to share their great achievements with their friends. Likewise, some of their friends expected them to operate the way they used to and were frustrated when they exhibited positive changes. For example, Ethan recollected that "when I came back, they said that I looked different and they said I've changed my ways and they said why am I not being naughty all the time."

6.6.5 Lack of support from teachers and school.

Lack of teachers' support also hindered the youths' reintegration. This subtheme represents data from all three participant groups that referenced descriptions of a lack of support from teachers when participants returned from the WA. Lack of teacher support includes descriptions of insufficient quality of interaction and attention from teachers to help them catch up on missed classwork, a lack of genuine interest in listening to youth talk about their WA experiences, overly high expectations and cautioning reminders of the WA, a lack of positive teacher–student relationships and a lack of opportunities to apply the skills learned from the WA. Some of the youth talked about the lack of recognition from their teachers and not getting

extra educational support and attention when they returned, as can be seen from some of the youth participants' responses during the second phase of interviews:

> I expected them [teachers] to notice that I was gone even when I came back… I expected that extra help. (Ayla)

> I haven't gotten any extra attention or anything like that to help me get back. (Caleb)

> Some were just like "how was Project K?" and I was "oh, good." They [teachers] didn't ask like what you did this and that. "How was it...? was it good?" yeah that's it. (Alice)

Some of the parents also shared their dissatisfaction regarding teachers' support with classwork missed during the WA. Key informants explained the missed classwork system put in place with the support of the liaison teacher and Project K programme coordinator. Many of the key informants explained that this process is challenging, and it differs according to liaison teachers and schools. John recalled that not all the liaison staff supported completing the missed-class follow-up documents for Project K youth. Some of the liaison teachers emphasised their heavy workload as one of the barriers preventing them from accommodating the extra work required for those who missed class. This demonstrates a gap can exist in supporting the youth with their missed classwork when they return from the WA.

Some of the youth shared that their teachers expected them to show positive change when they returned; however, the teachers' responses did not facilitate these changes. This was evident from Jordan's response: "they expected something to change but they didn't really facilitate to make a change…. they just expected it, but they didn't do anything to help it. I don't know just how they acted. They criticise you."

Kay, Jordan's mother, shared her son's response: "I don't like them, he said 'I feel when I turn up to class there are already things that have been said about me there's been a change.'" Kay was critical: "this is staffroom chatter and it bleeds into classrooms."

The teachers' expectations demotivated some of the youth participants. Responses from some of the key informants also revealed teachers' expectations regarding Project K youth. Some of the youth revert back to their old ways when they are cautioned or criticised, and become aggravated, if they did not have a positive relationship with their teachers. Reflections from some of the youth revealed negative relational aspects of their teachers which did not help their reintegration process: "I don't like my whānau teacher because he's rude, there are ones that

don’t really care” (Lucy). Similarly, Indie noted: “Some teachers don’t really, like they teach you, but they don’t really like care. They just teach you because they have to.”

Similarly, some of the key informants also stressed negative relational aspects associated with their teachers. As John stated: “some teachers don’t have a fantastic relationship with school students.”

Indie further explained that she decided to move to a new school due to the lack of recognition and support from her teachers. This can also be seen from Indie’s mother, Heather’s, response: “She wasn’t getting any help at the school from the teacher there and it seems like she was just pushed to the side.” Similarly, Jordan’s mother, Kay, explained that Jordan expected acknowledgement for what he had learned in the WA; however, he was disappointed when he found out his teachers knew “nothing about it.” As a result, “not only was his new knowledge diminished so was his self-esteem along with it.” Kay explained that the lack of support from his teachers negatively influenced her son:

> Lot of his knowledge that he comes back with and skills were largely ignored and that would be difficult for anything coming off so extreme. It is like a return from a tour of duty, you know, with the army and you return home and no one gives a damn what you learned and what your skills are and you start to feel a bit depressed, wondering what it’s all for, why and he was the one good and this thing happened and he just become a different person.

A few other parents blamed the school authorities and educational system for not taking adequate responsibility when their children were involved in problem behaviours or bullying incidents. One of the parents blamed the school for not taking adequate action against the conflicts and bullying that occurred with Project K youth participants after the WA. Some of the key informants also mentioned the bullying incidents that occurred between Project K youth and the support provided to youths and parents through meetings. However, David, a key informant, explained that these happen quite regularly in high schools and considered them a result of personality clashes which could have come with or without Project K. Another parent was disappointed about her son’s risk behaviours and she highlighted the school authorities’ stereotyping and discrimination as the causal factor: “he’s heading towards trouble and that to me in my mind’s eye that is a direct result of their assumption of the school’s assumption Māori, solo mother this is what happens to you guys and this is how he’s been treated.”

6.6.7 Contrast between two environments.

The subtheme contrast between two environments was highlighted by one of the parents. This subtheme describes the differences between the learning environment during the WA and at school. Jordan reflected that he was not given the opportunity to apply the new skills he learned from the WA: “like you could be a leader for a day and lead your whole team but then you come back, and you can’t and have to follow at school and things like that.” Jordan’s mother, Kay, described this as “the contrast between two environments.”

> I think a lot of that [new skills] was suppressed and oppressed by the system at school. You come back with these ideas and these skills you are not going to be allowed to use it in the classroom. What the teacher says goes…. you don’t question it. Whereas at the wilderness thing he was allowed to question everything. What is a better way of doing this, what is a faster more efficient, how do you support all of these life skills that are going to kick in when he needs it most? When you suppress it in an institutionalised environment you are either going to get a kickback you are going to get your conformists and you are going to get those that resist and he resisted vocally because it was why am I learning this when I don’t want to know, why am I doing Shakespeare, you know. (Kay)

Jordan’s experience illustrates the challenges he faced when he attempted to transfer the new skills to his classroom environment. Jordan embraced the experiential and pragmatic learning approach that enabled student autonomy. Conversely, he struggled when he returned to the structured environment where he did not receive the opportunity to exercise personal agency. Additionally, one of the key informants, Amber, shared that some youth can be “disruptive in the classroom” due to their newly earned confidence. Hence, they might talk when the teacher talks in the classroom and “they might just push boundaries a little bit further because they have got the confidence to do that.” She added that these disruptive behaviours should be regulated through youth–mentor support.

6.7 Project K Programme Contextual Factors

The major theme of PK(Project K) programme contextual factors outlines the contextual aspects of the programme that promoted or thwarted the reintegration process of the youth participants when they returned. The promoting factors of the programme context include the subthemes of reconnecting with the wolfpack, the community challenge, and mentor and

programme staff support. Conversely, the subtheme lack of programmatic support explains the factors related to the programme that hindered the reintegration process.

6.7.1 Reconnecting with the wolfpack.

This subtheme illustrates references to the Project K group (referred to as the *wolfpack* in the previous chapter) and how youth participants derived strength and support that eased the reintegration process. The wolfpack played a pivotal role in youth reintegration. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the extended time together in the WA bonded the youth participants and instilled a family feeling. Some of the youth participants continued this bonding through follow-up meetings and their Facebook group as part of the programme. However, only very few parents reported the continuity of wolfpack bonding. Participants also maintained their connection through interactions at school. The bonding and connection of the wolfpack helped them to navigate the reintegration process. For example, Ethan recollected: “I get some of their advice to me and I give them some advice, so it just carries on…. like one whole family.” A few of the youth participants used Project K follow-up meetings and Facebook interactions as the platform to discuss the challenges and achievements upon their return to home and school.

Many of the youth participants derived support from each other to undertake or initiate new out-of-school activities when they returned which included joining martial arts, new sports activities and cultural events. Liam explains:

> I want to do Muay Thai at the moment. I want to get into martial arts so that is one thing I’m looking forward to getting into… Out of Project K, me and Chris have been good mates and we're going to do it together. It actually makes it better because like you are more confident when you are with someone and you have someone to be with like doing it by myself would be really bad be less confident.

Similarly, Ethan also joined athletics for the sake of motivating and ensuring one of his Project K mate’s participation in the event. Likewise, some of the parents also perceived the new extra-curricular initiatives of their children as a result of their Project K friends’ influence. Some of the key informants expressed that wolfpack bonding could support Project K youth to catch up with their missed class work by working together.

6.7.2 The community challenge.

The subtheme community challenge includes the finding related to the community challenge phase of the Project K programme and how it reconnected the youth participants to the memory

of the programme. Youth participants from one specific cohort made more references to the community challenge than the other cohort. They said it helped them refresh their WA memories and provided opportunities for meaningful learning and contribution to the community. Lucy recalled: “it was like Project with the wilderness again. It was like we were all friends again.” Similar to the youth participants, some parents of that specific youth cohort talked more about the community challenge and perceived it as a group gathering that was a follow up of their WA.

Many of the key informants perceived the community challenge component of the programme as one of the key factors that facilitated the reintegration process. Many of them described the community challenge as a follow-up intervention to provide opportunities to transfer the skills learned from the WA and also to ease the transition back to the community. Robyn illustrates how they utilise the community challenge to facilitate the transition:

> Community challenge is definitely a step toward that [transition] because we have an opportunity to talk with them again, how is it going, what is it like being back at home, what are the challenges. Only through community challenge when we speak to them about those things.

6.7.3 Mentoring support.

The subtheme mentoring support comes under Project K programme contextual factors that accelerated the reintegration process, especially learning transfer. This subtheme outlines the notion of positive youth–mentor relationships that contributed to the developmental outcomes of the youth participants. The majority of the youth participants expressed that the mentoring experience was beneficial to achieving their goals. They also outlined the significant role played by their mentors in terms of facilitating the transfer of learning and sustaining outcomes initiated from the WA. For example, Ayla’s reflections demonstrate the significant support she received from her mentor which facilitated positive outcomes:

> When I didn’t have the mentor, I ended up being all quiet again, but then once I met with the mentor and kept meeting up with her, she brought confidence out in me. So I guess that gave me back confidence.

The mentoring support subtheme also describes how youth participants perceived their mentoring relationship. Many of them considered their mentors as a friend who they could trust, someone who was outside of the family and with whom they could share things about their life and their goals. Liam recalled: “I am more open with him and I can trust him and it is

all good to have that relationship with someone else other than my family." Many of the parents and youth highlighted the mentors' support to achieve the youths' dream goals and become future oriented. Key informants viewed the mentoring component as a crucial part of the Project K programme through which mentors utilised their resources and connections to help the youth achieve their dream goals. Many of the parents were impressed with mentors' support with their children's academic goals. Ella's parents talked about Ella being internally motivated and future oriented, saving money for her dream career of travel and photography. Further conversation with Ella revealed the inspiration and support she derived from her mentor to achieve her goal. The following description from Ella illustrates her mentor's support to pursue her goal.

> We talk a lot about like school and what I am planning to do after it. So we've been talking about the subjects I'm choosing for next year because I'm trying to do photography and so she is trying to help me choose things that could help me towards photography and what can help with like travelling. She [mentor] took me to the city for further photography exhibitions so I got to see different types of photography skills and stuff like that and then she talked to this school careers lady and like asked what subjects should be taken to improve the chance of getting into photography classes. I am going to try to start working so I can earn money and then after school try to travel more just to put out my photography stuff.

Mentor–youth matching also played a pivotal role in sustaining the relationship. Some of the youth and parents mentioned that they had the mentor who was the right match for them. Ayla recalled: "they picked the right mentor for me." Similarly, Anna, Lucy's mother shared:

> Dora [Lucy's mentor] was a little sweetie and they had a lot in common.… she was fun and she is like a young adult but they were like little girls together giggling and having fun and having conversations, but still able to study and stuff together.

The above quote demonstrates the parental perception and approval of the mentor–youth relationships, which also enhanced the reintegration process.

6.7.4 Project K programme staff support.

The subtheme programme staff support illuminates the supporting features of the programme staff that promoted the reintegration process and the learning transfer of the youth participants. The responses from youth and parents revealed that the Project K coordinator plays a significant role in the reintegration process. Many of the youth participants talked about the

positive relationship they had with their coordinator. Similar to the characteristics of positive youth–mentor relationships, youth also reflected on the mutual warmth, respect, and trust they experienced with their coordinator. Feedback from youth participants highlighted the "promoting" and "mediating" role of the programme coordinator in their reintegration process. They also helped them to set their goals, maintained regular communication, via text, phone calls and Facebook, with them and their parents, as described by youth participant Lucy:

> Amber [the coordinator] will listen and she's like always there like when you message her, she always answers straight away to let us know that she's there for us and like she will hold meetings at school frequently to talk to us and even when we don't come she still comes again even if she is irritated that we haven't come and I guess that is a good thing because again we know she will always be there to support us. Like my mentor, Amber always knowing that she will be there too, and we can ask her anything and for help and my mentor is always there as well.

Some of the participants reported that their coordinator acted as their mentor in the absence of their assigned mentor and enabled them to be focused. Zoe recalled that: "she wanted me to graduate she always like pushes me because if I don't see my mentor as often as I do then I wouldn't be able to graduate."

Coordinators also provided and received constant support and feedback to youths' mentors and school liaison teacher. Mutual support and communication are also important in order to facilitate the reintegration process of the youth. One of the school liaison teachers noted:

> They are amazing; they are just wonderful. Amber is…. is so organised and so supportive, but they've all been. They pick really good people. Every facilitator that I've worked with has been, they are so patient I don't know how they do it.

Similar to the youth participants, parents also recognised the support of the coordinator. One of the parents recalled:

> The coordinator calls on them once every Monday and checks if they are doing fine and they need help and talks about mentors. The person in charge of Project K at school checks on them regularly and sees if they are ok if they need any support and all that.

The previous subthemes have illustrated the promoting factors of wolfpack bonding and follow-up meetings. The coordinator plays a significant role in organising and arranging the follow-up meetings which accelerated the wolfpack bonding. They also reminded the youth

participants about the skills they learned and brought their WA memories back to facilitate the learning transfer, as can be seen from Ayla's response: "during the meetings that we had with Amber… we would always look back… and she would show us photos as well and that would just trigger what we learned."

Moreover, the coordinator intervened in the group dynamics and conflicts that occurred in the wolfpack and organised meetings to solve the conflicts. Key informants, including the project staff, mentors and liaison teachers, also shared the support they provided to youth throughout the reintegration process. Key informants outlined the significance of communication and information sharing with youth and parents, the discussion and preparation required for youth and parents during the transition process, organising meetings and follow-up interventions, reviewing the youths' log books to monitor their progress and organising the final graduation ceremonies. The data illustrate that, overall, the coordinator helped youth to navigate the reintegration process from the beginning until the end of the programme. The findings from both phases demonstrate that the coordinator accompanied the youth throughout their reintegration process of preparation mode, memory mode, reaction mode, adaptation mode, and transfer mode and throughout their reintegration experiences.

6.7.5 Lack of programmatic support.

In contrast to the above subthemes of promoting factors, this subtheme explains the factors related to the programme that hindered or interrupted the youths' reintegration process. This includes the lack of programmatic support experienced or observed by a minority of youth and their parents. A few of the youth participants shared that they did not receive much guidance and support from programme staff when they returned from the WA. Some of the youth participants expected more support in terms of having a once-a-week Project K group meeting, more time for the community challenge and WA follow-up discussions with WA facilitators. Some of the youth participants and their parents shared that the WA was the most beneficial part of the programme. Further responses from those youth and parents also evidenced a lack of participation and engagement from youth in the community challenge and mentoring components. One of the youth participants, Zara, shared that she did not want to participate in the follow-up meetings due to the wolfpack interpersonal dynamics. As discussed previously, she experienced conflict and bullying from some of her Project K group members during the WA and it continued when she returned to school. Her mother shared that, though school and Project K staff members responded to the situation, she was not happy with the support

received from them. Hence Zara completely avoided the wolfpack. Zara recalled: “I just didn’t go near them didn’t talk to them, so I just cut them off here.” Due to this, she did not enjoy the community challenge.

On the other hand, some of the parents and youth were not satisfied with their mentoring support. Some of the youth participants reported that either it was delayed, or their mentor never turned up. One of the youth participants shared his concern regarding the lack of mentor support given to one of his Project K mates. However, he only spoke briefly about it:

> One of my mates Cooper he said that his mentor dropped out. He doesn’t want to do it anymore. That’s all I’ve heard if he’s lying or telling the truth. I want to ask my coordinator if Cooper could come share a mentor with me just in case he follows the wrong path…. … I don’t want him to follow the wrong path, I just want him to come with me. … I tried my best to get him to come. (Ethan)

Another youth participant, Caleb, found his own mentor from another youth programme in the absence of his Project K mentor, as mentioned under the major theme of individual characteristics. Some parents also reported mentor–youth mismatches. One of the parents, Kay, shared that although Jordan’s mentor was a good person, she and Jordan were not happy with the match. Moreover, she also added that Jordan was assigned his mentor one month late. Jordan also did not maintain his relationship with his mentor. Kay shared:

> No, he was a good person, he was a great guy. Jordan is a mature boy for his age and I think they became more mates than role model and they fed off each other’s ideas and they had banter. So, I think for Jordan a role model would be someone who is like Project K leaders knowledgeable in their area and being in a position to actually teach them fundamental values he understands that. His mentor they were too alike their humour, their, you know, just a bit young, you know, that is going to work for other people, but it’s going to be difficult with a solo family because boys are brought up differently. You’ve got to be a man at five because mum has got to go to work or mum has to go to school whatever. He was fantastic, but I don’t think Jordan would have talked to him. He is not chatty when it comes to that any kind of trouble you are not going to find Jordan talking about it. Really internalises a lot of stuff.

Conversely, while some parents were happy with their children’s progress, and the positive outcomes they observed, they were not satisfied with the lack of parental participation and communication that exists between parents and youth in the Project K programme.

> I would say that the mentor should also communicate to the parents what changes she sees in the child so that the parent will know how to try and improve their behaviour or reduce that behaviour. But now we are not clued up we are just here.… Maybe guidance for the parents how to like what to do to change that behaviour like that. So it becomes a whole community effort… Like I said it is a good programme for the child to build up confidence and things like that, but like it should be more a mutual thing so that where a parent and a child is not communicating and that may be on a community project to include the parents so that you can build a bond between the parent because in one year Project K is done, but the parent is still going to be there, so just to understand for the child not to go back into the old ways so that the parent has a more of an understanding of how to go forward.

Similarly, some of the key informants highlighted the lack of parental or caregiver involvement as a downside of the programme due to funding and resource constraints. However, they expressed their desire and interest to increase parental participation and involvement and recognised this would increase youth developmental outcomes.

A few of the key informants shared that conflict management due to Project K youth group interpersonal dynamics interrupts their work. Some of the key informant mentors shared that they never get to know much about the WA experience unless youth participants share with them. One of the key informant mentors, Sean, recommended that organising WA handover meetings with the WA facilitators, youths and mentors would facilitate the reintegration process and learning transfer. He added:

> Obviously, the mentors don't go on the wilderness. So they don't know what happens, you know, and so, therefore, it is only when they have these three-way conversations, or these groups get together they actually know actually specifically what happened.

The following description from Sean elaborated on what he would like to happen for a handover:

> Here's little Joe, that's not his name, this is what he did on the wilderness. This is my evaluation on how he went, his ups and his downs, what things we discussed, what things really bothered him, what things he actually achieved really well and all that sort of thing and perhaps potentially have that sort of handover for want of a better word between the people who run the wilderness and the mentors to say ok this is what it is. Because the mentoring is a follow up.

This subtheme presents the interruptions and gaps experienced by the participants which influenced the reintegration process. Recommendations made by the participants suggest further improvements in programme support. Some of the parents recommended more organised get-togethers for their children on a monthly basis when they return from the WA. A few other parents recommended improvements in mentor assignment and mentor matching and better communication from the programme staff. Nicola, mother of Caleb, stated:

> When they [youth] come back and they have got their mentors, you know, where they have regular catch up and stuff like they are going to have, but I think that maybe they could have another like in the wilderness or part of an overnight stay or a group stay again before the end, you know, like a personal challenge or something… I think there could probably be more coming back to the parent and if your child hasn't told you what is going on because especially they don't really talk a lot, you know, I think it would be good if we had even if it's more information on the programme to say right this is the community project they've decided to do and this is how they are going to do it or this is what they planned so far. Because I don't know any of it nobody told me because I know the programme ends in a couple of months, but I don't think they've done actually the community programme.

6.8 Other Contextual Factors

This theme highlights the factors that influenced the youth reintegration process outside of the family, peer, school and programme contexts. These include reference to their neighbourhood, community and church; other youth programmes; and social media. Under this major theme, research participants identified that participation in community activities such as other youth activities in church promoted the youth reintegration process. On the other hand, the data also evidenced negative neighbourhood and social media influences on the reintegration process and developmental outcomes of the youth participants.

6.8.1 Participation in community activities.

This subtheme represents participants' references to youth groups and programmes in their church and community activities in which youth had been involved prior to the WA. Only a few youth participants and their parents reported on the youths' active involvement in their community. However, they were able to derive support from these activities during the reintegration process. In addition to the support received from other domains (family, peer, school, and programme) some of the youth also derived support from the community context.

For example, Ella had been an active member of a youth group at her church for the past four years. As discussed earlier, the WA helped her to identify her future aspirations and she set a career goal related to photography and travel with the support of her mentor. Besides her mentor's support, she also received encouragement and support from her church pastor, one of the members of the community, and her youth group during the reintegration process. The following description from Ella illustrates this:

> I went to study with like some friends from church and we were walking around taking photos on like a professional camera from the pastor at our church… then we ran into a photographer and he explained that it is going to be hard from the beginning and he was giving us advice about how we can like build up a business in photography and film.

Zoe's experiences detailed how she derived spiritual strength from prayers at church to overcome a personal challenge during the reintegration process, on top of the other support she received from her peers and family. Zoe used to participate in the church band and volunteer for church events and paper runs, she recalled:

> We have church fundraising and its paper runs… and it is like evening until midnight every Thursdays and I do that.… because I'm into church stuff and I always think doing that is for God's work… for the paper run we don't get anything out of it... [it] all goes to church.

When she returned from the WA, Zoe found out that her boyfriend had started a new relationship with someone due to the lack of contact she had with him during the WA. Hence, she discontinued her relationship with her boyfriend. It was really hard for Zoe to overcome the negative emotions; however, she derived strength by actively participating in church activities.

> I'm still single, I'm still not over him, I always think that I didn't want to be here but I had support from my mum and my best friend and family. So we keep going, I was told to put trust in God and yeah, I still pray for him, forgave him and yeah, I'm still living. Yeah, I think I just have to keep moving on, try.

Similarly, Zoe's mother Gloria also described her church participation. Gloria shared that: "sometimes she has boy issues though and I said to her look just go to the cemetery see your grandfather, you know, she does. It settles her down more." Her participation in church activities distracted her from her negative thoughts along with the support from her family and her best friend.

6.8.2 Lack of community connectedness and negative neighbourhood.

This subtheme includes participants' references to a lack of community connectedness and negative neighbourhood influences that hindered their reintegration process. Many of the youth participants shared that they do not participate in any of the community activities other than the community challenge. Jack's mother, Sophie, commented on the lack of community and neighbourhood interaction Jack experienced:

> He hasn't found anyone in this community he could interact with like our neighbours they are all younger than him the kids or older than him much older than him and they like rugby and stuff like that and he doesn't at all. He doesn't go out very much.

One of the parents reported that they do not have any extended family, since they had migrated from another country. Nicola recalled that:

> I don't hear him talking to anybody else because we have got no family. It's not like I've got family that come over and can sit and talk about to other people, you know, with visitors or stuff like that. So there is no one really else for him to tell or talk about.

Ella's father pointed out that lack of parental participation in community activities is the root cause for children's lack of community participation and low-level community connectedness. Responses from many parents demonstrated that excessive parental and work-related responsibilities prevent them from partaking in community activities. Many of the youth participants did not receive additional support from their community and neighbourhood due to a lack of community connectedness and participation during the reintegration process.

Furthermore, one of the parents talked about her son being negatively influenced by a group of older boys from the neighbourhood. The following response from Kay depicts the situation:

> The trouble is this area. He has never had the trouble before because I've always sent him quite a long way to school, it is between here and there that all of these people live. The person that he had a major, major fight with he only lives over here and so it is like you always have got to be on your guard. You can't be on the street alone kind of thing. I don't know he is safe if he is with a group because if he was on his own and he was caught by this boy and his group he would be hurt badly.

6.8.3 Overuse and misuse of social media.

The final subtheme of the other contextual factors demonstrates the negative influences of social media which interfered with the reintegration process of some of the youth participants.

Many of the parents were concerned about their children's usage of social media, and the distractions this created, which hindered the reintegration process and developmental outcomes. Many of the parents had been surprised to see how their children survived in the WA without technology during the first phase of data collection.

During the second phase, the majority of the parents disclosed their concerns related to the overuse and misuse of social media, including online bullying. Even though the majority of the youth participants talked about their use of social media, only one of the youth participants shared about the online bullying she experienced through Facebook. She experienced bullying from her Project K friend based on the WA experience. This was brought to the attention of parents, programme staff and school authorities. In this context, the youth participant's mother intervened in her daughter's Facebook page and blocked and removed all the Project K friends who bullied her daughter. However, many of the youth participants did not share any details related to their social media usage with their parents. Conversely, the majority of the parents revealed they felt their children overused social media including Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, FaceTime, Hangout and Snap Chat. Some of the parents attempted to monitor social media usage. For example, Liam's father shared: "he's got his Facebook, he goes on that quite a bit. I'm trying to control it; it is good to try and keep it at a limit." On the other hand, some youth were beyond the control of their parents, which led them into trouble.

> She's still on Facebook but she has been told by me and the police not to inflame situations and get into because what they've been doing is been on those chats things where they all get on the same chat. It's like a multi-party on Skype and they are all yakking away on that and some guy that she barely even knows has threatened them with gang on her behalf. We both talked to her today the police officers both of them and basically said you've got to be so careful about what you say on Facebook and keep off the chat lines because you can't control what people are saying on your behalf. It is quite a dangerous thing, but any way you can't take them off it this is the problem. It exists you just have to learn to live with it because you've got to take her phone off, you have to take her phone, she's just going to go down to her friends and use their machine ….I think she has seen that today with the trouble we've had outside... the consequences of using it the wrong way (Nathan -Alice's dad).

However, there were a few parents who either did not have any concerns or did not have a clue about whom their children were socialising with on social media. One of the key informant

mentors also commented about the excessive social media use of the youth participants and the social media bullying she observed during the mentoring period. Jennifer explained about the youth participants' inconsistent friendships, sexual bullying, constant use of social media, unresponsiveness from parents, constant commenting on appearance and emphasis on how girls look in social media photographs: "cute, hot or ugly." The following quote from Jennifer depicts her observations of youths' social media usage.

> So every picture they post up your friends need to say "oh, you are so cute; oh, you look hot." There is constantly commenting on appearance. The biggest insult I heard over and over all year was "she is ugly."

Hence, some of the parents suggested that interventions to educate their children are needed. Nathan- one of the parents commented: "Educators if they can come up with a programme to teach kids how to use social media in a positive way and the ramifications of using it in a negative way would be very good."

This subtheme describes the negative influence of social media despite parental and mentor support. Moreover, it depicts the interconnectedness and interaction between various contexts or domains. In terms of individual characteristics, some youth participants appeared to lack self-regulation and were not receptive to support from parents and others. There was also variability in parent support, monitoring, and parenting style across the participants. This subtheme also emphasises the pervasive influence of social media and technology in youths' lives. Above all, this subtheme includes the current pressure and stress, experienced by Project K youth participants during the reintegration process, as a result of the influence of social media.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has captured the in-depth insights regarding differences and changes experienced or perceived in the phenomenon of reintegration process of youth participants seven months after their WA intervention. In addition to the Phase 1 findings discussed in the previous chapter, the second phase findings have elaborated on the contextual factors that promoted and impeded the reintegration experiences and learning outcomes of the youth participants over a period of time. The findings demonstrate that youth participants' reintegration experiences are embedded within their personal micro- and mesosystemic environments and the influences vary greatly from person to person. The learning outcomes from the WA are evidently facilitated or hindered by individual characteristics and family, school, Project K programme

and other contextual factors. The following chapter considers the research conclusions based on the combined findings from the first and second phases, and implications for the programme and for future research.

Chapter 7 – Discussion

Introduction

This research aimed to explore the reintegration experiences of youth, their parents or caregivers and key informants after the young people's participation in an OA-based positive youth development (PYD) programme. New Zealand-based Project K and its wilderness adventure (WA) component was identified as the unit of analysis of this case study. The aim was addressed via the following research objectives: to explore Project K participants' experiences of reintegration after participating in the WA, the OA component of Project K; to explore parents' views on reintegration after their young peoples' participation in the WA; and to explore the perspectives of key informants on the reintegration of young people after the WA. The research used a rigorous qualitative case study design which generated in-depth insights not only into the reintegration experiences of young people but also the contextual factors that facilitated and influenced their learning outcomes and learning transfer as part of the reintegration process. This final chapter outlines the summary of the key findings in terms of existing international literature, the thesis' contributions to Project K, its theoretical contribution to research and to PYD programming. It ends with concluding thoughts.

7.1 Summary of Findings

Some of the key findings of this research provide in-depth insights into the holistic process of reintegration. The longitudinal research findings have also identified the contextual factors that facilitate the reintegration process. Furthermore, the corroborated responses from youth, parents and key informants have strengthened the depth of knowledge on reintegration and also enhanced the validity of the research findings. The key findings from the first phase of data elucidate the reintegration experiences of youth as a process comprising five major modes: preparation mode, memory mode, reaction mode, adaptation mode, and transfer mode.

Although a few researchers have examined the reentry experiences of youth after an OA intervention, their studies seldom capture changes in the reentry process over a period of time. The studies that have explored reentry aspects, term the phenomenon "expedition reverse cultural shock," "residential reverse cultural or social shock" (Allison et al., 2012, p. 499), and or discuss it as involving readjustment strategies (Dettweiler et al., 2015), but do not position the experiences as a phased process. The findings about the youth's reintegration experiences

across five major modes were corroborated by the views and perceptions of their parents and key informants in the programme. The concept of "mode" in the reintegration experiences represents how youth participants and their parents reflected on or responded to or experienced the effects of the WA differently as time passed.

Previous research on reentry experiences (Allison et al., 2012; Dettweiler et al., 2015) have not explored youths' voices on how they felt leading up to the youth expedition. The current findings emphasise the importance of preparing the youth participants and their parents prior to their OA. The findings show that youth enter into OA experiences with different expectations. In Project K, their pre-intervention emotions were closely linked with their prior knowledge, pre-existing awareness and readiness to participate in the programme. It can be seen that parents also experience a mixture of positive and negative emotions prior to sending their children on Project K's WA. Prior connection and exposure to the programme alleviate anxieties and negative emotions among youth and their parents. Similarly, the lack of programme knowledge and misconceptions about the programme selection process can generate more anxieties among youth and their parents. Some of the parents were concerned about the safety and well-being of their children during the WA, which also heightened their anxiety. A recent study by McCole, Bobilya, Lindley and Holman (2018) highlights that parents perceive "safety and security" as the most important out of the many potential criteria for sending their children on youth development residential outdoor camps. Previous research has also shown that youth experience a mix of emotions, from being anxious to being excited and eager to try the new activity, prior to their adventure programme (Ewert, Chang, & Davidson, 2016).

Youth participants bring individual preconceptions including their attitudes, motivations for attending the OA, positive emotions, concerns, past experiences and programme information to the OA experiences and these influence their learning outcomes and engagement in the intervention (Cooley, Holland, Cumming, Novakovic, & Burns, 2014). Preparation prior to the intervention is vital to enhance the mindset of the youth participants for their development in the programme (Cooley, Cumming, Holland, & Burns, 2015). A study conducted by Ewert and Sibthorp (2009) points out that their prior knowledge and experience can create positive and negative influences on participants' learning outcomes. In their study they termed the factors participants "bring into" to the programme as "precursor confounding variable[s]" (p. 378) which included prior knowledge and experiences, demographics, pre-experience anxiety, pre-

experience motivations and expectations, and self-selection into the programme (Ewert &Sibthorp, 2009). Their findings supported the findings associated with preparation mode in the current study.

The current findings demonstrate that youth memories associated with Project K's WA are salient for a period between one month and seven months after their return. The findings also illustrate parents' reflections and perceptions on their children's WA as well as parents' experiences while their children were away in the WA. The once-in-a lifetime experience subtheme contains the memories of novelty, challenges and personal growth experienced by the youth participants during the WA. Numerous studies have highlighted the uniqueness of the physical and social environment of OA programmes and how the unfamiliar natural environment critically influences the engagement and individual transformation that ultimately results in PYD outcomes (Deane & Harré, 2014a; Ewert & Sibthorp, 2014; Hattie et al., 1997; Norton & Watt, 2014). The current findings are consistent with previous research findings of youth participants' retrospections of OA experiences as "unique" and life-changing (Allison, Stott, Felter, & Beames, 2011; Ramirez, Allison, Scott, Palmer, & Fraser, 2018). Youth participants experienced a collective identity and family feeling during the WA and they remembered their intervention with a sense of achievement. Some of the participants also spoke about interpersonal conflicts and group dynamics which stuck in their memories of the WA. This was not surprising since the WA required them to develop relationships with new peers with different personalities. These findings are consistent with Bobilya, Kalisch and Daniel (2011) who identified experiencing a feeling of accomplishment and experiencing community as the most enjoyable and group dynamics and physical challenge as most difficult characteristics of an Outward Bound wilderness programme. Research by Hopkins and Putnam (2013) also emphasised the construction of intricate and intense social relationships formed between OA participants, which underpins the success of the OA intervention.

The examination of youth perceptions of the WA over a period of seven months evidenced both intensity in youth retrospection and diminished memories over time. Although youth participants considered the WA as a milestone in their life, compared to the vivid memories reported one month after the WA, memories faded over a period of seven months. The findings indicate that the intensity of youth memories appear to be linked to youths' individual characteristics, contextual factors, and experiences. WA memories are likely to be kindled whenever references are made to similar interventions or exposure to the similar natural

environments. It also appears that some youth may repress their WA memories because of the unpleasant experiences of physical exhaustion, discomforts resulting from the lack of amenities, group dynamics and interpersonal conflicts experienced during their WA.

During the WA period, parents were comforted by the daily text-message updates received from the programme staff which lessened the anxieties experienced by some of the parents. The findings show that parents valued the updated communication via text message, written letters, photos, and videos while their children were away for the WA. Parents appreciated the letter writing experience during their children's WA. Letter writing is practised as a meaningful therapeutic exercise in therapeutic WA programmes (Bettmann & Jasperson, 2017; Crump, 2014). The current findings demonstrate that the letter exchange decreases parental anxieties due to separation. However, the lack of opportunity to read and respond to parents' or youths' letters, or vice versa, reduces the meaningful reflective purpose of the letter writing process.

The reintegration experience process highlights the initial adjustment period of emotional upheavals and discomforts associated with the reentry experience immediately after the WA. The current findings have similarities with the concept of expedition reverse cultural shock. However, the current findings are distinct from the previous findings which capture the emotions and thoughts of parents upon their children's reentry. Similar to the youths, parents also experienced a mixture of emotions but some of the parents' emotional lows were associated with worries and anxieties caused by their children's physical injuries during the WA. One of the key findings is that the positive reception of parents, teachers and programme staff has the potential to moderate the emotional upheavals experienced by participants immediately after the WA.

Returning to their normal routines after the initial adjustment period described in reaction mode, the fourth major theme (adaptation mode) describes how youth continued to encounter support and challenges and used some of the coping strategies learnt in their WA experience to re-adapt to their social environment. The adaptation mode in the first phase identifies the initial contextual scenarios and factors within nurturing and challenging environments which enhance or limit their reintegration process. Simultaneously, it also captures some of the youth participants' coping strategies that smoothen the reintegration process. Wolfpack bonding is one of the key strategies that facilitates their connection and learning from the WA. Consequently, it is not surprising that the dissolution of the wolfpack was reported over time in the second phase due to the lower frequency of follow up meetings. Although adaptation

mode describes the supportive and challenging factors experienced in the initial stage of the reintegration process, these are captured separately in the second phase. Over time, the initially identified contextual factors in adaptation mode were identified as the promoting and impeding factors that facilitated or prevented learning transfer and a successful reintegration process. Transfer mode in the process of reintegration illustrates the evidence of youth success and failure of learning transfer across a one to seven-month period. Transfer mode in the first phase describes how youth successfully transferred the skills learned from the WA into their home and school environment. Simultaneously, the data also reveals some of the transfer failure youth experienced over a period of time.

The literature on youth adventure programming emphasises the unique aspects of the wilderness atmosphere that provides a break from the normal social environment for the participants. The youth adventure programming model (YAP) developed by Deane and Harré (2014b) emphasised the three critical experiences of youth adventure programmes include a novel physical environment; achievable challenging activities with natural consequences; and an intense and supportive small- group social setting. The findings from this study also strengthened the arguments of YAP model.

Although, the aspects of remoteness create isolation from their normal social setting, some of the youth participants and their parents perceived it as “a break from each other.” Some of the youth participants viewed the WA as an opportunity to escape from their home environment and spend time with peer groups. The perception of young people was supported by Garst, Scheider and Baker (2001), who found that youth perceived WA as an escape mechanism from family pressure and other stressful influences. Moreover, youth were able to see the natural aspects of the environment that they never experienced in their life. The current findings also suggest there are reciprocal effects for parents, as some of the parents expressed the period of WA as a break from their teenage children and helped them to refocus themselves. Therefore, the WA programme creates value for both youth and their parents. The following figure 7.1 conceptualise and summarises the key findings.

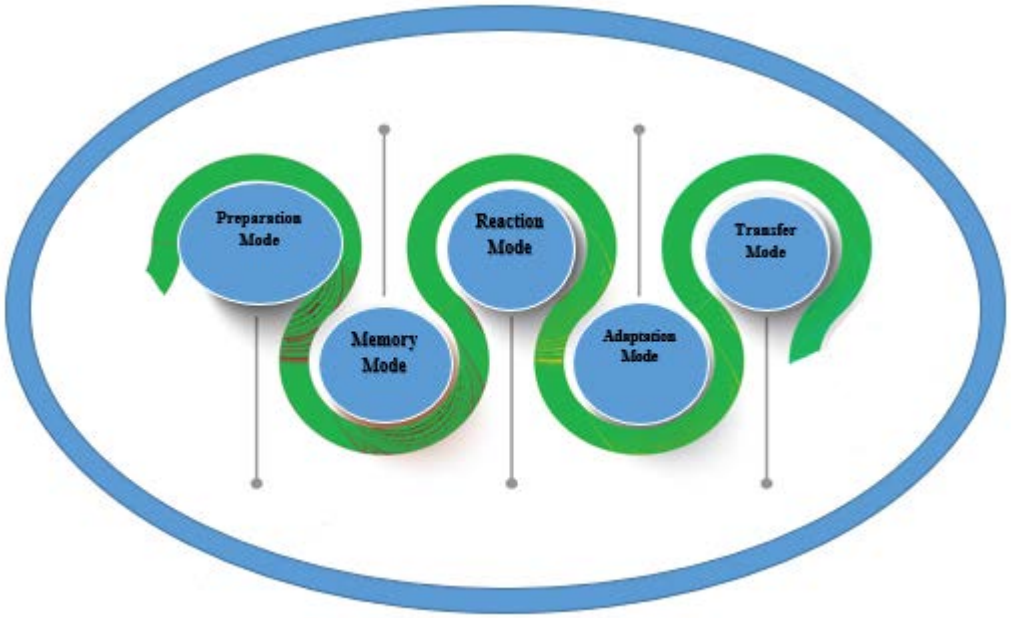

Figure 7.1. Conceptual framework of reintegration experiences.

The figure 7.1 conceptual framework visualises that reintegration experiences need to be understood as an interlinked holistic process. Reintegration occurs in the context in which individual and ecological factors play a role. Young people do not exist in isolation nor does their development. The interlinked holistic process of reintegration depicts the reciprocal interaction between the young individual and their context.

One of the key findings emphasises the importance of Preparation Mode. The successful reintegration of a young participant requires them and their parents to having a clear understanding of the programme and the expected learning outcome prior to the WA programme. Project K is a structured programme which provides detailed information to the young people, their parents or caregivers and other stakeholders, including schools and community partners prior and during the programme (Graeme Dingle Foundation Project K Programme Induction Manual, 2015). Despite this, the findings revealed that some lacked information and this concerned those young participants and their parents. Prior knowledge and clarity of the programme objectives can reduce these anxieties. Moreover, it is also important to address language barriers and cultural differences that may hinder parent's understanding of the programme. Hence, programmes can include support to address this gap.

Responses from Ethan and his mum Susan (please see p. 69) revealed how happy they were when they came to know about Ethan's opportunity to participate in the Project because they

had prior knowledge of the programme. The language barrier was not an issue for Ethan's mum because she had a good understanding of what was in store, but this was due to the previous connection their family had with the programme. For those who are unfamiliar with the programme, greater efforts to meet their information needs may be needed.

The key findings on Memory Mode shows that all three research participants groups considered the WA as a once in life time experience although those memories faded over the following six months period. Thus the findings emphasise the importance of creating a WA as an 'enjoyable' or 'everlasting' experience for young participants. Because, the key findings on Transfer mode revealed that their WA experiences and memories are important for transferring the learning from the programme. Project K participants became a "wolfpack" family. Although, the majority of the youth participants had enjoyable memories, a few youth participants experienced interpersonal conflicts during the WA. The researcher identified that the interpersonal conflicts that occur during the WA can also ruin the participants' memories which can result in disengagement from the programme. One of the youth participants, Zara, expected to be happy all the time during the WA and expected the staff to manage and deal with group dynamics in a better way. Zara's mum's response also indicated that Zara did not want to participate in the follow up meetings due to the group dynamics and interpersonal conflicts that occurred during WA.

The findings highlighted the significant role WA instructors play to adequately address the group dynamics and interpersonal conflicts. The findings also emphasised the requirement of handover in terms of the end of the WA to programme staff, parents and mentors, particularly with respect to youth achievements or concerns to ensure a smoother reintegration process. This could be achieved by arranging the mentoring support towards the end of WA component so that the WA instructors could debrief with parents, mentors and programme staff. This could address the information gap experienced by some parents and mentors. The third phase of Reaction Mode highlights that youth participants experienced emotional highs and lows when they returned from the WA programme. They experienced a 'brand new' or born again feeling. Although they were exhausted physically, they were enthusiastic. When youth retuned, they felt 'discomfort in the comfort zone'. What seems to be important during Reaction Mode is a positive reception, allowing the time and space for young participants to re-settle and listening to their stories. The connections and communication with their "wolfpack" helped some to regulate their emotions. Parents also play a crucial role in this mode. Parents or caregivers may

have limited information about the WA experiences due to the programme's youth-focused structure. Despite the information, success and achievement shared at the end of the formal welcome back, parents or caregivers may not completely understand and grasp the youths' unique and intensive experiences. Thus parents require strategies to facilitate a positive reintegration experience for themselves and their young people. Although the Project K programme manual highlights the changes expected in the Project K participants, the responses from the participants indicated limited information on reintegration. This may be due to a communication barriers or issues associated with a lack of fidelity to the expected programme standards during implementation. Thus this discrepancy requires further attention.

The findings related to Adaption Mode showed that during this phase youth participants adjusted back to their reality. This was nurtured by positive encouragements and support from parents and teachers. Parents, school teachers and peers have also been found to play an important role in this mode. Schools providing support to catch up with missed class work will help youth to adapt more quickly. Although the programme manual provides clear guidelines on missed work, the make- up sheets to be completed by liaison teachers and duly signed by parents and the participants had limited information. However some of the youth participants and their parents acknowledged the support from class teachers in terms of extra time or extensions for tests and assignments worked well. The findings accentuate some of the programme implementation issues and consistency required in terms of stakeholder participation. Successful reintegration requires connection and good communication between parents, programme staff and teachers. Although the Project K programme manual provides a very clear role description of school liaison, including the responsibility of ensuring the support of all year 10 teaching staff to youth participants, the findings indicates further support is required in this area. It is also important to consider the sudden change experienced by youth participants in terms of experiential learning in the WA. Findings showed that youth experience difficulties in adapting into the structured environment at school upon their arrival. Moreover, it is also crucial to better attend to some of the youth participants' individual kinaesthetic needs in school environments.

All youth were able transfer their learnings from the programme into their daily life. Parents and key informants shared that they saw behavioural changes in terms of positive self –concept, responsibility, skill development, academic success, and an outdoor orientation. What is more important is that the young people have the opportunity to apply their skills at home, school

and in their communities. The data showed personal growth, transfer success and failure. Contextual factors play a crucial role in sustaining positive changes. Some youth struggled to maintain the changes and their progress derailed. To enhance the transfer of learning, the youth participants require nurturing reciprocal individual –contextual interactions. The experiences and responses from Alice (p.124) and Jordan (p.126) support this finding. During the first of phase of data collection, Jordan was invigorated by WA and he was looking forward to make positive changes in his life. The WA helped him to improve his self-confidence, interpersonal communication skills, class engagement and cultural connectedness. However, the second phase of data revealed that he was suspended from school which also resulted in him dropping out of the Project K programme. Responses from Kay (Jordan's mother) highlighted the contextual aspects of negative peer influence from the neighbourhood, lack of mentor -mentee match and lack of support from school as some of the reasons for his disengagement from school and the programme. Kay also highlighted how the school system blamed her son for problem behaviours and bullying incidents rather than providing adequate support.

Although Alice (another youth participant) also faced a similar experience, she was able to bounce back with the support of her parents. Her parents helped her to identify a new school and she look forwarded to making positive differences in new school (see p. 127). Thus these examples reveal that the interaction between youth and their context can facilitate or hinder the reintegration process. Although personal attitudes and internal motivation of the youth also matter, the findings showed that parents and key informants tend to highlight or blame young people if they are not fulfilling their expectations or positive learnings from the programme.

7.2 Contribution of the Research to Project K

The current research provides substantial contributions to advancing understanding of Project K as a PYD programme. The research addresses a gap identified in previous Project K research in terms of the need to better understand issues associated with the reintegration of youth into their daily lives after the WA (Deane, 2012; Deane & Harré, 2014a). The triangulation of qualitative empirical quotes in the current study also substantiates the immediate and long-term positive outcomes identified from in previous Project K research (Chapman et al., 2017; Deane et al., 2016; Furness, 2013; Hollis, Deane, Moore, & Harré, 2011; Moore & Harré, 2007; Warren, 2005; Zhang, 2011). The randomised controlled trial on Project K revealed that the project created a sustained positive impact on youth participants' social and academic self-efficacy from pre- to post-programme over a period of one year. Furthermore, the study also

identified differential programme effects across participants' subgroups (Deane et al., 2017). The current study provides support for why positive youth outcomes were sustained over a period of 8 months and also suggests why differential effects of youth outcomes occur over time.

It also identifies the contextual factors that influence and facilitate the transfer of learning from the WA into sustained youth development outcomes. Given this, the research supports the programme theory of change (ToC) developed by Deane and Harré (2014a). Project K's ToC depicted eight theoretical components including the antecedent condition, the experiential learning cycle, the programme environment, individual characteristics, interpersonal dynamics, ongoing inputs, cultural considerations, and outcomes (Deane, 2012; Deane & Harré, 2014a). It is also important to note how these various components interact to produce outcomes. The ToC model emphasised the iterative experiential learning cycle that is strengthened by ongoing reinforcement and support from key people in the youths' external environment including parents, teachers, and peers (Deane & Harré, 2014a). The findings contribute to the ToC model of the programme by providing empirical evidence of the importance of ongoing inputs, interpersonal dynamics, and individual characteristics to the success of the programme. The identified promoting contextual factors, including positive characteristics of youth, positive parental support, positive peer influence, support from school and teachers, reconnecting with the wolfpack, community challenge, mentor support, programme staff support and participation in other community activities, provide a deeper understanding of the theoretical component of the ongoing inputs in the ToC model.

Furthermore, the ToC model conceptualises interpersonal dynamics as an important theoretical component of the programme which captures the interactions within the programme group, between participants, programme staff or mentors, and between programme staff and the participants' families and school. Some of the impeding contextual factors from the current study also unpack the ToC theoretical component of interpersonal dynamics. For example, positive and negative peer influences and peer jealousy. The five modes of the phenomenon of reintegration captured triangulated evidence of interpersonal dynamics across the findings from both phases. For example, memories of interpersonal conflicts experienced by some of the youth participants and perceptions of the parents and key informants. The current research indirectly elaborates on the ToC model by providing an in-depth understanding of the process and context in which youth participants transfer the learning from the WA. Additionally, it

identifies the factors that aid or thwart the reintegration process as well as learning transfer which is linked to the transfer of knowledge in the ToC model. Although the current study only explored the reintegration experiences and perception of participants after the WA component of the programme, the findings also refer to the other programme components, the community challenge and mentoring due to the elongated nature of the data collection. Thus it also provides partial support for the ToC model with respect to the other components.

One of the key contributions of this research to the Project K programme is the in-depth exploration of the process of learning transfer as part of the reintegration. The findings describe the factors that facilitate the transfer success and transfer failure. This is one of the first studies of Project K that has explored the transfer process. Despite the individual differences identified in transfer mode in terms of the degree to which they transferred their learning, all the youth participants experienced some level of personal growth which was sustained over a period of seven months. Parents' and key informants' perceptions also supported these findings. This in-depth qualitative evidence is concurrent with the rigorous findings of the previous randomised controlled trial study (Deane et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the current study evidences that the learnings provided by the WA are transferred into youths' lives and, in the absence of promoting factors, transfer failure can arise at any point of time during the reintegration process. Thus, the findings suggest key contributing factors of the differential programme effects experienced by youth after the programme is finished.

Despite the fact that the Project K programme is culturally neutral (Hollis et al., 2011), the current findings indicate that it can enhance cultural and spiritual connection, especially for some of the Māori youth participants. Previous research on the Project K programme explored the culturally specific impact of the programme on Māori youth participants. The previous findings show that although participation had a positive impact on the self-efficacy and academic achievement of Māori youth, they did not report any culturally specific youth outcomes. However, Hollis et al.'s (2011) findings revealed that during the WA, Māori youth reflected on their cultural beliefs and values despite some of the instructors and youth members being unaware of their cultural beliefs. The same study made a recommendation to improve the programme by providing culturally responsive support to Māori youth participants in the Project K programme. The current study found that one of the youth participants remembered the WA as a place which enhanced his cultural identity and helped him to reconnect with his tupuna (ancestors). His mother also stated that he became "culturally stronger" after the WA.

Furthermore, some of the youth participants from the same Project K cohort reflected onspiritual connections, talking aobut how they recited prayers in their own languages during the WA. Greffrath, Meyer, Strydom and Ellis (2011) have also noted that significant experiences in the wilderness can make valuable contributions to an individual's spiritual upliftment and beliefs. Although Project K programme is secular and culturally neutral, these findings signal that it can enhance the culture and spiritual connections of the youth participants.

The research findings also support the recent immersive participant observational research conducted with Project K (Burnett, 2018). Burnett (2018) explored the concept, process, and trajectories of engagement and disengagement in the WA. Burnett argues that disengagement during the WA is influenced by three factors: physical challenge, negative social influence, and limited facilitator attunement. The current findings also evidence youth memories of physical challenge and interpersonal conflicts under the memory mode during their reintegration period. Furthermore, the current research also evidences that positive or negative WA memories regarding engagement and disengagement appear to influence the memory, reaction, adaptation and transfer modes of the reintegration process. The triangulated evidence from all three participant groups also provides support for the factors influencing engagement during the WA.

Previous research on Project K (Deane & Harré, 2014a; Warren, 2005) has identified some of the reintegration difficulties faced by youth participants when they return from the WA. Despite the suggested strategies in the programme manual for easing reintegration, it is still considered a difficult process (Deane & Harré, 2014a). Although programme manuals describe the changes expected in students, it does not sufficiently capture a holistic view of the reintegration experience. The current research provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of reintegration as a process, and factors that influence the reintegration, including the transfer of learning outcomes.

The research findings also corroborate a previous Project K study by Chapman et al. (2017). Structural equation modelling of longitudinal, multilevel data with 327 Project K participants confirmed the significance of WA engagement and mentor support. The current findings also identified mentoring support as one of the key promoting factors that facilitated the learning transfer. The findings also outlined the importance of mentor–youth matching that played a pivotal role in sustaining the youth relationship with their mentors. Moreover, the findings also identified the role of parental perception in supporting mentor–youth relationships and parental

approval of the relationship, which enhanced the transfer of learning. Additionally, the findings also suggest that the programme staff also played a key role in smoothening the reintegration process. Findings showed that some programme staff played the role of mentor when youth experienced interruptions with their assigned mentor in the programme. A recent study on a New Zealand based school-based mentoring programme also suggests that programme staff can be a valuable source of information about the mentoring relationship (Dutton, Deane & Bullen, 2018).

All of this research on Project K provides a deeper understanding of its effectiveness and how it works to create positive outcomes in young people's lives. It is quite remarkable that so many studies (Burnett, 2018; Chapman, Deane, Harré, Courtney, & Moore, 2017; Deane, 2012; Deane & Harré, 2014a, 2016; Deane, Harré, Moore, & Courtney, 2016; Deane, Courtney, Moore, & Gillham, 2017; Furness, 2013; Hollis, Deane, Moore, & Harré, 2011; Warren, 2005; Zhang, 2011) conducted with various research methods repeatedly reinforce the same findings and consistency across the evidences. The following section delineates what the evidence base on Project K can offer to other fields and similar PYD Programmes, particularly in relation to the reintegration process.

7.3 Theoretical Contributions of the Research to PYD Programming

The previous section demonstrates how extensively researched the Project K Programme is and the significance of this research to the PYD field. Among the previous research on Project K (Burnett, 2018; Chapman, Deane, Harré, Courtney, & Moore, 2017; Deane, 2012; Deane & Harré, 2014a, 2016; Deane, Harré, Moore, & Courtney, 2016; Deane, Courtney, Moore, & Gillham, 2017; Furness, 2013; Hollis, Deane, Moore, & Harré, 2011; Warren, 2005; Zhang, 2011), the YAP model, which was derived from Project K research, including its ToC (Deane & Harré, 2014a ; Deane & Harré , 2014b), provided significant theoretical contributions to youth adventure programming and also highlighted the need to unpack the 'black box' problem of OA programming. The term 'black box' represents studies that emphasise programme outcomes without exploring the factors that contribute to these outcomes (Astbury & Leeuw, 2010). The current study extends the theory building process of Project K by further unpacking the 'black box' by identifying the process and causal mechanisms that influence sustained youth outcomes. As a single case study, it may not be representative of other OA based PYD programmes but the findings from this study can still be translated in ways that inform other similar programmes. Project K, as a case study, demonstrates best practices of PYD

programming in terms of incorporating research and evidence. As mentioned in the previous section, the current findings supported the generic YAP model that represented the experiential learning cycle along with moderators of outcomes. The alignment between the YAP model and current findings demonstrates theoretical implications of likely relevance to other PYD programmes. The conceptual framework of Project K's reintegration process likely applies to similar OA based PYD programmes or any programme that removes young people from their social environment and provides an intensive and transformative short -term experiences.

The process of reintegration as interlinking modes is an innovative concept that unpacks not only youth participants' reentry experiences but also their parents and key informants' perspectives. The research findings altogether distil the promoting and impeding factors that influence learning transfer and ultimately results in sustaining or thwarting the positive outcomes of PYD programmes. This case study addresses a significant gap in knowledge about PYD residential programme settings and contributes to the existing literature on adjustment and post-programme experiences after an intensive OA programme (e.g. Allison et al., 2012; Dettweiler et al., 2015).

Although the research focused on the OA component of a PYD programme, the second-phase of data collection cut across two other components of the programme. The longitudinal nature of the data collection provides an in-depth understanding of the changes in the reintegration experience and perceptual differences over time, which contrasts with previous research (Dettweiler et al., 2015). As detailed in Chapter 4, the research used a single-case holistic design (Yin, 2014, 2017, 2018) to explore the phenomenon of reintegration of youth participants after a residential adventure youth development programme. The researcher followed a longitudinal case study design; a single case inspected at two or more points in time (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016; Yin, 2018). The study provides a methodological contribution to descriptive accounts of youth development programmes, as qualitative empirical evidence in existing PYD studies is limited and more so with respect to investigating reintegration experiences at different points in time.

7.4 Implications for Practice

PYD research often focus solely on program outcomes without considering the internal program processes and components responsible for producing observed outcomes. The literature on OA programming indicates that it is an effective form of programming for

enhancing positive youth development (Deane & Harré, 2014a). However, we do not know much about what happens when youth returns to their normal environment following a residential based OA programme. The current research addressed this knowledge gap, in part, through a single programme case study. The research identified opportunities and challenges faced by youth participants during the reintegration process. However, it is important to note that Project K programme provides substantial support to youth participants during the reintegration process through its multiple components. Thus, other OA based programmes could look to replicate Project K's practices in terms of reintegration and learn from the current findings.

The results indicate that, out of the three components of the Project K programme, the WA was identified as the critical component that ignited positive outcomes among youth participants. However, the findings demonstrated the two other components, the community challenge and mentoring support, played an influential role in facilitating the reintegration and learning transfer of the youth participants. The community challenge provided opportunity for youth participants to revive and maintain their WA family spirit. The follow up meetings with their peer members and programme staff helped the young people to cope better with their reintegration. Similarly, the findings accentuated the significance of mentoring component. Mentoring support was identified as one of the most important contextual factors that facilitated learning transfer. The mentoring partnership facilitated youth participants' learning from the WA with a one- on- one mentor-mentee relationship. This research evidences the uniqueness of the Project K Programme. The triple components of Project K provide maximum opportunity and resources for youth participants to transfer and sustain their learning outcomes of the programme.

The findings indicate that OA based PYD programmes need to consider reintegration strategies in order to smooth the transition of young people back into their daily lives. Youths' positive characteristics, support from parents, peers and teachers, bonding with OA peer group, programme support and participation in other community activities are some of the promoting elements that establish transfer success. Similarly, a lack of positive contextual supports appears to impede the ongoing transfer of skills and leads to transfer failure which results in adverse effects. Individual characteristics, ongoing support, and inputs from parents, peers, teachers, Project K group, mentor and programme staff enhance youth participants' successful completion of the Project K programme.

The findings depicted the fundamental influence of positive family support. Positive responses and active participation of the parents in the programme motivated youth participants and smoothened their reintegration process. It also promoted the transfer of learning at home. Project K programmes provide opportunities for parents to participate in the programme by inviting them for induction, debriefing, welcome back ceremonies, follow up meetings and graduation ceremonies. However, lack of parental involvement and participation in these events can create barriers to youth reintegration and sustained programme achievements. The results indicated that parental encouragements, rewards and acknowledgement during the reintegration phases positively influenced the youth participants. Parents who intentionally create opportunities and assign responsibilities to youth also enhanced learning transfer. It is suggested to include clear descriptions regarding the role of parents and create guidelines for parents to support their children during the reintegration process when young people sign up to participate.

The findings also indicate the importance of the role of teachers to assist with catching up with missed schoolwork, providing opportunities in the classroom to apply the skills learned in the WA, encouraging and motivating them, and supporting youth when they face challenges by providing instructive and constructive feedback. Experiencing a lack of support, autonomy, and confronting the difference of the experiential learning in the WA and the structured environment at school impeded reintegration and learning transfer. Although, there are programme documents and processes in place in terms of missed work makeup during the WA, these guidelines need to be actively followed and monitored byparents and school teachers.

The research accentuates the contextual lens of PYD programming, which takes the view that “human development involves mutually influential relations between developing individuals and the multiple levels of their complex and changing contexts” (Geldhof et al., 2014, p. 67) This evidences youth–context interactions. The research highlights the programme improvement required in terms of facilitating mutually beneficial youth–context interactions. More participation and involvement of parents, teachers, and peers during the programme reintegration period will smooth the transition process. It is important that programme providers develop a thorough reintegration strategy and guidelines for parents, teachers and programme staff. The findings also indicate that OA experiences can break down barriers and provide the perfect venue for youth to explore their hidden potential and to maximise it. Hence the WA requires careful debriefing and follow-up plans in terms of transition and the transfer

of learning process. WA debriefings involving parents and other important adults, such as natural or formal mentors, may provide better reintegration experiences and may enhance learning transfer.

7.5 Implications for Future Research

The previous section on theoretical contribution of the research findings highlighted the implications for similar OA based PYD programmes as well as any forms of residential programming that removes young people from their social environment. Thus, it is suggested that future research explore the application of the conceptual framework of Project K's reintegration process against other OA based or residential based PYD programmes. The triple components of Project K appears to play a key role in facilitating the reintegration process because Project K provides opportunity for family, school and community to participate through the follow up components. Because the findings evidenced that the community challenge and mentoring partnership strengthened the transfer of learning that sustained the youth outcomes over a period, future research should be carried out to determine the significance of having multiple components in OA based PYD programmes. Moreover, the findings also raise questions about the reintegration process for other PYD programmes that do not have multiple components. Although Project K has multiple components, the current findings emphasise the need for further support for youth to enhance the reintegration process. Other PYD programmes that abruptly finish with an OA component without any follow up raises potential concerns. A comparative case study that explores the phenomenon of reintegration between Project K and similar OA based youth development programmes which do not have multiple components could clarify if these concerns are well founded.

The findings also raise the question of whether all Project K youth participants, parents and key informants experience reintegration in a similar manner across programme sites. Because the current research was carried out in only one of the regions across the nation, an embedded case study design with multiple units of analysis incorporating mixed method research with multiple source of evidence nationwide would address this question. This could extend the concepts of reintegration identified here and would assist in discerning programmatic differences that influence learning transfer and the sustainability of youth outcomes.

This research identifies some of the key contextual factors that facilitate the transfer of learning outcomes from the WA component of a PYD programme, by unpacking the concept of transfer

in the ToC and YAP models developed by Deane and Harré (2013, 2014a). Exploring more deeply the contextual influential factors of learning transfer after participating in other components of the Project K programme is likely to be a fruitful opportunity for future research. This could identify other contextual factors that influence learning outcomes within programme components. This would advance PYD knowledge by deepening understanding of the bidirectional person-context interactions in youth development programme. Case study methods could continue to be used to explore these interactions. Further qualitative research on other components of the programme would provide a more complete understanding of the interaction between individual characteristics and other major contexts including family, peers, school, and programme.

Concluding Thoughts

The significance of this thesis is the in-depth exploration and deeper understanding of the phenomenon of reintegration experienced by participants after a OA-based youth development programme. The research captures this phenomenon in-depth, whereas it has not been adequately addressed in the current youth development literature. The findings from this research provide a thematic conceptual framework for the reintegration experience and also identifies relevant contextual factors that promote and impede learning transfer and reintegration process in general.

The triangulated, in-depth findings of the reintegration phenomenon can assist in improving programme delivery and advance knowledge of PYD through this theory-building process. The current research also complements the existing literature by outlining implications for future research and practice. At a broader level, this thesis highlights the importance of interactions between youth and their contexts and it identifies the conditions under which youth development programmes work. In order to sustain the positive outcomes of the OA based youth development programme, programme stakeholders are encouraged to deepen their understanding of the reintegration process. Moreover, it is important to understand that youth participants can transfer the skills learned from OA participation throughout the reintegration process, but this is influenced by various contextual factors. The current research opens a plethora of opportunities for future research to further test theories about interactions between young people and their contexts and their influence on learning transfer and the sustainability of outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix A – Organisation Information Sheet and Statement of Collaboration

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

SCHOOL OF COUNSELLING, HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL WORK

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Organisation Information Sheet

Title of Research Project: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Name of the Researcher: Mary Liya, PhD Student, School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Name of the Supervisors: Dr Christa Fouché
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work,
University of Auckland

Dr Kelsey Deane,
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work,
University of Auckland

Tēnā koe! Warm Greetings!

The aim of this research is to explore the reintegration experiences of Project K youth participants, their parent/caregivers and key informants after participation in the Wilderness Adventure component of the programme. Mary Liya's research is being supervised by Dr Christa Fouché and Dr Kelsey Deane. This research will offer a significant contribution to Project K and to the broader field of Positive Youth Development field by building knowledge about how to facilitate the positive reintegration of youth into family and school systems after an intensive residential youth development programme. To do this, we are interested in recruiting Project K participant-parent/caregiver pairs (or triads) and key informants (individuals who have been intimately involved with Project K over several years). Your assistance in reaching out to interested participants would be useful for conducting this important research.

The PhD researcher (Mary Liya) seeks your assistance in sharing general information about the study to potential youth and parent/caregiver participants at the Project K induction meeting at two different Auckland-based sites in early 2016. She also requests permission to attend the induction meeting so that she is available to answer questions and discuss the research in greater detail with interested participants and to distribute Participant Information Sheets (PISs), Assent and Consent Forms (AFs and CFs) when parents and caregivers are onsite together. If both parent(s)/caregiver(s) and the young person consent and assent to take part in the research, the researcher will invite them to participate in separate interviews approximately one month after the young person returns from the

Wilderness Adventure. Following the first research phase, the researcher will interview the participants (young person and parent(s)/caregivers, separately) again approximately six months after the first interview.

She also requests your support in identifying and contacting key informants who are suitable to include in the study (based on their ongoing involvement in Project K and with Project K participants and their families) to ascertain their interest in participating. Once their interest is confirmed, the researcher will contact each key informant over phone to discuss the research in greater detail, distribute and the PISs and CFs, and schedule a time for an interview.

All interviews are expected to last 60 to 90 minutes each and will take place at a location convenient to the participants. All participants will be reimbursed for their time with a small koha/gift. Participants will be advised that their involvement is completely voluntary and they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give reason and without penalty. Further, the participants will be advised that their choice to participate or not to participate will have no effect on their existing relationship with FYD or Project K.

The results from this research will be published in research articles, reports and presentations and may also be used by FYD in the promotion of or training for Project K. This research also forms the basis of Mary Liya's PhD research. To protect the participants' confidentiality no names will be noted at any point in the interviews or in any associated reports. Individuals will be referred by codes or pseudonyms. No one outside of the research team will have access to the individual raw data and this information will be securely stored. However, the researcher will provide you with the electronic copies of journal articles, reports or other publications which arise from this research.

He mihi nui! Thank you for reading about this research!

If you have any questions at all about your organisation's participation in this study, or feel uncomfortable about any part of the research, or if you just have general questions about the research, I encourage you to contact any members of the research team listed below.

CONTACT DETAILS AND APPROVAL

Student Researcher name and contact details	Supervisor name and contact details	Head of Department name and contact details
Mary Liya Email : mary.liya@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email:
	Dr Kelsey Deane 09 623 8899 ext. 48685 Email: k.deane@auckland.ac.nz	c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335.

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Statement of Collaboration

Between the Foundation of Youth Development (FYD) and University of Auckland researchers: Mary Liya, Dr Christa Fouché and Dr Kelsey Deane

Background

- FYD own Project K, a youth development programme that aims to maximise youth potential.
- FYD wishes to engage in research to inform the development of this programme.
- Mary Liya wishes to research the practices that promote positive youth development and wellbeing within the context of youth development programmes as part of her PhD thesis. Dr Christa Fouché and Dr Kelsey Deane (permanently appointed staff at University of Auckland) have agreed to supervise this study.
- It is understood that there is an opportunity to collaborate for mutual benefit. The purpose of this statement of collaboration is to set out mutually agreed guidelines for a collaborative research study.

Parties

This understanding relates to the research to be conducted by Mary Liya, Dr Christa Fouché and Dr Kelsey Deane ('the academic researchers'). The research involves an exploration of the experiences of youth, their parents and key informants regarding the reintegration of young people after participation in an outdoor adventure component of Project K. Liya will use the research to complete a PhD thesis under the supervision of Dr Christa Fouché and Dr Kelsey Deane. FYD will be represented by Julie Moore.

The agreement

FYD and the academic researchers agree that:

1. The research will be conducted as outlined in the ethics application titled *'Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme' (REF 016335)* attached. THE APPLICATION WAS APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON (16-Dec-2015 *, for a period of three years Ref.No. 016335*)

2. The researchers and FYD are committed to working in a collaborative manner to allow each party to achieve their objectives, and the responsibilities outlined in the ethics application are understood and will be met by each party.

3. FYD agrees to allow the academic research team access to FYD policies and procedure manuals and research or evaluation reports to assist with this study.

4. The involvement of any academic research team members not yet named in this document will be subject to prior approval by FYD. FYD may stipulate that any academic research team members sign a confidentiality agreement for matters associated with FYD's intellectual property, organisational policies and procedures that are not directly relevant to this research study and data collection processes prior to obtaining access to the data.

5. The academic research team will not copy any FYD materials or use them for any other purpose than to design, conduct and write up this research study.

6. Any material handed out during the research study or made available to FYD in advance will not be copied by FYD without the permission of the researchers.

7. FYD understand that they will not have access to any raw data or names of consenting participants and that a participant's decision to take part or not to take part will have no impact on their relationship with FYD.

8. The academic researchers will keep all hard copy data and consent forms in separate locked filing cabinets at the University of Auckland for 6 years, after which point they will be confidentially destroyed in compliance with the University of Auckland's secure destruction of research guidelines.

9. Electronic data will remain on the researchers' password-protected computer indefinitely so that it can be utilised in future research. This information will have all characteristics that could identify individuals removed.

10. Mary Liya has the full rights to use the data and results of this study to write her PhD thesis.

11. The academic researchers have the right to publish findings from this research project or present the results at conference or other public forum after providing FYD with an opportunity to comment on the interpretation of the findings. FYD's perspective on the interpretation of the findings will be incorporated in the discussion of the findings if this is desired by FYD. Feedback on the findings will need to be provided within three weeks of receipt of the findings and draft discussion. FYD will be given the opportunity to request de-identification in any related outputs as part of the consultation process. If requested, the academic researchers will not include the name or specific location of the organisation or programme and will take any other steps that may be necessary (for example, publication outside of New Zealand only) to ensure that neither the organisation nor the programme are identifiable. The published research will acknowledge FYD's contribution in supporting the research, unless FYD requests de-identification.

12. FYD have the right to use any findings and results from the research for development, marketing and fundraising, and for any other purpose not prohibited by this document, after obtaining agreement from the academic researchers regarding the way the research is presented. If FYD wish to present the findings produced by the academic researchers, FYD will invite a representative of the academic research team to take authorship role in the presentation. If the role is declined, FYD will provide the academic researchers with an advance copy allowing a reasonable time for them to comment. The academic researchers will be acknowledged appropriately in such presentations.

13. Regardless of input from either party, oral and written reports of findings will be open, direct and honest in their disclosure, including limitations, in order to maintain the integrity of the research.

14. Participants have the right to withdraw from the research and continue in Project K without penalty or compromise to any relationship with FYD outside of this project.

15. Any official communication between FYD and the researchers will be conducted via Julie Moore.

Signed by

_____ (PhD student)

_____ (Principle Investigator/Supervisor)

_____ (Co-Investigator/Supervisor)

_____ (Representative of FYD)

Contact details for the academic researchers

Student Researcher name and contact details	Supervisor names and contact details	Head of Department name and contact details
Mary Liya Email : mary.liya@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz Dr Kelsey Deane 09 623 8899 ext. 48685 Email: k.deane@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz

Additional contact details

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.

Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335.

Appendix B – Youth's Information Sheet and Assent Form

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

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Participant Information Sheet for Youth Participants

Title of Research Project: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Name of the Researcher: Mary Liya, PhD Student, School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Name of the Supervisors: Dr Christa Fouché (Principle Investigator)
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Dr Kelsey Deane
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Tēnā koe! Warm Greetings!

We are looking for Project K participants and one or both of their parents/caregivers to participate in a research project. The aim of this research is to explore the experiences you and your parent/caregiver have when you return home and to school after finishing the Wilderness Adventure component of Project K programme. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.
"FYD has given an assurance" that your choice to participate or not to participate or to withdraw from the research will not have any effect on any relationship you or your parent/caregiver may have with FYD or Project K.

What does this involve?
You are invited to participate in this research along with your parent/caregiver. Participation involves taking part in two interviews with the researcher over the next year for an hour or an hour and a half each time. The interviews will take place at a location and time convenient for you. You and your parent/caregiver will be interviewed separately.

Because we would like to hear about both your and your parent/caregiver's perspectives, we will need 1) your agreement to participate; 2) your parent's agreement for you to participate; and 3) your parent's agreement for them to participate. Otherwise, we will not be able to include your or your parent/caregiver in the research.

During the interviews, the researcher will ask you and your parent/caregiver to talk about when you were on the Wilderness Adventure and about what happened when you returned home and to school. The interviews will be audio recorded to make sure we collect accurate information. You and your parent/caregiver may stop participating in the research at any time or can refuse to answer particular questions at any time without giving a reason. You can also ask the researchers to delete the information you provide during the interview, but you must do this within two weeks of the receipt of written version of your interview. You will be offered with the opportunity to read the written version of your interview and you can give the research feedback if any changes are needed but you must send this by email within two weeks of receiving the document. Your choice to participate or not to participate or to withdraw from the research will not have any effect on your relationship with Project K or FYD. You and your parent/caregiver will also receive a small koha/gift to thank you for your time and effort.

Confidentiality

All the information you and your parent/caregiver provide during the research will be kept strictly private. FYD and its Community Partners will not know the identity of participants and will not have access to raw interview data. The information you share with the researcher will be kept confidential and will not be shared with your parent/caregiver. To protect you and your parent/caregiver's privacy no names will be noted at any point in the interviews. All participants will be referred by codes or false names. All data not withdrawn after two weeks of the receipt of the written documents of interview will be kept indefinitely on password-protected computers for research purposes. All hard copy information relating to the research will be stored in secured filing cabinets at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. Results from this research will be published in research articles, reports and presentations and may also be used by FYD in the promotion of or training for Project K. This research also forms the basis of Mary Liya's PhD research.

Are there any benefits to being involved in the study?

As was noted earlier, you and your parent/caregiver's participation in this research will be thanked with a small koha/gift. We hope this project will inform the ongoing development of Project K and other youth development programmes. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you via email if you indicate your interest in receiving the report on the attached assent form. This will be sent to the email you have provided on the assent form.

Are there any risks to being involved in the study?

We do not believe that there will be any risks to anyone taking part in the study. However, due to the nature of the organisation, there is a small risk that people within Project K or FYD may be able to identify quotes you or your parent/caregiver provided if you and your parent/caregiver's perspectives are known to others. Please note that you and your parent/caregiver can stop participating from the study at any time without giving a reason. Your choice to participate or not to participate will have no effect on your relationship with Project K or FYD.

If you and your parent/caregiver have any questions or concerns or would like to know more about the research, please feel free to contact a member of the research team (details provided below).

He mihi nui! Thank you for reading about this research!

CONTACT DETAILS AND APPROVAL

Student Researcher name and contact details	Supervisor name and contact details	Head of Department name and contact details
Mary Liya Email : mary.liya@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz Dr Kelsey Deane 09 623 8899 ext. 48685 Email: k.deane@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2105 for three years. Reference Number 016335.

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Assent Form for youth participants under 16

This form will kept for a period of 6 years.

Title of Research Project: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Name of the Researcher: Mary Liya, PhD Student, School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Name of the Supervisors: Dr Christa Fouché
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Dr Kelsey Deane
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had my questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I have read the information sheet provided and understand what this research is about and why I have been invited to participate.
- I understand my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that "FYD has given an assurance" that my participation or nonparticipation will not affect my relationship or my child's relationship with FYD or Project K.
- I understand that no-one except the research team will have the access to the interview data.

- I understand that I will be interviewed twice over the next year for an hour or an hour and a half each time and it will be audio-recorded.

- I understand that I can turn off the recording device at any time without giving a reason.

- I understand that I can stop participating at any time without giving a reason, and I can ask the researchers to delete the information I provided if I do this within two weeks of the receipt of written documents of the interviews.

- I understand that I will be offered with the opportunity to read the written version of my interview transcribed by the researcher and I can give the research feedback if any changes are needed and I must send this by email within two weeks of receiving the document.
- I understand that the information from the interview will be published in research articles and reports of FYD and also forms the basis of researcher's PhD thesis.

- I understand that this assent form, the audio recording of the interview and the hard copy version of my interview will be kept for 6 years in separate, secure filing cabinets at the University of Auckland and then they will be destroyed, but that computer files containing my information but not my name or any information that identifies me will be kept indefinitely on the researchers' password-protected computers.

- I understand that "no material which could identify me" will be used in any reports for this research and that only the researchers will know the information that is related to me.

- I understand that there is a mall risk that people within Project K or FYD may be able to identify my quotes if my perspectives are known to others.

- I know who to contact if I have any problems with the study.

- I agree to participate in this research.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Email and Mobile Number (for follow up contact): _____

If you would like to receive updates on the findings at the end of the project, please tick here. ☐

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335

Appendix C – Parent's Information Sheet and Consent Form

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New Zealand

Participant Information Sheet for Parents

Title of Research Project: **Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme**

Name of the Researcher: Mary Liya, PhD Student, School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Name of the Supervisors: Dr Christa Fouché (Principle Investigator)
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Dr Kelsey Deane
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Tēnā koe! Warm Greetings!

We are looking for Project K participants and one or both of their parents/caregivers to participate in a research project. The aim of this research is to explore young people's experiences of returning home and to school after participating in Project K's Wilderness Adventure. We are also interested in parent/caregivers' perspectives of having their young person return to daily life after the Wilderness Adventure. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.
"FYD has given an assurance" that your choice to participate or not to participate or to withdraw from the research will not have any effect on any relationship you or your young person may have with FYD or Project K.

What does this involve?

You are invited to participate in this research along with your young person. Participation involves taking part in two 60-90 minute interviews with the researcher. Because both parent/caregiver and young person perspectives are needed for this research, to be considered for the research, we will need 1) your consent to participate as a

parent/caregiver, 2) your consent for your young person to participate, and 3) your young person's agreement (i.e. assent). Otherwise, we will not be able to include you or your young person in the research.

The interviews will take place at a time and location convenient to you. You and your young person will be interviewed separately. The first interview will be conducted one month after the Wilderness Adventure programme. The second interview will be conducted six months after the first interview. The researcher will ask you and your child to share your experiences about your young person's return home and to school after Project K's Wilderness Adventure. The interviews will be audio recorded to help with the analysis of data. You and your young person may stop participating in the research at any time or can refuse to answer particular questions if you feel uncomfortable at any stage. You also have the right to withdraw your interview data up to two week after receipt of the interview transcript. You will get an opportunity to go through the interview transcripts to make any necessary changes but must provide feedback within two weeks of receiving the scripts. Your choice to participate or not to participate or to withdraw from the research will not have any effect on your relationship with Project K or FYD. You and your young person will also each receive a small koha/gift at each interview to thank you for your time and effort.

Confidentiality

All the information you and young person provides during the research will be kept strictly confidential. FYD and its Community Partners will not know the identity of participants and will not have access to raw interview data. The information you share with the researcher will be kept confidential and will not be shared with your young person. To protect you and your young person's privacy, no names will be noted at any point in the interviews. All participants will be referred by codes or pseudonyms. All data not withdrawn after two weeks of the receipt of interview transcript will be kept indefinitely on password-protected computers for research purposes. All hard copy information relating to the research will be stored in locked filing cabinets at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. Results from this research will be published in research articles, reports and presentations and may also be used by FYD in the promotion of or training for Project K. This research also forms the basis of Mary Liya's PhD research.

Are there any benefits to being involved in the study?

As was noted earlier, you and your young person's participation in this research will be thanked with a small koha/gift. We hope this project will inform the development of Project K and other youth development programmes. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you via email if you indicate your interest in receiving the report on the attached consent form. The report will be sent to the email you have provided on the consent form.

Are there any risks to being involved in the study?

We do not believe that there will be any risks to anyone taking part in the study. However, due to the nature of the organisation, there is a small risk that people within Project K or FYD may be able to identify quotes you or your young person provided if you and your young person's perspectives are known to others. Please note that you and your young person can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without penalty.

If you and your young person have any questions or concerns or would like to know more about the research, please feel free to contact a member of the research team (details provided below).

He mihi nui! Thank you for reading about this research!

CONTACT DETAILS AND APPROVAL

Student Researcher name and contact details	Supervisor name and contact details	Head of Department name and contact details
Mary Liya Email : mary.liya@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz Dr Kelsey Deane 09 623 8899 ext. 48685 Email: k.deane@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335.

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New Zealand

Consent Form for Parents/Caregivers

This form will kept for a period of 6 years.

Title of Research Project: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Name of the Researcher: Mary Liya, PhD Student, School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Name of the Supervisors: Dr Christa Fouché
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Dr Kelsey Deane
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had my questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I have read the information sheet provided and understand what this research is about and why myself and my young person have been invited to participate.
- I understand my participation and my young person's participation are voluntary.
- I understand that "FYD has given an assurance" that my participation or nonparticipation will not affect my relationship or my child's relationship with FYD or Project K.
- I understand that no-one except the research team will have the access to the interview data.

- I understand that my young person and I will be interviewed twice over the next year for approximately an hour or an hour and a half each time.
- I understand that the interviews will be audio recorded and I have the right to turn off the recording device at any time without giving any reason.
- I understand that I will get an opportunity to go through my own interview transcripts written up by the researcher to make any necessary changes but I must provide feedback within two weeks of receiving the transcripts.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw mine and my young person's participation in the research at any time without giving a reason, and I can withdraw any data traceable to me and my young person up to two weeks after the receipt of the interview transcript.
- I understand that the information from the interview will be published in research articles and reports of FYD and also forms the basis of researcher's PhD thesis.
- I understand that my consent form and any hard copy data will be kept for [6] years in separate, secure filing cabinets at the University of Auckland, after which time these will be destroyed, but that de-identified electronic copies of my data will be kept indefinitely for research purposes on the researchers' password-protected computers.
- I understand that my participation and my young person's participation in this research is confidential and that "no material which could identify me or my young person" will be used in any reports of this research.
- I understand that there is a mall risk that people within Project K or FYD may be able to identify my quotes if my perspectives are known to others.
- I know who to contact if I/my young person have any problems with the study.
- I agree to participate in this research and I agree for my young person to participate in this research.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Child's Name: _____

Your relationship with child: _____

Date: _____

Email and Mobile Number (for follow up contact): _____

If you would like to receive updates on the findings at the end of the project, please tick here. ☐

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335.

Appendix D – Key Informant's Information Sheet and Consent Form

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New Zealand

Participant Information Sheet for Key Informants

Title of Research Project: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Name of the Researcher: Mary Liya, PhD Student, School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Name of the Supervisors: Dr Christa Fouché
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Dr Kelsey Deane
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Tēnā koe! Warm Greetings!

We are looking for participants who have been intimately involved in the delivery or coordination of Project K and have several years of experience with the programme. The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of youth, their parent/caregivers and key informants regarding their reintegration to home and school after participation in the Wilderness Adventure component of Project K programme. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.
"FYD has given an assurance" that your choice to participate or not to participate or to withdraw from the research will not have any effect on any relationship you may have with FYD or Project K.

What does this involve?

You have been identified as someone who has substantial expertise in delivering or coordinating aspects of the Project K programme, thus you are invited to take part in this research as a key informant. Participation involves taking part in one 60 to 90 minute interview with the researcher. The interview will take place at a location and time convenient for you before the end of 2016. The researcher will ask you to share your perspective on the reintegration experiences of Project K participants, family members and

teachers following the young person's participation in the Wilderness Adventure. The interviews will be audio recorded for ease of transcription and accuracy. However you have the right to turn off the recording device at any time without giving a reason. You will be offered with the opportunity to edit the transcript of your interview but must provide feedback within two weeks of receiving the transcript. You may withdraw from participating in the research at any time or can refuse to answer particular questions if you feel uncomfortable at any stage without penalty. You also have the right to withdraw your interview data up to two weeks after receipt of the interview transcript. You will also receive a small gift as a koha for your time and effort.

Confidentiality

All the information you provide during the research will be kept strictly confidential. FYD and its Community Partners will not know the identity of participants and will not have access to raw interview data. To protect your confidentiality no names will be noted at any point in the interviews. Individuals will be referred to by codes or pseudonyms. All data not withdrawn after two weeks of the receipt of interview transcript will be kept indefinitely on password-protected computers for research purposes. All hard copy information relating to the research will be stored in locked filing cabinets (in the Principle Investigator's office) at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. Results from this research will be published in research articles, reports and presentations and may also be used by FYD in the promotion of or training for Project K. This research also forms the basis of Mary Liya's PhD research.

Are there any benefits to being involved in the study?

As was noted earlier, your participation in this research will be thanked with a small koha/gift. We hope this project will inform the ongoing development of Project K and other youth development programmes that involve a reintegration process. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you via email if you indicate your interest in receiving the report on the attached consent form. This will be sent to the email you have provided on the consent form.

Are there any risks to being involved in the study?

We do not believe that there will be any risks to anyone taking part in the study. However, due to the nature of the organisation, there is a small risk that people within Project K or FYD may be able to identify quotes you provided if you and your perspectives on reintegration are known to others. Please note that you can withdraw from the study at any time with no questions asked, including withdrawal of any information provided to the researchers up to two weeks after receipt of the interview transcript.

If you feel concerned or would like to know more about the research, please feel free to contact a member of the research team (details provided below).

He mihi nui! Thank you for reading about this research!

CONTACT DETAILS AND APPROVAL

Student Researcher name and contact details	Supervisor name and contact details	Head of Department name and contact details
Mary Liya Email : mary.liya@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz Dr Kelsey Deane 09 623 8899 ext. 48685 Email: k.deane@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Christa Fouche, 09 373 7599 ext 48648, Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/15 for three years. Reference Number 016335

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Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Consent Form for Key Informants

This form will kept for a period of 6 years.

Title of Research Project: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Name of the Researcher: Mary Liya, PhD Student, School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Name of the Supervisors: Dr Christa Fouché
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

Dr Kelsey Deane
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, University of Auckland

- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had my questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I have read the information sheet provided and understand what this research is about and why I have been invited to participate.
- I understand my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that "FYD has given an assurance" that my participation or nonparticipation will not affect my relationship or my child's relationship with FYD or Project K.
- I understand that no-one except the research team will have access to the interview data.

- I understand that participation involves one 60 to 90 minute interview and it will be audio recorded.
- I understand that I have the right to turn off the recording device at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that the interviews will be transcribed by the researcher and I can edit the transcripts so long as the revisions are returned within two weeks of receipt of transcripts.

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without giving a reason, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to two weeks after the receipt of interview transcript.

- I understand that the information from the interview will be published in research articles and reports of FYD and also forms the basis of researcher's PhD thesis.

- I understand that my consent form and any hard copy data will be kept for [6] years in separate, secure filing cabinets at the University of Auckland, after which time these will be destroyed, but that de-identified electronic copies of my data will be kept indefinitely for research purposes on the researchers' password-protected computers.

- I understand that my participation in this research is confidential and that "no material which could identify me" will be used in any reports of this research.

- I understand that there is a mall risk that people within Project K or FYD may be able to identify my quotes if my perspectives are known to others.
- I know who to contact if I have any concerns about the research.
- I agree to participate in this research.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

If you would like to receive a report of the findings from this research at the end of the project,

please provide your email here: _____

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335.

Appendix E – Semi-structured Interview Questions – Youth Participants

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Semi-structured Interview Questions- Youth Participants

Project Title: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Individual Semi-structured Interviews with youth (Maximum 24 young people aged 14-16)

Each interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

Interviews will be carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire designed to explore the experiences of young people after participating in Project K's Wilderness Adventure. The semi-structured interviews will be based on the following indicative questions (and indented prompts, if needed):

1. Can you tell me about how you were feeling leading up to the Wilderness Adventure?

2. Why do you think or you thought/felt in that way?

(Prompts if needed: What were your expectations about the Wilderness Adventure before you went?

Tell me about your experiences in the Wilderness Adventure?

What did you gain from participating in the Wilderness Adventure?

Tell me about the changes you've noticed about yourself since finishing the Wilderness Adventure?)

2. What was it like when you returned home after participating in the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. What kind of support did you receive at home when you returned from the Wilderness Adventure?
    b. What difficulties did you face when you returned home after participating in the Wilderness Adventure?
    c. How could you have been better supported?

3. What was it like when you returned to school after participating in the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. What kind of support did you receive at school when you returned from the Wilderness Adventure?
    b. What difficulties did you face when you returned to school after participating in the Wilderness Adventure?

c. How could you have been better supported?

4. What were the responses from your friends when you returned from the Wilderness Adventure?
    a. How did they respond to the stories you shared?

5. What kind of support did you receive from Project K staff to help you adjust to home and school life after the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. What did they do that was helpful?
    b. What could they do better?

6. Tell me about the goals you set during the Wilderness Adventure.
    a. How are you doing in terms of making progress with these?
    b. How could you improve?

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335

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2nd Semi-structured Interview Questions- Youth Participants

Project Title: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Individual Semi-structured Interviews with youth (Maximum 24 young people aged 14-16)

Each interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

Interviews will be carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire designed to explore the experiences of young people after participating in Project K's Wilderness Adventure. The semi-structured interviews will be based on the following indicative questions (and indented prompts, if needed):

1. Can you tell me a story about your memories of your wilderness adventure?

    a) Can you tell me about your thoughts and feelings about your Wilderness Adventure experience at present? (Missing or wanting to go back)

    (Prompts if needed: Have you ever drawn back to the wilderness adventure experience? How often you think or reflect about it?

    b) Can you give me a picture about the changes you noticed about yourself since finishing the Wilderness Adventure?
    (Prompts if needed: positive attitude-more appreciative, responsible, outdoor or sports orientation, communication and interpersonal skills, leadership, maturity, healthy life style, use of technology and any negative effects)

    c) Can you think of anything from Wilderness Adventure which still keeps you moving or influencing?(ultimate motivating factor)

2. What is it like being at home after participating in the Wilderness Adventure? (Prompts if needed: any kind of feelings - weird, different or boredom)

    a) When you came back from the wilderness some of the young people shared that people at home were not able to grasp or understand your experience. How did you respond to that situation? How did you overcome it?
    b) Tell me about the support you received from your parents to retain the positive experience at Project K? How do they refer back to the Wilderness Adventure? What are the challenges you faced at home regarding Project K?
    c) Some young people shared that they were able to practice the skills you have learnt in wilderness at home. Can you give me some examples?

3. How is it like being at school after the wilderness adventure? (Prompts if needed : feeling weird, different, boring)

    a) Any specific examples from school in terms of practicing your new skills?
    b) Some of the young people shared that, friends at school were feeling jealous or did not care about your wilderness experiences. What was your response towards it? How did you overcome it?
    c) Some of the PK participants shared that, their teachers at school were not able to understand your experience and did not provide much support to catch up the school work. How do you feel at the moment?
    d) How do you feel about your Project K friends at School? (Feeling of second family)

4. Can you tell me about the support you are receiving from Project K Programme at the moment?
    a) Any specific example or situations at school or home?
    b) How you and your family get along with the mentor?

5. You have shared me about the personal goals set during the wildness adventure or to achieve throughout Project K.

    a) How are you doing in terms of making progress with those?
    b) What is your best gain from Project K programme?

6. Can you give me some example on how you practice some of the skills in your daily life which you learnt at Wilderness adventure?

7. In a nut shell, how do you recommend Project K programme and Wilderness Adventure for other young people who are new to this programme?

8. Any further comments, feedback, recommendations to make?

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335

Appendix F – Semi-structured Interview Questions – Parent Participants

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Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Semi-structured Interview Questions- Parent or Caregiver

Project Title: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Individual Semi-structured Interviews with parent or caregiver (Maximum of 24)

Each interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

Interviews will be carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire designed to explore the perception of parents or caregivers on their experiences of their young person returning home and to school after participating in Project K's Wilderness Adventure. The semi-structured interviews will be based on the following indicative questions (and prompts, if needed):

1. What expectations did you have about (child's name) participation in Project K's Wilderness Adventure?

2. What did (child's name) tell you about their experiences of the Wilderness Adventure?

3. In your opinion, what did your (child's name) gain from participating in the Wilderness Adventure?

4. What was it like when (child's name) returned home after participating in the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. What positive changes did you observe in (child's name) at home after the Wilderness Adventure?
    b. What difficulties did (child's name) face when she/he returned home?
    c. What support did you provide to (child's name) to make it easier to adjust at home and school after the Wilderness Adventure?
    d. What do you think you could have done to better support your child, if anything?

5. What was it like when (child's name) returned to school after participating in the Wilderness Adventure?
    a. What positive changes did you observe in (child's name) with regard to school activities after the Wilderness Adventure?
    b. What difficulties did (child's name) face when he/she returned to school after the Wilderness Adventure?
    c. What kind of support did (child's name) receive from teachers when she/he returned to school after participating in the Wilderness Adventure?
    d. What could his/her teachers or the school do better, if anything?

6. What kind of support has (child's name) received from Project K staff with regards to adjusting to home and school life after the Wilderness Adventure?
    a. What are Project K staff doing well in this regard, if anything?
    b. What could they do better, if anything?

7. Tell me about the goals (child's name) set during the Wilderness Adventure.

    a. What is she/he currently doing to work towards them?
    b. What could she/he do better?

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335.

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2nd Semi-structured Interview Questions- Parent or Caregiver

Project Title: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Individual Semi-structured Interviews with parent or caregiver (Maximum of 24)

Each interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

Interviews will be carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire designed to explore the perception of parents or caregivers on their experiences of their young person returning home and to school after participating in Project K's Wilderness Adventure. The semi-structured interviews will be based on the following indicative questions (and prompts, if needed):

1. Can you give me a picture about (child's name) after participating in Wilderness Adventure of Project K?
   (Prompts if needed: Have you observed him/her referring back to the wilderness adventure experience during the last six months? What did she/he tell you?)

2. Can you tell me about some of the positive changes you have observed in (Child's name) after the wilderness adventure and how she/he is progressing with it?
   (Prompts if needed: in terms of positive attitude, responsibility, maturity, time management, healthy life style, out door or sports orientation, use of technology, family relationship, spiritual and cultural connectedness, friendship, life skills-cooking)

3. Can you give me some examples on how your (child's name) practiced some of the skills or learning he /she had in the wilderness adventure back to home environment?

4. What did your (child's name) tell you about his/her progress in terms of achieving personal goals set during the wilderness adventure?

5. Can you think of anything which influenced your (child's name) positively to maintain the positive outcome from the wilderness adventure?

6. Can you think of anything which hindered or reduced the positive outcome of your (child's name) gained from wilderness adventure?
   (Prompts if needed: any influence of friends or social media)

7. In your opinion what kind of support you are providing to facilitate his positive outcome from the programme?

8. What is your observation about (your child's name) experience at school after the wilderness adventure? (Prompts if needed : Positive or negative feelings-boredom, academic performance)
    a) Any specific observation at school in terms of practicing his/her new skills learnt from Project K?
    b) Some of the parents shared their concerns about missed school work, catching up with studies and support received from teachers after the wilderness adventure. What is your observation about your (child's name) at the moment?

    c) Some of the parents expressed concerns regarding bullying or problems with friends at school after wilderness adventure. What is your observation about your (child's name)?
    d) What is your opinion about your (child's name) relationship with Project K group?

9. Can you tell me about the support your (child's name) is receiving from Project K programme at the moment?
    a) Any specific examples or situations from school or home?
    b) What is your observation regarding community challenge and mentoring programme?

10. In your opinion, what is the best gain or achievement of your (child's name) from participating in the Wilderness Adventure?

11. In your opinion what are the support required for your (child's name) to keep up his achievements from Project K?

12. Any further feedback, suggestions or recommendations to make?

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335.

Appendix G – Semi-structured Interview Questions – Key Informant participants

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Semi-structured Interview Questions- Key Informants

Project Title: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Individual Semi-structured Interviews with Key Informants (Minimum of 5 people)

Each interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

Interviews will be carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire designed to explore the perception of key informants on the reintegration experiences of Project K participants after participating in Project K's Wilderness Adventure. The semi-structured interviews will be based on the following indicative questions (and prompts, if needed):

1. Tell me about yourself and your role in Project K?
2. In your opinion, what do the Project K participants gain from participating in the Wilderness Adventure?
3. What is your impression of what happens for Project K participants when they return home and to school after participating in the Wilderness Adventure?
    a. How would you describe the post-Wilderness adjustments Project K participants undergo?
    b. What type of support and opportunities do participants receive after returning from the Wilderness Adventure?
    c. What challenges do the participants face at home?
    d. What challenges do they face at school?
    e. To what degree do you think they continue practicing the skills and lessons learned during the Wilderness Adventure in their day to day lives when they return?
4. What is your opinion about the level of understanding parents/caregivers have of the experiences their children undergo during the Wilderness Adventure?
    a. What do they do that supports the reintegration of their children into their daily lives following participation in the Wilderness Adventure?
    b. What could they do better?

5. What is your opinion about the level of understanding teachers have of the experiences their students undergo during the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. What do they do that supports the reintegration of their students into their daily school activities following participation in the Wilderness Adventure?

    b. What could they do better?

6. What support do you provide to Project K participants to smoothen the reintegration process at home and school after the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. What role do you play with regard to assisting participants with post Wilderness Adventure adjustments?

    b. What are the challenges faced by programme staff/facilitators with regards to supporting a smooth transition for Project K participants after taking part in the Wilderness Adventure.

    c. What has worked well to facilitate the transfer of learning gained during the Wilderness Adventure?

    d. What could be done to better facilitate the transfer of learning from the Wilderness Adventure?

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335

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Semi-structured Interview Questions- Key Informants

Project Title: Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme

Individual Semi-structured Interviews with Key Informants (Minimum of 5 people)

Each interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

Interviews will be carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire designed to explore the perception of key informants on the reintegration experiences of Project K participants after participating in Project K's Wilderness Adventure. The semi-structured interviews will be based on the following indicative questions (and prompts, if needed):

1. Tell me about yourself and your role in Project K?
2. How did you begin your mentoring relationship with Project K student?

3. In your opinion, what did the Project K participants gain from participating in the Wilderness Adventure?

4. What did the Project K students shared about their experiences in the Wilderness Adventure?

5. What is your impression of what happens for Project K participants when they return home and to school after participating in the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. How would you describe the post-Wilderness adjustments Project K participants undergo?
    b. What type of support and opportunities do participants receive after returning from the Wilderness Adventure?
    c. What challenges do the participants face at home?

6. To what degree do you think they continue practicing the skills and lessons learned during the Wilderness Adventure in their day to day lives when they return?

7. What is your opinion about the level of understanding parents/caregivers have of the experiences their children undergo during the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. What do they do that supports the reintegration of their children into their daily lives following participation in the Wilderness Adventure?

b. What could they do better?

8. What is your opinion about the level of understanding teachers have of the experiences their students undergo during the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. What do they do that supports the reintegration of their students into their daily school activities following participation in the Wilderness Adventure?
    b. What challenges do they face at school?

    c. What could they do better?

9. What role do you play with regard to assisting Project K participants to achieve their goals set during the Wilderness Adventure?

    a. What are the challenges faced by you to support Project K student to achieve their goals.

    b. What has worked well to facilitate the transfer of learning gained during the Wilderness Adventure?

    c. What could be done to better facilitate the transfer of learning from the Wilderness Adventure?

Approved by the University Of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/12/2015 for three years. Reference Number 016335

Appendix H – Approval letter from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Finance, Ethics and Compliance

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UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

16-Dec-2015

MEMORANDUM TO:

Assoc Prof Christa Fouche
Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 016335): Approved

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled **Reintegration Experiences of Young People after a Positive Youth Development Programme**

.

We are pleased to inform you that ethics approval is granted for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 16-Dec-2018.

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Research Office, at ro-awards@auckland.ac.nz. For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Please quote reference number: **016335** on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk
Mrs Mary Liya Kanakkappally Antony
Dr Kelsey Deane

Additional information:

1. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, giving the dates of approval and the reference number, before you send them out to your participants.

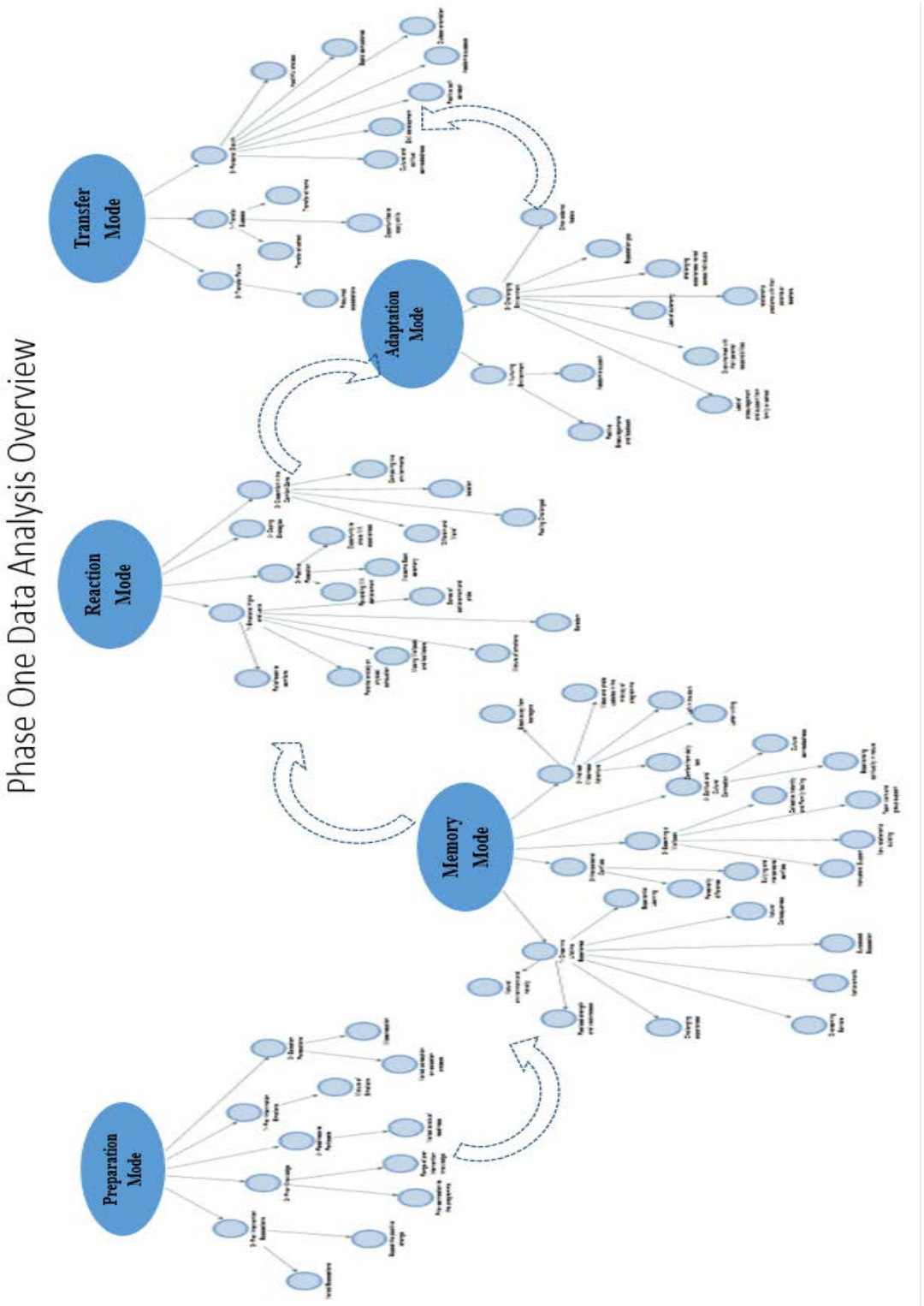
2. Should you need to make any changes to the project,please complete the online proposed changes and include any revised documentation.

3. At the end of three years, or if the project is completed before the expiry, please advise UAHPEC of its completion.

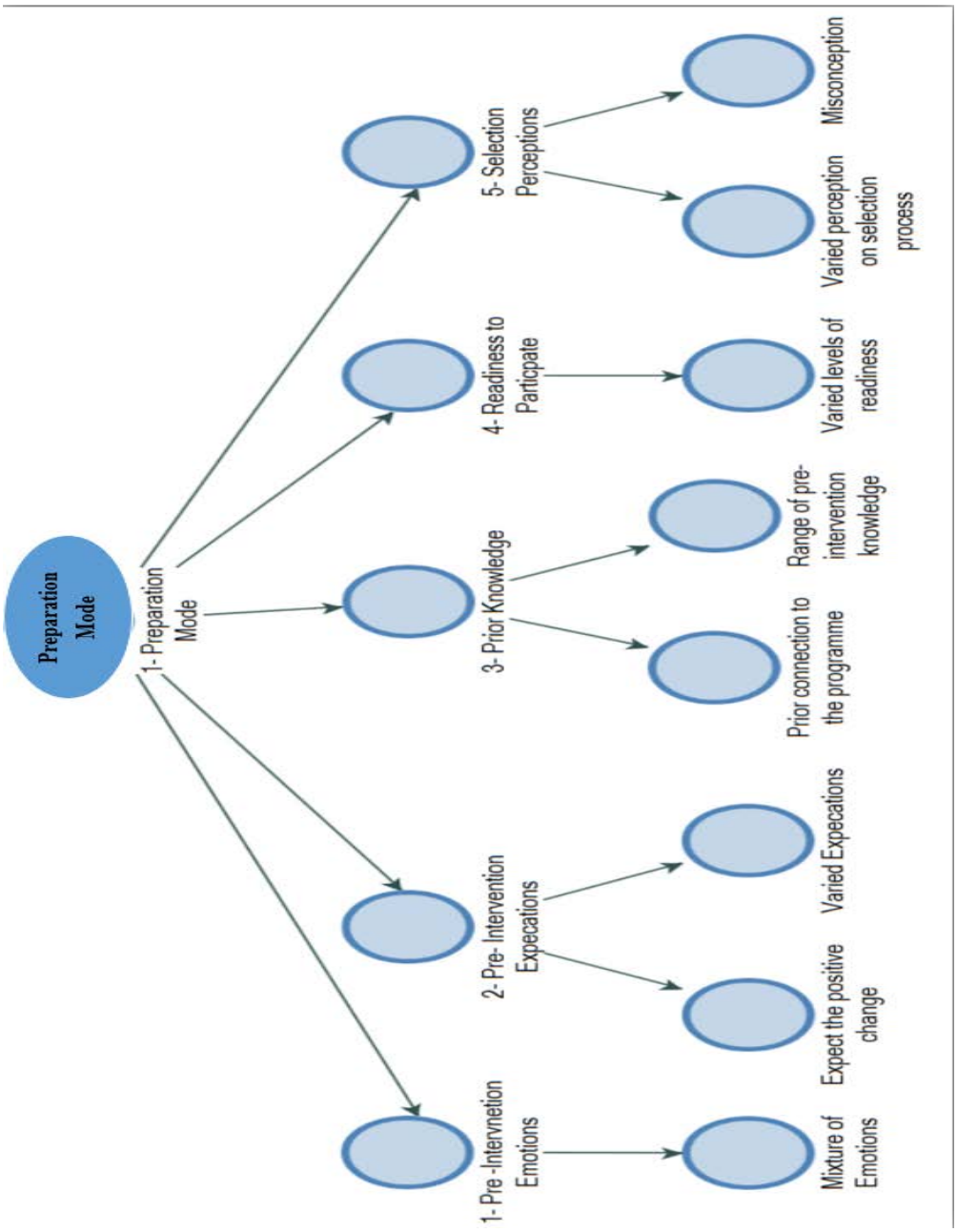
4. Should you require an extension, please complete the online Amendment Request form associated with this approval number giving full details along with revised documentation. An extension can be granted for up to three years, after which a new application must be submitted.

5. Please note that UAHPEC may from time to time conduct audits of approved projects to ensure that the research has been carried out according to the approval that was given.

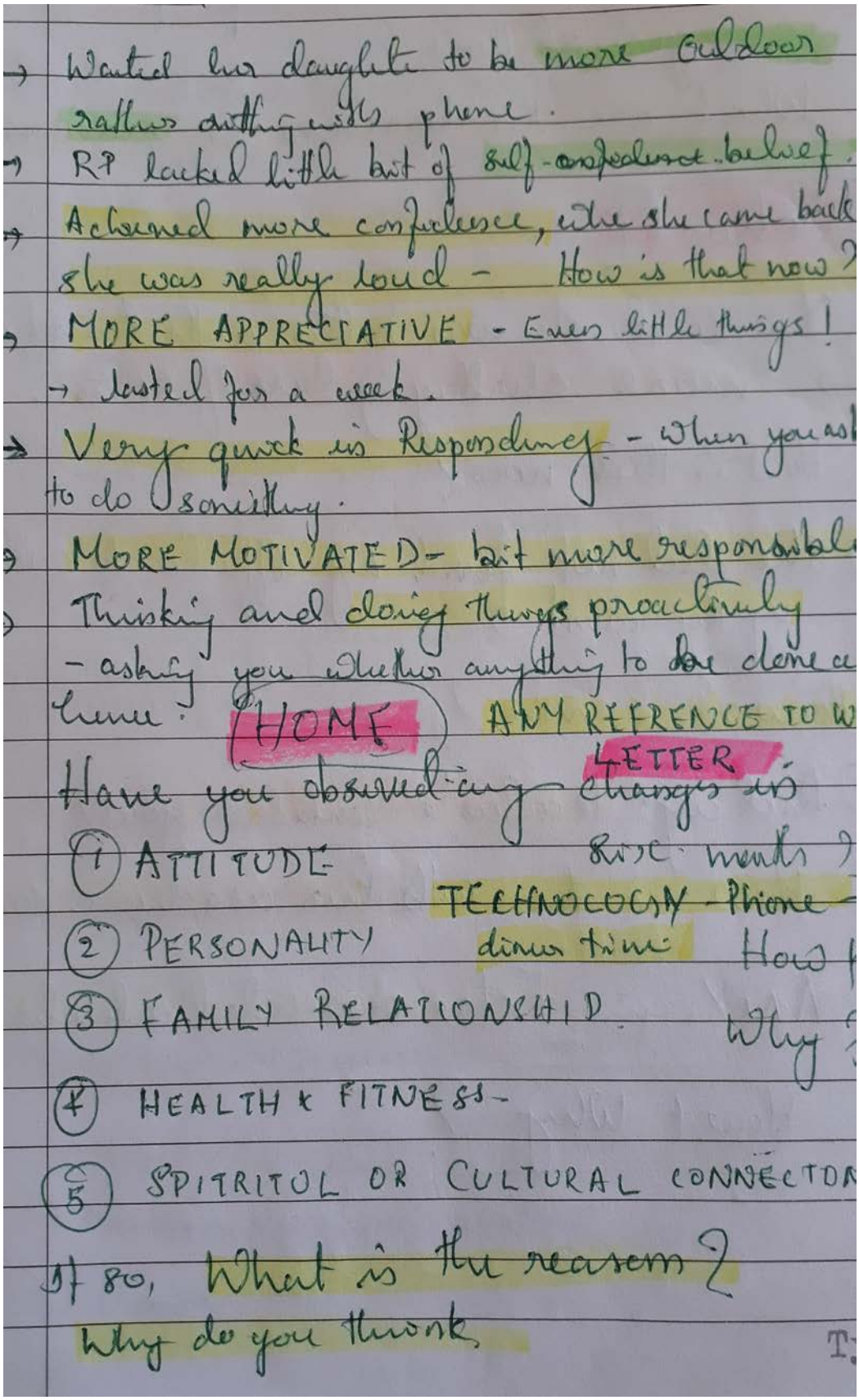
Appendix I – NVivo visualisation of coding framework- Stage one data analysis overview



Appendix J – NVivo visualisation of coding framework- Stage one data analysis – Detailed view of Preparation Mode (Major themes, second level and third level themes)



Appendix K – Examples of field notes



→ Wanted her daughter to be more outdoor rather on her phone.
→ RP lacked little bit of self-confidence belief.
→ Achieved more confidence, like she came back she was really loud - How is that now?
→ MORE APPRECIATIVE - Even little things!
→ lasted for a week.
→ Very quick in Responding - When you ask to do something.
→ MORE MOTIVATED - bit more responsible
Thinking and doing things proactively - asking you whether anything to be done a time.
HOME
ANY REFRENCE TO W
LETTER
Have you observed any changes in
(1) ATTITUDE
last month?
TECHNOLOGY - Phone
(2) PERSONALITY
dinner time
How
(3) FAMILY RELATIONSHIP
Why
(4) HEALTH & FITNESS -
(5) SPIRITUAL OR CULTURAL CONNECTION
If so, What is the reason?
Why do you think
T

If he is practising. What do you think what could be the influencing factors helped him to continue the changes?

→ What are the barriers to stop him practising the skills.

SCHOOL

⇒ Do you How he has been at school?

→ Academic achievement

→ English: Missing, classed & know it has been

→ What (3) How he has been with his friends?

(4) PJ & Friends

(4) How he is in the community.

→ last some years, when he used to

→ Achieving the Personal Goals.

* ANGER MANAGEMENT

* MORE MANNERS

* MAKING LOT OF FRIENDS.

* FEELING SAD TO LEAVE TEAM

* When you finished the pgm - PK friends become your second family? How is that now?

* When you come back home, you wanted to go back to the camp sites - it was just the NATURE Have you had that thoughts again during the past six months?

PK FRIEND'S ONLINE CHAT

* FRIEND's have given feedback, bcoz that you've changed a lot than last time. How come you don't talk back? Do you've things come the same opinions or how is that now?

If Yes, with how did you maintain that. who support what influenced you?

If No, Why, what influenced you?

* You've advised your friends to be stay who you are, be nice to one another How is that?

* → Increased your Confidence - before - dn.scared almost crying, when handing one assignment now you can look at them & say it loud -

* Now like going to Gym - go out - rather than sit at home ?

* Doing things by yourself in the Weekdens. cooking breakfast / washing clothes / etc ?.

→ Have you brought those skills back to home ?

* Mum gave good feedback - made a better person, how is that now ?

* You had an enjoyed at wilders, good exercise getting up early, go through rough terrain, leaving bugs behind, - Have you ever thought of those memories, How you relate those experiences to present life ?

* GAINDED CONFIDENCE TO TALK TO PEOPLE NOT TO BE AFRAID OF TALKING TO SOMEONE ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL - . ~~How you~~ Do you feel like

* YOU'VE GROWN - ? Some ?

* MORE RESPECTFUL ?

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