

A Theory of MYND

An Evaluation of a Programme for Youth Who Have Offended
Using the Theory of Change Methodology

Leon Russell

Supervised by Prof. Niki Harré and Prof. Ian Lambie

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate
in Clinical Psychology, the University of Auckland, 2022.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I want to thank everyone involved in MYND, the Graeme Dingle Foundation and Lion Breweries for all of your patience and enthusiasm for the project, but particularly Stephen Boxer, Julie Moore and MYND's youth workers. Thank you also to the young people who I interviewed, who were honest, hilarious and resilient and who this project (and programme) is ultimately all about. To my family: even though I still occasionally get asked whether I'm still "studying movies", you have always shown unwavering support in whatever I'm focussed on. I've always felt refreshed after reconnecting over a brisk Sunday evening Bethells walk, haircut (thanks mum), or hot bowl of pumpkin soup. To my DCP whānau: *ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini!* I've felt such collective strength and backing from you all through this journey (must have been all of those check-ins), and I'm also really glad that I landed with "the fun ones" (thanks Nigel). I feel that I've gained some lifelong friends here. Speaking of friends, thanks also to Chris and Tami, Anusha and Monique, Alex and Andrew for your persistent cheerleading. To my supervisor, Niki Harré. I still stand by my honours acknowledgements, that you "completely changed many stereotypes I previously had about academics" (Russell, 2016, pp. 3). Having now known you for five years I can say that your kindness, curiosity, passion, compassion, quirkiness, diligence, and intelligence (I could go on) makes you both an amazing supervisor and all-round great human being. Thank you so much Niki. Finally, to my partner, Anoosh. You have been the bundle of joy that has kept my spirits light and stopped me from taking myself too seriously. You have taught me that dumplings in fact *do* make me feel better after a day stuck on one paragraph. You encouraged me when I needed persistence, and had Netflix loaded for the breaks. Love you always Anoosh.

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Abstract

The current project aimed to evaluate MYND, a programme for 14-17 year old boys who had offended and were considered at high risk of continuing down a “prison pipeline”. A Theory of Change methodology was used, comprised of two phases. Phase 1 involved construction of a model (the Theory of Change) which represented MYND’s most important components (key elements), intended outcomes for clients at the end of the six-month programme (short-term goals) and five years in the future (long-term goals), and additional moderating variables. The final MYND Theory of Change drew on perspectives from MYND staff in two workshops (management, youth workers) as well as from MYND clients through eight one-on-one interviews. Phase 2 aimed to investigate the efficacy of the Theory of Change constructed in phase 1. This was done by first identifying 12 assumed links (key assumptions) between MYND’s key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals. An analysis of the above client interviews and a systematic review of the literature was then completed to test each of these key assumptions.

The Theory of Change methodology revealed a unique programme model with key elements grouped into staff contributions (personal qualities, role modelling, practical assistance) and programme elements (life skills lessons, fun and positive experiences, community learning environment). Key assumptions were generally supported by client interviews and the literature review. Among the most interesting findings were MYND’s combination of short-term and long-term goals. These represented both the “human flourishing” sentiment of the Positive Youth Development approach yet also acknowledged the importance of reducing offending by drawing on principles found in strengths-based approaches to rehabilitation, such as the Good Lives Model. The combined application of these theoretical lenses is a unique contribution to the broader literature on rehabilitating youth who have offended. Specific recommendations for MYND included continued use of the Theory of Change, some small changes to MYND’s life skills, administration of a repeatable questionnaire, further whānau involvement, and measuring and targeting intrinsic motivation to increase client engagement in what MYND has to offer. Some suggestions were also made regarding the development of other strengths-based programmes for youth who have offended in New Zealand.

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Section 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Youth Offending in New Zealand

Despite having decreased in recent years (Ministry of Justice, 2020), youth offending in New Zealand continues to be problematic. It is believed that most young people break the law at some point in adolescence, but that a large proportion of youth offences are committed by a small subset of the youth population (Maxwell, 2018; Ministry of Justice, 2020; Spier, 2016). Indeed, in New Zealand most youth deemed at “high-risk” of reoffending are known to police for serious infringements before the age of 14 (Spier, 2016). Recent data indicates that 45% of 14–16 year olds in New Zealand who committed an offence in 2016/17 reoffended within 12 months (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Furthermore, offending appears to consistently increase in severity and frequency with age, with 14–16 year olds responsible for 97% of offences of young people aged 16 or less (Police Data, 2018). Experts in the field have now claimed there is a “prison pipeline” system, in which this small group of individuals are “at risk of becoming the core of the future adult prison population” (Reil, Lambie, Horwood & Becroft, 2021, p. 3; Gluckman & Hayne, 2011; Henley, 2016; Gluckman & Lambie, 2018).

Individuals who fit the above description appear to be described by Terrie Moffitt’s dual taxonomy. While even Moffitt herself acknowledged the existence of other groups, her simplified dual taxonomy outlines two primary groups of individuals who together contribute a majority of youth offences: the *adolescent-limited group* and the *life-course persistent group*. Adolescent-limited individuals tend to begin offending later in their teens and cease earlier, while individuals matching the life-course persistent description begin to offend at a younger age and continue a more consistent pattern of offending throughout and beyond adolescence (Moffitt, 1993; Moffitt, Caspi, Dickson, Silva & Stanton, 1996).

Individuals who fit the life-course persistent description are often referred to as “youth offenders”, “delinquents” or “deviants” in the international literature. Such labels have been criticised for their implied reduction of such people to a permanent “offender” identity held by an individual who is personally to blame for their actions, obscuring the complex socio-structural and historical causes of the person’s offending (Reil et al., 2021; Willis, 2018). Gwenda Willis highlights that concerns about the effects of this labelling can

be traced back to at least the 1930's, and argues for the use of more behaviourally descriptive terms such as "person who has offended" (Willis, 2018). The current document will therefore use the term "youth who have offended" (YWHO).

The following section intends to build a picture of some of the common historical experiences and ongoing psychological and relational factors that are often present in the lives of YWHO. Most of the literature in the last two decades broadly groups these into *static* and *dynamic* risk factors. Static risk factors are those that are part of an individual's history and/or those that cannot be changed through intervention (e.g., genetics, age, childhood abuse, prior offending). In contrast, dynamic risk factors are predictors of offending that are ongoing but changeable (e.g., antisocial thinking patterns, behavioural habits, life circumstances, unhelpful relationships). While understanding offending is certainly more complex than two risk factor categories, the following section makes this simplification in an effort to remain consistent with the majority of literature on risk factors.

Static Risk Factors

Much evidence exists on the role of biological factors in youth offending. As suggested by Moffit's taxonomy, one of the predominant biological correlations with offending is age. In 2017 the New Zealand Ministry of Justice reported that 10-13 year olds committed only 2% of youth crime (crime committed by under 17 year olds), while 14 year olds committed 24%, 15 year olds committed 29% and 16 year olds committed 44%. The frequency of offending behaviour continues to increase with age until the 20-24 age bracket, before declining once more (Police Data, 2018). As for why people in their mid to late teens and early twenties are more inclined to offend, Erikson characterises adolescence as a major life stage where individuals seek both distance from authority and also a sense of social belonging, and it is from within this struggle that antisocial group identities can develop (Albert, Chein & Steinberg, 2013; Erikson, 1963). These social changes are thought to combine with marked neurological instability during this period, contributing to offending behaviours. This neurological process is called "axonal pruning", and involves millions of connections between neurons being either strengthened or removed. It begins in the back of the brain and works its way forward to the prefrontal

cortex; an area that takes significantly longer to complete this process, only slowing in the mid-twenties (coinciding with the life stage in which YWHO tend to commit less crime; Monahan, Steinberg, Cauffman & Mulvey, 2013; Steinberg, 2009). The prefrontal cortex is responsible for response inhibition, abstract thought, executive functioning, planning, anticipation of future events, as well as self-awareness and empathy for others (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006). These are all areas which, when compromised are associated with increased criminal activity (Lambie, Ioane & Best, 2014; Syngelaki, Moore, Savage, Fairchild & Van Goozen, 2009).

Various other biological factors are also thought to predispose young people to offend. Research has found for example, that individuals with a specific “MAOA” genotype appear to be more sensitive to maltreatment than those without it, resulting in higher levels of antisocial behaviour in this group (Haberstick et al., 2005). Other intellectual conditions have been found to predispose youth to offend including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD; Scott, 2017) and mild intellectual disability (Savage & Bouck, 2017). Perhaps the most common biological disadvantage seen among those in youth justice is traumatic brain injury (TBI). While specific numbers for New Zealand are presently unknown, Hughes (2012) reported that the proportion of youth in custody with past TBI in England to be approximately 65-76% compared to 5-24% in the general youth population. Similarly, Farrer and Hedges (2011) found incarcerated groups to have significantly higher rates of brain injury compared to the general population. This is relevant because many of the long-term psychological effects of traumatic brain injury are often identified as risk factors to youth offending, including antisocial behaviour and impulsivity (Ogilvie, Stewart, Chan & Shum, 2011). However, to say that the above biological factors alone cause higher rates of offending is an oversimplification. Rather, the interaction between biology and social factors needs to be stressed; individuals with these biological factors are simply more sensitive to adverse social factors (resulting in responding with offending behaviour) than those without them (Moffit et al., 1996).

Of course, one of the most robust findings in criminality research worldwide is that the majority of people who have offended are male (Bachman & Paternoster, 2016; Mazerolle, Brame, Paternoster, Piquero & Dean, 2000). Males also tend to have different “profiles” of offending in that overall, they are more likely to become life-course persistent (Mazerolle et al., 2000), less likely to cease offending (Denno, 1994) and are more likely to

respond to adverse life events (such as being victimised themselves) through criminal behaviour (Asscher, Van der Put & Stams, 2015). Men also commit more serious, violent crime (Steffensmeier & Haynie, 2000); a behaviour pattern that is thought to begin earlier in life, as seen in higher rates of physical aggression in male adolescents and children (Card, Stucky, Sawalani & Little, 2008; Crick, Bigbee & Howes, 1996). Furthermore, in a meta-analysis Sawyer and colleagues found evidence that rehabilitative programmes are less effective at reducing antisocial behaviours in males than in females (Sawyer, Borduin & Dopp, 2015). Many interpret the consistency of these findings across cultures as evidence that males are genetically and hormonally predisposed to be aggressive (Buss, 2005; Dabbs, Jurkovic & Frady, 1991; van Vugt, De Cremer & Janssen, 2007). However, authors of these studies often admit that while biological factors such as testosterone (a hormone produced at higher levels in males) do predict violent offending, the variance in criminal activity that can be accounted for by testosterone is quite low (rarely more than 4%, as was found by Dabbs et al., 1991).

Sociological perspectives suggest that differences in offending between males and females are more likely due to gender norms. Until quite recently offending itself was thought to be conflated with masculinity to the point where female offending was often described as a rejection of traditional female gender roles (Heidensohn, Silvestri & Campling, 1985; Young, 1986). Offending as a female may have therefore have been a rejection of femininity and the rest of what it means to “be female” (and vice-versa for males; Walters, 2001). Indeed, Steffensmeier & Allan (1996) note that generally, females tend to show much less commitment to and self-identification with criminality compared to males. However, new female criminal identities do appear to be emerging, complicating this gender-criminality association (Holsinger, 2000).

Among the most researched predictors of criminal activity is a childhood home environment characterised by instability and/or maltreatment. Unfortunately, since these experiences often involve primary attachment figures (parents), instability and maltreatment often begins early and spans years, having lifelong implications for the ways young people form and maintain relationships. Maltreatment can be defined as physical or sexual abuse as well as emotional (e.g., lack of parental warmth) and resource neglect (e.g., lack of food, clothing). In New Zealand the incidence of abuse or other forms of trauma for YWHO is as high as 92.5% compared to 5-15% in the general population

(Henley, 2016). Anthony Samy and Zimmer-Gembeck (2007) studied the behaviour of Australian children aged 4-8 who had been referred to child protection services out of concern for abuse. They found that this group already exhibited marked interpersonal difficulties, social withdrawal and aggression compared to a control group; all factors that Moffitt identified as contributing to a “life-course” pattern of offending (Moffitt, 1993). Smith and Thornberry (1995) found that the severity and longevity of maltreatment during early childhood (between birth and age 12) was associated with higher rates and seriousness of offending in North American youth; a link that has also been found in countless other studies and cultures (Asscher et al., 2015; Dodge, Pettit & Bates, 1997; Dutton & Hart, 1992; Haberstick et al., 2005; Herrenkohl, Huang, Tajima & Whitney, 2003; Teague & Mazerolle, 2007). Using longitudinal data from the “Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development” in the United Kingdom, Theobald, Farrington and Piquero (2013) highlighted the psychological effects of an unstable childhood home environment on rates of violent offending later in life. They discovered that children under age 14 who experienced low family income, harsh discipline and marital separation, were all more likely to offend later in life.

The mechanisms for *why* maltreatment can lead to criminal behaviour are less understood. This uncertainty likely stems from the diverse individual responses to maltreatment, responses which themselves are affected by the form and severity of the maltreatment, the age at which it occurs and the child’s individual beliefs around this maltreatment. For example, some evidence suggests that emotional abuse can lead to low self-esteem, which, when combined with other factors like substance abuse, can increase the likelihood of acting violently toward others (Day et al., 2013; Reckdenwald, Mancini & Beauregard, 2014). Another theory suggests that repeated violent abuse can lead to children over-interpreting situations and people as hostile (Dodge, Pettit & Bates, 1997; Schöenberg & Jusyte, 2014). There is also a fair amount of evidence suggesting that abuse and neglect toward a very young child can lead to an absent or insecure attachment between the child and parent, stunting emotional and interpersonal development and subsequently leading to antisocial behaviour (i.e., behaviours that contradict expected social norms such as aggression, deception and other forms of law-breaking; Bowlby, 1944; Herrenkohl et al., 2003; Kinniburgh, Blaustein, Moran, Spinazzola & Van der Kolk, 2017).

Poor role modelling during childhood is another commonly cited explanation for youth offending. Now supported by a wealth of evidence, Bandura's *Social Learning Theory* (SLT) has found that children mimic the actions of their parents, siblings and peers. Van de Weijer, Bijleveld and Blokland (2014) for example found that Dutch boys were significantly more prone to commit violent offences if their fathers had done so, but only if their father's offences occurred after their sons were born. Young people also appear to re-enact specific criminal behaviours that they observed and were subject to as children (Widom, 2000). For example, various studies have discovered that the type of offending most likely aligns with forms of abuse received during childhood; prisoners convicted of sexual offending are most likely to have been sexually abused as a child, and those convicted of other violent offences are more likely to have been physically abused (Asscher et al., 2015; Dutton & Hart, 1992; Jespersen, Lalumière & Seto, 2009). In this sense, the strength of the relationship between being abused as a child and offending later in life (as highlighted above) may be so due to the dual effects of abuse being socially learnt, as well as the disruptive effect that being abused has on attachment and emotional development.

Just as poor role modelling in the home can influence children's early involvement in criminal behaviour, learning antisocial behaviours and thought patterns from people in the community can also occur. Again drawing on SLT, an individual living in a community with a high number of these "antisocial" role models is more likely to think of their behaviours as "normal" or desirable. Accordingly, gang participation, drug and weapon access in the community have all been found to uniquely predict younger involvement in these things (DeMatteo & Marczyk, 2005; Herrenkohl et al., 2003; Maguin et al., 1995; Salzinger, Feldman, Stockhammer & Hood, 2002). It should be noted that most of the above studies used a North American sample population which may reflect different norms of antisocial behaviour, particularly in relation to gangs (e.g., firearm use in the United States), however the role that SLT principles have on offending are broadly accepted to apply across cultures (Gluckman & Lambie, 2018a).

There are dozens more specific risk factors that have been linked to offending later in adolescence including having a large family size, school and learning difficulties, few friends, an older sibling who has offended, a convicted parent, a mother who is young or suffers from depression, parental conflict, and many others (Farrington, 2012). Many studies have noted that finding an individual with the presence of a single risk factor in the

absence of all others is exceedingly rare; the vast majority of YWHO are affected by two or more (Elliott, Huizinga & Menard, 2012; Farrington, Jolliffe, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber & Kalb, 2001; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Sullivan, 2006). The interconnected nature of many risk factors therefore appears to represent a broader set of disadvantageous life circumstances that are implicated with offending. This underlines the importance of viewing risk factors as correlational rather than as discrete factors that each independently *cause* youth to offend.

Indeed, low socio-economic status (SES; defined through household income, education and occupation) is widely recognised as among the most important “macrosocial” predictors of offending by young people (Steffensmeier & Haynie, 2000; Wright et al., 1999). In a longitudinal study in North America, Herrenkohl and colleagues (2003) examined a large number of variables and found that low SES in childhood was the best predictor of other risk factors for violent offending in 14-20 year olds, including abuse, parental attachment, antisocial peers and school commitment. Similarly, Nikulina, Widom, and Czaja (2011) found that low SES for North American children uniquely predicted young adult arrest, as well as diagnoses of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder; both of which have been correlated with male youth and adult offending (Bielas et al., 2016; Leigh-Hunt & Perry, 2015). Similarly, research conducted in the Dunedin Longitudinal Study by Odgers and colleagues found that New Zealand adults who followed a life-course persistent trajectory of offending were highly likely to have been lower in SES throughout their childhoods (Odgers et al., 2008).

There are a number of theories that attempt to explain the link between low SES and offending in adolescence. One suggests that income-related stress perpetuates a number of previously mentioned risk factors including family functioning and conflict, as well as resource neglect (Galloway & Skardhamar, 2010). Low SES may also constrain the number and quality of financial, educational and occupational opportunities provided to young people from such families (and the poorer neighbourhoods in which they live), and that criminal behaviour is a rational alternative pathway to earn income. Steffensmeier and Haynie (2000) acknowledge that socioeconomic disadvantage influences both male and female offending, but draw specifically on gendered goals as one mediating variable. They argue that since men’s goals tend to be more occupational and financial in nature

while women's tend to be more relational, men living in poverty are more likely to feel that their goals are unattainable and resort to crime to resolve this.

In New Zealand, Māori are three times more likely to be known to the youth justice system before the age of 14 compared to the rest of New Zealand's youth (Spier, 2016) and are nine times more likely to go through youth court (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Young Māori males made up 64% of the 10-19 year olds charged in court in the year ending 2016, despite representing only around 21% of this subset of the national population (Ministry of Justice, 2017a; Ministry of Justice, 2018). While the reasons for this disparity are varied and complex, there is a consensus that a core driver relates to Māori continuing to be deeply affected by *intergenerational trauma* (Reil et al., 2021). This is a process triggered by the colonisation of New Zealand, whereby many Māori were displaced (and continue to be displaced) from their land, spirituality and whānau (family) support systems. This has resulted in an intergenerational cycle of poverty and associated stress (Gibson et al., 2017), exposure to violence and abuse (Marie, Fergusson & Bodon, 2009), low educational achievement (Campbell, 2016), use of substances to cope (Ameratunga et al., 2011) and mental health diagnoses (Adolescent Health Research Group, 2004); all of which have been individually linked to criminal behaviour (Jackson, 1988; Jones, 2016).

These statistics are worsened by reports that Māori youth seem to be less positively affected, and in some cases even harmed, by traditionally "western" preventative measures (Ministry of Justice, 2012) including but not limited to placement into state care which has been shown to exacerbate trauma and harm (Reil et al., 2021). New Zealand has been criticised internationally for failing to address Māori children's unequal access to services that are designed to address the above risk factors (New Zealand Government, 2015). Therefore, while being Māori does not "make" individuals offend, Māori children and youth are for various structural and historical reasons more like to experience many of the above risk factors for offending.

The above discussion on static risk factors serves multiple purposes. Firstly, historical risk factors are used to predict the likelihood of recidivism, which is important because this prediction determines the level of service that each individual requires (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). Secondly, it helps to build a picture of the horrific childhood experiences that many young people have had, providing much needed context for any researcher, clinician or youth worker working alongside YWHO with patience and

compassion. Thirdly, it contextualises crime as a complex manifestation of familial and societal factors rather than those involving only the individual. This highlights the paramount importance of comprehensively addressing these systems in any intervention that aims to prevent future offending (Scott, 2008).

These static risk factors paint a bleak picture of a “life-course persistent offender” who appears to be non-agentic and, in a sense, at the mercy of their history and other things that they cannot control. Since its inception in 1993 though, Moffitt’s dual taxonomy has come under international scrutiny. Various studies have since found that the dual taxonomy of only two “profiles” is over simplistic; most high risk young people seem to offend less seriously and less frequently with age (Moffitt, 2006; Piquero, Farrington, Nagin & Moffitt, 2010) and some researchers have claimed up to seven or more different pathways for offending (Bushway, Thornberry & Krohn, 2003; Day et al., 2012). Moffitt herself cautioned that in reality the narratives of YWHO still contain much heterogeneity (Moffitt, 1993; Moffitt, 2006). Indeed, many newer models show groups of individuals with high rates of offending in childhood as expected in “life-course persistent” individuals, but who stop offending at various points throughout adolescence and early adulthood. Most importantly, these studies highlight that even young people with early lives of severe antisocial and offending behaviour are not necessarily “destined” to continue along the life-course persistent trajectory without hope of gaining a life free of offending. Indeed, another group of factors have been identified that also predict offending behaviour; ones that are less deterministic in the sense that they are able to change over time, such as through intervention.

Dynamic Risk Factors

Where static risk factors are often historical experiences that cannot be changed through intervention, dynamic risk factors refer to experiences that are ongoing in the young person’s life. One important use of dynamic risk factors is their ability to predict risk, increasing the accuracy of psychometric tools that aim to measure risk of reoffending (Bersani, Nieuwebeerta & Laub, 2009; Bonta & Andrews, 2007). These tools allow the ability to estimate risk based on both the unchangeable histories and demographics of an

individual, whilst also considering their current life circumstances, psychological mind set and perhaps most relevantly, recent changes to either.

Therein lies perhaps the most important functional distinction between static and dynamic risk factors: their utility. In addition to their unique predictive abilities, the fact that dynamic risk factors represent *current* psychological and situational circumstances make them more targetable in interventions designed to reduce the likelihood of future offending (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). Accordingly, the forensic field has internationally come to conceptualise the relationship between dynamic risk factors and offending as one in which the former causes the latter; the logic being that if an intervention “targets” a dynamic risk factor, offending will reduce (Heffernan, Wegerhoff & Ward, 2019). While it is generally true that interventions that target dynamic risk factors reduces recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a) there are some important caveats to this, expanded on at the end of this section.

Nonetheless, interest in discovering these targetable risk factors for offending led to international efforts to identify “key” dynamic risk factors. “Key” in this instance means those with the highest predictive power of offending and those that predict more serious crimes (Farrington & Loeber, 1999; Mulder et al., 2011). While there are small differences in some risk factors between cultures (Chui & Chan, 2012; Mulder et al., 2011), empirical research has generally found that these key areas of dynamic risk remain consistent. Most notably, Andrews and Bonta (2017) have synthesised empirical findings from around the world to conclude that offending behaviour can generally be predicted by eight categories of risk; the *central eight*; a concept that has gained much empirical support since it’s conception (Grieger & Hosser, 2014; Jung & Rawana, 1999). These are 1) *a history of criminal behaviour*, 2) *an antisocial personality pattern*, 3) *antisocial attitudes*, 4) *antisocial associates*, 5) *family problems*, 6) *difficulties at school*, 7) *lack of prosocial recreational activities*, and 8) *substance abuse*. All but “a history of criminal behaviour” are considered dynamic risk factors (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). While the central eight were originally based on data from adults who had sexually offended, Bonta and colleagues found that these eight factors also predicted general, violent and sexual offending for juvenile offending (Bonta, Blais & Wilson, 2014). Some research has found that the central eight may be even better at predicting reoffending in youth than in adults (Wilpert et al., 2018).

The following section describes the central eight in more detail, exploring the mechanisms for why these factors correlate with offending. Criticisms of the central eight, both as eight individual constructs and also as a coherent theory will be touched on. Importantly, gaining an understanding of how they can be manipulated is essential to evaluating interventions that attempt to do so. The following section will therefore also highlight what makes the central eight able to be considered dynamic, “changeable” risk factors.

The Central Eight.

Discounting the first of the central eight due to this being a static risk factor (a history of antisocial behaviour cannot be changed), the second of these key dynamic factors is an *antisocial personality pattern*. According to Bonta and Andrews (2007) this includes impulsivity, seeking pleasure without delaying gratification, and being restlessly aggressive and irritable. While on the one hand personality is often conceptualised as a stable, unchanging construct (research has found that this is true to some degree; Caspi, Bem & Elder, 1989; White, Moffit, Earls, Robins & Silva, 1990), the same research also tends to find that adolescence is the life stage in which antisocial personality characteristics can change the most (Johnson et al., 2000). Age is not the only factor that can lead to changes to an “antisocial personality”; environmental and contextual factors have also been found to play a role. Sanders, Munford, Thimasarn-Anwa and Liebenberg (2017) for example note our steadily increasing understanding of “resilience” over time; a personality trait which corresponds to being less impacted by high levels of stress. They note that where resilience was previously thought of as a stable personality trait, it is now understood as something that can be learnt through ongoing positive relationships with family, school and community members, and can protect youth from falling into patterns of antisocial behaviour.

The third of the central eight is *antisocial or procriminal cognitions, values and attitudes*. Examples of common antisocial attitudes include rationalisations for crime, negative attitudes toward the law and authority figures, and a self-identity that is interwoven with a criminal lifestyle (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Similarly, Walters (1990) also claims the importance of criminal “thinking patterns”, which denotes a set of internal rules

that support decisions to participate in criminal activity. Donald Andrews discovered the importance of antisocial attitudes to criminal recidivism as early as 1980. He built on previous findings that antisocial attitudes in children and young people were able to be changed by exposing such individuals to “anti-criminal patterns” and isolating them from “pro-criminal” attitudes expressed by others (Andrews, 1980; Sutherland and Cressey, 1966). In a seminal North American study, Andrews and colleagues ran a number of experimental discussion groups where 2-3 young adults who had offended (average age of 18 years old) were paired with 2-3 undergraduate community volunteers who were of similar age but held more prosocial attitudes. These groups met every week for eight weeks to openly discuss opinions on a number of topics including the function of rules and the law, freedom, the roles of police and courts, and illegal behaviour as learnt patterns. Compared to those in a matched control group, young adults in the experimental groups were significantly less tolerant of rule violations, identified less with criminal others and valued education and employment more than those assigned to the control groups; a finding also replicated in other studies with similar methodologies (Andrews, Young, Wormith, Searle & Kouri, 1973).

Antisocial associates is the fourth of the central eight, which includes having criminal friends and being isolated from prosocial peers. Antisocial peers may play an even more important role in increasing risk of reoffending for adolescents compared to adults, given the added importance of social belonging in youth and the increased time spent around peers during this time period (Albert, Chein & Steinberg, 2013). Indeed, Gardner and Steinberg (2005) found that peer-influenced risk taking was significantly more likely among adolescents than other age groups. Sweeten, Pyrooz and Piquero (2013) found that high-risk, “life course persistent” young people in particular may struggle to transition out of gangs because they lack the prosocial skills that “adolescent-limited” young people use to make this transition. The ability to change peer associates through intervention has been demonstrated in various studies. The above interventions by Andrews (1980) and Andrews and colleagues (1973) for example, who paired up people with offending histories with groups of people with no offending histories, found that at the end of the experiment those who had offended identified less with their antisocial associates. The opposite has also been found through observational research showing increased reoffending rates of individuals deemed at “low-risk” simply by placing them in correctional facilities with those

with more serious offending histories (Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2004). This is thought to have occurred by inadvertently allowing low-risk individuals to develop antisocial peer networks while simultaneously removing them from the influence of prosocial peers.

As detailed earlier, having had an unsafe or unstable early family environment holds a significant place as a static risk factor, but ongoing *family problems* can also continue to impact a young person to the point where this is considered an important dynamic risk factor. Le'Roy, Vera, Simon and Ikeda (2000) position youth violence within a societal lens, coming to the conclusion that “the family is... the most critical component of the proximal social level of influence as they can influence youth risks for violence in several important ways” (p. 64). Some of these influences include poor parental monitoring, inappropriate discipline and family relationships devoid of care and nurturance (Andrews and Bonta, 2017; Bonta and Andrews, 2007). The effects of youth actively learning from parents and elders who model criminal behaviour and inconsistent or violent discipline have also been known for some time (Le'Roy et al., 2000; Tolan and Guerra, 1994). In an attempt to better understand the relationship between parenting and youth offending, Chung and Steinberg (2006) generated a broader systemic model of serious youth offending. The model suggested that poor parental warmth and supervision influenced offending due to its tendency to mediate the degree to which a young person formed antisocial peer relationships, which as noted above is a significant risk factor. They posited that a young person first looks to create close intra-familial relationships, but if the family is incapable of meeting these needs, they can instead turn to extra-familial groups such as peer networks to fulfil needs of identity and belonging. Chung and Steinberg's model also acknowledges the mediating effect of SES; youth living in disadvantaged communities are more likely to encounter antisocial groups such as gangs, from which antisocial identities are formed.

Specific *difficulties at school* such as poor school performance and low levels of satisfaction and engagement with school figures has also been established as a key risk factor for offending behaviour (Andrews and Bonta, 2010a; Rucklidge, McLean and Bateup, 2013). Sutherland (2011) for example interviewed YWHO who resided in New Zealand youth justice facilities after committing serious crimes, with the intention of uncovering shared experiences in their schooling. She found that many YWHO were impacted by the accumulation of negative experiences at school, which often led to their detachment from

the educational system. She suggested that this detachment can exacerbate other areas of risk such as stressful school transitions, identifying with antisocial peer groups, and diminished relationships and lowered expectations by school staff. Henry and colleagues also found that teenaged New Zealanders' disengagement from school correlated with offending behaviour, especially for boys with poor self-regulation skills (Henry, Caspi, Moffitt, Harrington & Silva, 1999).

A key question then becomes "why do some have more negative school experiences than others in the first place?" One explanation draws on findings highlighting the difficulty in finding risk factors specifically related to school but not other areas of young people's lives (Mulder, Brand, Bullens and Marle, 2010). While this could be interpreted as evidence that school does not contribute a unique risk to future offending, most researchers note that school is an environment in which almost all other risk factors can interact and become exacerbated, including antisocial personality traits, antisocial attitudes, antisocial peer relationships, family stress, and access to substances. For example, a 13 year old who has not had breakfast and limited sleep due to stressors at home may struggle to concentrate and behave irritably toward other teachers and students. He may quickly find himself identifying with peer groups containing other "disruptive" students who model and reinforce antisocial attitudes.

Many studies have found strong correlations between *drug or alcohol habits* and offending, making it the seventh of the central eight (D'Amico, Edelen, Miles & Morral, 2008). Of the 23-34 year-old New Zealanders interviewed by Bowman (2015), 73% and 79% believed that cannabis and alcohol (respectively) maintained their offending when they were in their teens. Some claim that the relationship between substance abuse and offending stems from the pharmacological effects of drugs and alcohol (particularly violent crime; Lennings, Copeland & Howard, 2003; Putnins, 2001; Welte, Zhang & Wieczorek, 2001). Despite these studies, importance of the psychoactive and addictive effects of substances on offending has been challenged (Fergusson & Horwood, 1997; Lennings et al., 2003). Mulder and colleagues (2010) argue that substance abuse and criminal behaviour often have a reciprocal relationship; offending makes youth more likely to engage in substance use (i.e. through new associations with substance-using peers) whilst the psychoactive effects of substances make youth more likely to engage in criminal behaviour (i.e. if the substance makes an individual more aggressive, or to financially

support an addiction). Other hypotheses include substance abuse as a coping mechanism for the effects of traumatic earlier life experiences (Bender, 2010), and substance abuse as merely a disinhibitor of psychological or social barriers that would otherwise prevent offending (Day et al., 2013).

Finally, Andrews and Bonta (2017) identify a *lack of involvement and satisfaction in prosocial leisure activities* as the last of the central eight. The establishment of this risk factor largely stemmed from studies finding that individuals who participate frequently in prosocial recreational activities are less likely to reoffend than those who participate in fewer prosocial recreational activities (Palmer and Hollin, 2007; Wooditch et al., 2014). Researchers have also identified more specific elements of leisure activities that correlate with offending. Various studies by Mahoney and colleagues for example found associations between higher offending rates in young people and leisure activities that are unstructured, unsupervised and lack emphasis on skill-building (Mahoney and Stattin, 2000; Mahoney, Stattin and Magnusson, 2001). Relating to skill-building in particular, Deci and Ryan (2000) claim that a perceived lack of prosocial skill mastery (i.e., a young person believing that they are not good at anything) can lead to “psychological withdrawal or antisocial activity as compensatory motives” (p. 229). A lack of competence or mastery in school may therefore partially explain the relationship between school disengagement and offending behaviour; failure to do well academically can encourage individuals to seek mastery in other, less prosocial skills (e.g., graffiti, theft, fighting; Reckdenwald, Mancini and Beauregard, 2014). While there is consensus on the inverse correlation between prosocial leisure pursuits and offending behaviour, a lack of experimental designs in this field make it difficult to identify whether there are any unique elements of leisure activities that reduce offending (e.g., mastery) or if this link is more correlational (e.g., time used by prosocial leisure activities reduces time otherwise spent with antisocial peers; Andrews and Bonta, 2010; Wooditch et al., 2014).

The ability of the central eight to stand the test of time is a testament to their robustness and predictive validity, however they have certainly not escaped criticism and amendment. For example, most researchers now acknowledge a conceptual distinction between *acute* dynamic risk factors which change across hours or days (e.g., relationship stress, substance use) and *stable* dynamic risk factors which can change over months or

years (e.g., negative attitudes towards authority, relationship patterns, lack of coping skills).

Presenting the central eight as a numbered list, each risk factor with its own predictive validity, is also problematic. Doing so frames them as independent variables, when, as alluded to above, these factors are overlapping, interconnected systems. Unfortunately, most research has focussed on just one of the factors, meaning little is known about the interaction between them. In 2014, Wooditch and colleagues found only 12 studies that examined more than two areas of dynamic risk at once (Wooditch, Tang and Taxman, 2014). The reason for this is most likely because addressing all of these factors at once would require a massively complex model, which is simply beyond the scope of most research designs. Systems theory provides one body of research that acknowledges this complexity; it understands offending as being supported not only by factors relating to the individual (personality pattern, cognitions, values and attitudes) but also by the relationships around them (peers, family and school). The importance of the various systems surrounding YWHO cannot be understated and will become a key theme of the current thesis, however this will be expanded on in more detail later (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gluckman & Lambie, 2018a; Henggeler, 2017).

Furthermore, the implication that static and dynamic risk factors are *causally* linked to offending has also been challenged in light of claims that dynamic risk factors conflate both descriptive and explanatory elements of offending, and generally lack coherence, specificity, precision and factualness (Heffernan, Ward & Beech, 2014; Ward, Vandeveld & Van Damme, 2019; Heffernan, Wegerhoff & Ward, 2019; Ward & Fortune, 2016a). Some have argued that these conceptual and definitional issues mean they are limited to being “blunt instruments” since they fail to outline the more nuanced psychological and relational *processes* underlying offending, which would better inform intervention (Ward & Beech, 2015). Ward and Fortune therefore caution that dynamic risk factors should instead be thought of as *symptoms* of offending or “markers of causal processes” rather than as causes themselves (Ward & Fortune, 2016b, p. 200).

To summarise, there are a number of well-researched factors that are thought to predict offending in young people, which are often separated into those that are *static* and those that are *dynamic*. While static risk factors hold unique predictive power for offending and provide much-needed context to the traumatic early lives of YWHO, the fact that these

are past experiences makes their effects difficult to change. Dynamic risk factors are ongoing in the young person's life and are therefore potentially changeable through intervention. Key dynamic risk factors identified by experts in the field include having an antisocial personality pattern, antisocial cognitions, values and attitudes, antisocial associates, family problems, school difficulties, substance use, and a lack of involvement and satisfaction in prosocial leisure activities. While the specific causal mechanisms linking dynamic risk factors to offending are still being explored, the last few decades of research have at least demonstrated that reducing risk is possible, even for YWHO who appear to be on a "life-course persistent" trajectory.

A History of Youth Justice

So, what can we do *with* young people who are at high risk of reoffending? Unfortunately, the general answer to this question has changed surprisingly little in modern society since for many countries, "confinement" remains an important part of the answer (Foucault, 1979; Hazel, 2008; Rodriguez, 2013). As a result, secure youth facilities remain a key component of most western country's youth justice systems, including New Zealand's (Lambie, Krynen & Best, 2016; Muncie, 1999). While there are some differences between "youth justice facilities" and adult prisons (level of security, inclusion of education, more lenient sentencing; Center of Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2018), many of the reasons for their use align with the logic behind adult prisons (Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006). Three common justifications for restrictive sentences that have been used internationally include:

1. Separating perpetrators of serious crimes from the general population so that they are no longer a danger to society (Lynch & Bruce, 2016).
2. Revenge; forced retribution where the perpetrator must "pay" a debt back to the victims and society, often emotionally motivated (Gerber and Jackson, 2013; Staggs & Landreville, 2017; Youth Justice Board, 2013).
3. Instrumental punishment; using the principles of behaviourism by pairing a negative consequence (removal of freedom) with offending behaviour to deter them from future offending (De Valk, Kuiper, Van der Helm, Maas & Stams, 2016).

Despite the existence of popular rhetoric in New Zealand that continues to argue these points (covered in more detail by Barretto, Miers & Lambie, 2018), a fair amount of evidence exists which questions their validity. For example, contrary to the claim that secure facilities exist to remove dangerous criminals, Gluckman and Lambie (2018a) argue that “the costs of prisons far exceed those justified by the need to protect the public” (p. 4). Lambie, Krynen and Best (2016) report that a third of young people in secure youth justice facilities in New Zealand in 2014 were sentenced under charges categorised as “minor” offences, such as theft and burglary. They also found that 73% of young people in these facilities were on remand, meaning they were yet to be sentenced or to have even appeared in court. Only half of these young people were identified as being “at risk to the public” (Lambie et al., 2016, p. 27). Many also remain confined after being formally released due to a lack of alternative accommodation options (Jones, 2016b). Pratt (2017) argues that even if secure residences do prevent some dangerous individuals from remaining in society in the short-term, the over-reliance on this strategy has led to a lack of long-term investment in social supports and preventative measures that act to reduce the amount of crime being committed by this population in the first place. These statistics also raise queries about whether there is an over-emphasis on immediate public safety at the risk of encroaching on the rights of YWHO (Lambie et al., 2014), or whether a lack of alternative options is behind the over-use of secure facilities.

The justification for sentencing YWHO to secure facilities as societal or individual “revenge” also needs to be examined (Gerber and Jackson, 2013). Socio-biological perspectives suggest this cross-cultural phenomenon has been evolutionarily selected to punish transgressions of norms, and that this drive stems from emotions such as anger or shame (depending on culture; Price, 2009). Many believe that this “eye for an eye” mentality is problematic because of the imposing role that the media plays in its proliferation (Binnie, 2016; Gluckman & Lambie, 2018a; Staggs & Landreville, 2017). McGregor (2017) for example found that the proportion of news coverage in New Zealand that focused on crime increased from 21% in 1993 to 31% in 2016, and on some days crime reporting used up to 70% of news coverage. News media is also more likely to report crime news stories in ways that instill anger and outrage in the public. Such strategies including interviewing highly emotional victims or focusing on rare crimes that make the most extreme moral violations (e.g., assaulting an elderly person; Monod, 2017; Park, Holody &

Zhang, 2012; Serani, 2008). In reality, the proportion of sinister, amoral “offenders” is hugely over-represented in news media and youth crime rates have actually dropped significantly since 1993 (Barretto et al., 2018; Greer & Reiner, 2015; Lugo-Ocando & Faria Brandão, 2016). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Kääriäinen (2018) found that when laypeople were exposed to more detailed and accurate information about an individual’s background and criminal behaviour and were provided recommendations from experts and judges, people tended to support community and rehabilitative sentences rather than only imprisonment.

The notion that YWHO should be imprisoned to pay a “debt” to their victims is also questionable (Gerber & Jackson, 2013). Barretto and colleagues (2018) for example, interviewed both victims and non-victims of crimes committed by YWHO in New Zealand. They found that victims of youth offending in New Zealand were generally more supportive of preventative measures than punitive ones (Barretto et al., 2018). In fact, in the few studies conducted on this topic, non-victims were more likely to seek punitive consequences (Barretto et al., 2018; Van Camp, 2017). For those who do feel the need for punitive measures, research shows that punishment only partially satisfies victim’s feelings of retribution, and that this partial feeling of satisfaction is only temporary (Ulrich, 2004).

One final argument for the use of secure youth justice facilities is that incarceration will deter YWHO from future offending. Gollwitzer and Denzler (2009) found that people are significantly more likely to support punishment of someone who has broken the law if the individual knows the reason that they are being punished than if they do not, suggesting that this “detering” reasoning remains relatively popular in the eyes of the public. There is some limited evidence supporting this viewpoint. Bowman (2015) for example interviewed 51 New Zealanders (49 male) who completed at least one prison sentence before they were 20 years old and who, despite being labelled as “high risk of reoffending” at release had managed to avoid recent reconviction. She found that 78% of the interviewees stated that prison was a primary reason for their decision to cease offending, and of these individuals most had made this decision whilst in prison as teenagers. However, these findings are at odds with reconviction rates following incarceration. Bowman acknowledged that in reality 91% of young adults are reconvicted within five years of a prison term. Similarly, Mendel (2011) reported that 70-80% of youth who had completed programmes in secure youth facilities went on to offend within three years. Clearly then, while prison can be effective at deterring a minority of YWHO from

reoffending, for a majority this does not seem to be the case (Dmitrieva et al., 2012; Gatti, Tremblay & Vitaro, 2009; Gluckman & Lambie, 2018a).

In New Zealand, Lambie and colleagues have claimed that “detaining youth is generally ineffective and may even increase their levels of antisocial behaviour” (Lambie, Krynen & Best, 2016, p. 58). A report by the chief science advisor to the Prime Minister of New Zealand states that “prisons act as recruitment centres for gangs (especially for young offenders)” (Gluckman & Lambie, 2018a, p.4). Lambie and Randell (2013) also suggest that secure facilities are ill-equipped to help young people deal with many of the risk factors for their offending. These include the psychological effects of childhood trauma, violent behavioural patterns, poor education and employment prospects, and alcohol and substance addiction. Furthermore, the Department of Corrections themselves have acknowledged a lack of cultural resources available to young Māori residents, which could be utilised to prevent future offending. Lacking cultural resources in prisons is also concerning in light of the common Treaty of Waitangi interpretation that the government must protect Māori interests, language and culture (Henwood, George, Cram & Waititi, 2018; Lambie, Krynen & Best, 2016; Nakhid & Shorter, 2014; Tamatea, Webb & Boer, 2011); a perspective also shared by the Waitangi Tribunal (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2002).

Despite the various historical issues in the Youth Justice sector as outlined above, one positive outcome is an increased focus in the literature on *desistance*. Simply put, desistance can be thought of as the process of an individual shifting from a lifestyle of offending, to a lifestyle without. In reality though, this process is far from a simple “decision” to stop offending, as indicated in the above study by Bowman (2015). Weaver and McNeill (2015) for example highlight the extremely complex task of evaluating and re-negotiating interpersonal relationships (e.g., friends, intimate partners, families, employers and religious communities) toward those that support a prosocial lifestyle. Nugent and Schinkel (2016) identify three “spheres” of desistance: act desistance, identity desistance and relational desistance. They reiterate that change in these spheres does not occur easily and often brings about pain, isolation and hopelessness. Such research shatters the almost romantic image of desistance being a simple decision, however being humbled by this realisation is essential. Doing so allows researchers to set more realistic goals of understanding this multi-faceted process, the intention being that this knowledge will help

individuals accept the “pains” of desistance, but also equip them with means of making meaningful change in their lives.

From Dogma to Evidence-Based Practice

In recent years New Zealand has seen a slow move away from the preferential use of secure youth justice facilities; the number of “supervision with residence” orders for example has halved in the last decade (Ministry of Justice, 2018). This move is thought to be at least partially driven by a combination of the above body of research which points to the ineffectiveness of detention, as well as various political and cultural influences (Gilmore, 2007; Maxwell & Morris, 1993). This trend also reflects the increased use of science in criminology over the last 20-30 years (Cullen, 2005; Kuper, 2010; Steinburg, 2009; Thurston, 2016). There is now an emphasis in using empirical evidence to inform the design of interventions for young people who offend. Not getting positive outcomes may result in a withdrawal of government funding.

One example illustrating this point is the “scared straight” programme, which involved taking high-risk young people into prisons and exposing them to the “horrors” of prison life in the hope that they would cease offending due to fear of ending up there. While these programmes enjoyed support from public opinion, most were terminated due to lack of evidence for their effectiveness (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino & Buehler, 2003). Similarly, military-style boot camp programmes for YWHO have grown in popularity over the last two decades in New Zealand, however a growing body of evidence suggesting their ineffectiveness has stunted their funding, preventing their proliferation and their recognition as anything more than experimental in nature (The Families Commission, 2009).

Currently, New Zealand is considered by many to have one of the most progressive youth justice systems in the world (Maxwell & Morris, 1993; Ministry of Justice, 2013; Muncie, 2001). Following the *Children’s, Young Persons and Their Families Act of 1989* (now known as the *Oranga Tamariki Act 1989*), New Zealand developed and began using a unique tool called the *Family Group Conference* (FGC; Slater, Lambie & McDowell, 2015). With principles founded in tikanga Māori (Māori values and customs), the FGC involves bringing authorities, communities, whānau and often iwi together to address a YWHO’s

offending and agree on a positive way forward. It resembles restorative justice principles, which provides the victim an opportunity to meet with the YWHO, and through this process allows the YWHO to empathise with the victim, take ownership of their actions, take some initial steps to “put right” the harm caused, and reduce the chance of this occurring again. Restorative justice and FGCs therefore both balance the agendas discussed earlier: the immediate safety of the community, the needs of the victim, the rights and dignity of the YWHO, and the longer-term intention of reducing offending (Wenzel, Okimoto & Cameron, 2012). Recent statistics suggest that this restorative justice approach is working; prosecution of 10–16 year olds is at one of its lowest rates ever, down 60 per cent in 2017 compared to 2008 (Ministry of Justice, 2017a). Despite this promising data, New Zealand still has an acute need for the development of evidence-based programmes that diverge from traditional youth justice strategies.

Risk, Needs and Responsivity

Internationally, the most common empirically-based approach to reducing reoffending is the *Risk, Need and Responsivity (RNR) model* (Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2011). The RNR model is not a specific intervention type such as the scared straight or boot camp programmes, but rather a set of three principles which, when upheld, are widely regarded as the “gold standard” for interventions for forensic populations (this is not to say the RNR model enjoys unanimous support, more on this later; Andrews et al., 2011; Gannon & Ward, 2014; Katharina et al., 2018). Since its first formalisation in Canada in the early 1990s by Donald Andrews and James Bonta (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990), many elements of the RNR model have been tweaked and developed. However, over the almost 30 years since, “the principles of risk, need, and responsivity remain at the core” (Andrews et al., 2011, p. 736). These principles are discussed below.

Risk

Risk as a concept refers to the predicted risk of reoffending. An individual’s level of risk (low, medium or high) is derived from the individual’s scores in a range of static and dynamic risk factors, touched on earlier. Tools that have been shown to do this accurately include the *Level of Service Inventory Revised* (LSI-R), which is used internationally

(Andrews & Bonta, 2010a) and the *Risk Of ReConviction/Risk Of Imprisonment (RoC*RoI)*, which was developed and is still used in New Zealand prisons (Bakker, O'Malley and Riley, 1999). International tools that use static and dynamic risk factors to predict more specific forms of offending include the *Static-99* and *Stable-2007* for people who have sexually offended (Hanson, Lloyd, Helmus & Thornton, 2012), the *Historical, Clinical Risk management-20 (HCR-20)* for those who have violently offended (Dahle, 2006) and the *Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)* for YWHO (Onifade et al., 2008).

The risk principle states that the intensity of services should be matched with the person's level of risk. This means that resources are prioritised for programmes for individuals at high risk of reoffending over those at low risk of reoffending (Andrews et al., 2011). The reason for this revolves around cost efficiency; it makes sense to direct costly but intensive services toward the group at highest likelihood of going on to impose the most harm to society (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). Much research has also found that high-risk individuals benefit the most from intervention programmes (Kapiti Youth Support, 2013; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2004). New Zealand has begun to take notice of this research, as seen in the government's Youth Crime Action Plan (Ministry of Justice, 2013) and public reports requesting more cognitive-behavioural-based interventions for specifically high-risk youth (Ministry of Justice, 2016). The RNR also cautions against attempting to rehabilitate different risk groups in the same programmes, as consistent interaction of high and low-risk individuals has repeatedly been found to increase risk of future offending in the lower-risk individuals (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2006). This is thought to occur due to low-risk individuals learning attitudes and behaviours from their high-risk peers (Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2004).

Needs

The needs part of the RNR model refers to the concept of *criminogenic needs*. Many use the terms "dynamic risk factors" and "criminogenic needs" interchangeably, however one important difference lies in the contexts in which they are used (Thornton, 2016; Ward & Fortune, 2016; Ward & Willis, 2016). Risk factors are often used in the context of crime prediction, are thought about as statistics attached to individuals that

make them “risky”, and some note an association between their use and deficit-driven rehabilitation strategies that carefully monitor risk factors and seek to avoid and remove situations where they may be exacerbated (Hannah-Moffat, 2004; Ward & Brown, 2004). The term criminogenic needs however is used more in the context of rehabilitation; it acknowledges that psychological and situational mechanisms lead to decisions to offend and that these needs can be addressed in interventions to reduce the likelihood of reoffending (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; Polaschek, 2012).

Research has found that the effectiveness of interventions at reducing offending tend to closely follow the number of criminogenic needs targeted. In a meta-analysis for example, Gendreau, French and Taylor (2002) found that interventions that targeted 4-6 criminogenic needs were significantly more effective at reducing reoffending than those that targeted 1-3 criminogenic needs. The RNR model also asserts that targeting criminogenic needs over non-criminogenic needs (needs that have not been empirically linked to offending) should be the focus for any intervention strategy that aims to reduce offending (Coenberg, Bakker, Maynard & Percy, 2000).

Responsivity

Broadly, the responsivity principle determines *how* treatment should be administered, and is perhaps the most complex of the RNR principles. According to the responsivity principle, addressing the criminogenic needs of individuals should be conducted in a way that is most likely to be effective for them. Within the literature, responsivity is usually split into two categories: general responsivity and specific responsivity.

General Responsivity. General responsivity firstly involves using models that are empirically-supported to reduce offending in the target population (Andrews & Bonta, 2017). Research consistently shows that cognitive-behavioural programmes that target risk factors are the most effective at reducing antisocial behaviour in all populations, including in youth (Koehler, Lösel, Akoensi & Humphreys, 2013; McGuire, 2002; Sawyer et al., 2015; Smeets et al., 2015). Cognitive-behavioural programmes often involve teaching skills in the areas of emotion regulation, interpersonal communication, critical thinking, values education, mindfulness, perspective-taking, identifying offence chains and antisocial

cognitions, and more. Many of the above have proven success in helping young males manage anger and impulse control (Barrett, 2017; Dowden, Antonowicz & Andrews, 2003; Frazier & Bela, 2014; Tong & Farrington, 2006). Sweeten, Pyrooz and Piquero (2013) note the beneficial effect that these skill-building strategies have for youth who are on the “life-course persistent” trajectory, whose traumatic and unstable early life experiences likely prevented them from developing skills necessary to take steps toward a prosocial life, such as transitioning out of gangs and finding prosocial supports. Social Learning Theory also features heavily in these programmes, as intentional role modelling of prosocial behaviours and values have been found to be particularly effective in interventions for YWHO (Darling, 2005; De Vries, Hoeve, Assink, Stams & Asscher, 2015; Liang, Spencer, Brogan & Corral, 2008).

Bonta and Andrews (2007) also state that these empirically-supported interventions are community-based whenever possible. SLT also informs this, given the tendency of young people to learn antisocial behaviours in the hyper-social environments of prisons and other secure facilities (Bayer, Hjalmarsson & Pozen, 2009; Jacobs, 1982; Monshouwer, Kepper, van den Eijnden, Koning & Vollebergh, 2015; Shulman, Monahan & Steinberg, 2017). Cognitive-behavioural models also suggest that recidivism can occur from a failure to generalise positive skills learnt in secure facilities to the community, and that one way to minimise this is to teach these skills in the environment that they will later be used (Binswanger et al., 2012; Ludbrook, 2012; Zavlek, 2005). Furthermore, the community is inevitably an integral part of the development of criminal behaviour, but can also be a positive source of identity and strength (Bevan, 2015; Wright & Cesar, 2013). Community-based interventions are now widely recommended for all of these reasons, as well as for the purposes of building a protective “web” of positive community support (Gluckman & Lambie, 2018a; Johnson, 2015; Ludbrook, 2012).

Secondly but at least as importantly, general responsivity requires the establishment of a warm, respectful working alliance with the client. Research has shown for a long time that warmth and sensitivity in any therapeutic setting gives the best outcomes, whether it be in an inpatient mental health setting, in prison, or the community (Glickman, 2011; Marshall et al., 2005; Westbook, 2011). Various researchers have found that people who had offended who had warm and sensitive probation officers were more disapproving of antisocial behaviour and had lower rates of recidivism (Andrews, 1980;

Durnescu, 2012). Similar evidence on the benefits of a warm and trusting relationship with youth are also found (Harder, Knorth & Kalverboer, 2013; Parra, DuBois, Neville, Pugh-Lilly & Povinelli, 2002).

Specific Responsivity. While general responsivity determines the type of intervention to be used and the larger theories that guide it, specific responsivity determines the need for each intervention to be tailored to the individual. The key assumption behind this principle is that everyone is different, and interventions need to account for this to maximise effectiveness. Things such as the individual's personality, skills, learning style, motivation, current psychological state, ethnicity and personal strengths (to name a few) are all important factors that treatments must remain responsive to in order to "increase the credibility of the intervention's message" (Sinclair, 2013, p. 17). Specific responsivity is thought to be particularly relevant for YWHO because of the need to counter-balance varying degrees of motivation, impulsivity and reasoning (due to ongoing brain development in associated areas; Richards, 2011) and immense social pressures to remain disengaged from prosocial influences (Cresswell & Campbell, 2013). Responding to individual's varying degrees of motivation to engage with the intervention is therefore a key part of specific responsivity (Andrews & Bonta, 2017; Polaschek, 2012). As a result, the RNR supports the incorporation of young people's personal interests and preferences into programmes that address criminogenic needs in order to build engagement and motivation.

Another element of specific responsivity is matching professional skills and characteristics with the needs of clients. Bonta and Andrews (2010) cite the need for correctional staff to be "respectful, caring, enthusiastic, collaborative and valuing of personal autonomy" (p. 22). In youth forensic research, recent studies have indicated the effectiveness of replacing intensive supervision with more meaningful and collaborative mentoring relationships with YWHO as they live in the community (Abrams, Mizel, Nguyen & Shlonsky, 2014; Weinrath, Donatelli & Murchison, 2016). When given the option of choosing their own mentors, YWHO appear to seek individuals whom they find trustworthy, non-judgemental and dedicated to helping them (Spencer, Gowdy, Drew & Thodes, 2019). Matching mentors and mentees by shared personal interests is a common ingredient in successful youth mentoring programmes in North American and New Zealand

(Deane, 2012; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011; Liang & Grossman, 2007).

Matching youth and youth workers based on ethnicity has also been theorised to lead to more trusting relationships on the grounds of lessened threats of cultural mistrust or negative stereotyping (Darling, Bogat, Cavell, Murphy & Sánchez, 2006). One study by Hollis and colleagues identified several examples where non-Māori staff were insensitive to the cultural beliefs of Māori youth, creating distress and reducing the ability of some staff to support their young people (Hollis, Deane, Moore & Harre, 2011). While there is less evidence supporting systematic ethnicity matching on a programme-wide level (DuBois et al., 2011; Parra et al., 2002; Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman & Maxine, 2002), matching staff and client ethnicity (or any other factor for that matter) could be very important for particular clients. Responding flexibly to individual's requests for particular staff qualities may increase YWHO's subjective experiences of control, safety and motivation to engage in the mentoring process (Spencer et al., 2019), and therefore features as an important specific responsivity factor for YWHO (Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004).

In recent years the specific responsivity principle has been increasingly influenced by research that explores using individual's protective factors and strengths to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Protective factors or strengths can be understood as personal characteristics or environmental conditions that theoretically lead to reduced offending (Baglivio, Wolff, Piquero, Howell & Greenwald, 2017). These can include but are certainly not limited to supportive parents, good social skills or sporting talent. While the incorporation of strengths for YWHO has been found in only approximately a quarter of intervention plans (Singh et al., 2014), a meta-analysis on North American programmes found that those that integrate strengths tend to be more engaging and have higher programme completion rates (Belciug, Franklin, Bolton, Jordan and Lehmann, 2016).

The *Good Lives Model (GLM)* is a radically different conceptualisation of offending (and responding to offending), that has been steadily increasing in popularity and its evidence-base in recent years. Generally, it approaches both assessment and intervention from a strengths-based approach. Rather than thinking of criminogenic needs as things that only "criminals" have, the GLM understands criminogenic needs as antisocial expressions of fundamental needs shared by most people (Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward &

Stewart, 2003). It therefore understands offending behaviour as an individual striving toward one or more “primary human goods” that are present in all human beings (Yates & Prescott, 2011). For example, where the RNR understands “antisocial associates” as a factor that increases risk and therefore needs to be targeted and reduced (i.e., finding ways that they can leave a gang), proponents of the GLM would argue that gang affiliation can also fulfil fundamental human needs of feeling protected and included in a like-minded group of others. It might instead attempt to explore this need further and find other ways of achieving “friendship” and human “connection” (2 of the 11 primary human goods identified by the GLM). Proponents of the GLM go even further to suggest that interventions should target *all* needs of the individual (whether or not these are expressed in criminogenic behaviours). They believe addressing all needs can help YWHO become actively engaged in the rehabilitative process, and can also indirectly reduce the risk of reoffending in ways that are difficult to measure (Sinclair, 2013; Willis & Ward, 2013).

While the younger age of the GLM means there is a smaller body of evidence supporting it, research conducted thus far (a large part of which has been based in New Zealand) suggests it is liked by both clients and clinicians (Willis, Ward & Levenson, 2014) and that its principles can enhance engagement with interventions (Gannon, King, Miles, Lockerbie & Willis, 2011); a common area of concern for programmes for YWHO. The GLM’s understanding of offending and rehabilitation reflects a gradual shift away from using entirely deficit-driven models of working with people who have offended, and toward more humanistic, strengths-based approaches.

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an example of a strengths-based approach to working with youth. Its philosophy is rooted in positive psychology; a broad field that aims to understand and promote the factors involved in human development and flourishing. PYD also has roots in community psychology, which advocates for prevention strategies rather than relying solely on treatment of existing problems. PYD combines these factors, focusing on both “risk factors” but also on building skills, strengths and connections into the lives of young people. In this way it distinguishes itself from traditional perspectives that “focus on punishment and the idea that adolescents are broken” (Lerner, Lerner &

Phelps, 2009, p. 10). It argues that exploring and unlocking their own potential in a prosocial context will remove their need to continue offending.

There are five central principles or goals to the PYD model commonly referred to as “the five Cs”. They stand for Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Compassion. *Competence* refers to an ability to understand and have control over one’s own emotional, behavioural and social responses, decision-making, vocational or educational achievement. *Confidence* refers to an individual with an internal sense of self-worth and self-efficacy. *Connection* refers to positive, reciprocal bonds with people and institutions. Having *Character* involves being respectful of societal and cultural norms, and being *Compassionate* is having sympathy and empathy for others. These principles are able to be further broken down into 15 “essential” practices of PYD (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Kawkins, 2004):

1. Promotion of bonding
2. Fostering of resilience
3. Promotion of social competence
4. Promotion of emotional competence
5. Promotion of cognitive competence
6. Promotion of behavioural competence
7. Promotion of moral competence
8. Fostering of self-determination
9. Fostering of spirituality
10. Fostering of self-efficacy
11. Fostering of clear, positive identity
12. Fostering of belief in the future
13. Recognition of positive behaviour
14. Opportunity for prosocial involvement
15. Fostering of prosocial norms

One ideological difference between the RNR and PYD models is perhaps best highlighted by examining who the “client” is. Government-run secure forensic institutions such as prisons are the primary employers of RNR-based programmes, which must balance

the interests of the public with the wellbeing of the individual. Generally though, forensic institutions must prioritise the interests of the public over the enrichment of the lives of its clients. This can be seen in the RNR's exclusive focus on factors relating to future offending (and risk to the community) and *not* on factors such as the individual's self-esteem, anxiety, depression and other mental and physical difficulties if these are not considered relevant to the individual's offending pathway (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). The PYD framework on the other hand can perhaps be understood as more "client-centered" in the sense that its five Cs focus mostly on the needs of the youth specifically. However, creators of the PYD model add that an individual who experiences success in all of the five Cs will ultimately have a desire to *Contribute* (sometimes referred to as the "sixth C") to wider systems including their families, communities and public institutions (Lerner et al., 2009). As such, this sixth C seems consistent with goals of reducing offending. Importantly, much of the research on PYD originates from North America, suggesting a need to apply its principles flexibly and with careful consideration of how cultural differences may change how it is best applied to the New Zealand context. With this in mind, several programmes have demonstrated that PYD can successfully be applied in New Zealand.

Benefits of the PYD Approach

Some have identified the usefulness of this more positive lens from a behavioural psychology perspective; that generally people (not just youth) learn better through positive experiences and reinforcement rather than imposition of negative consequences. Warnings and threats for example, while at times effective at changing behaviour, have limitations (Sharot, 2012). Specifically, people tend to pay less attention to them and instead become more attuned to shorter-term threats, often at the expense of long-term costs. Furthermore, negative messages or threats trigger *avoidant* behavioural patterns. Although this appears to be the intention (i.e., to avoid prison), avoidance strategies often result in a reduction in the emotion associated with the threat (fear), rather than a reduction in the threat itself (Sharot, 2012).

The phenomenon of *optimism bias* appears to align with this; a cognitive phenomenon where people generally appear to pay more attention, and increasingly change their beliefs in response to positive messages, rather than negative ones (Sharot,

2012; Sharot, Riccardi, Raio & Phelps, 2007). To illustrate this, Garrett and Sharot (2017) conducted numerous studies with adults in the United Kingdom where participants were first asked to rate the likelihood of positive and negative events happening to them. Half of participants then had an “expert” tell them that they were more likely to experience positive events and less likely to experience negative events than they had rated themselves. The other half of participants were told the opposite; that they were less likely to experience positive events and more likely to experience the negative ones. Garrett and Sharot found a robust optimism bias across their three studies when participants were asked to re-adjust their estimations in light of this “expert” information; participants who were warned that they were more likely to experience negative events adjusted their own estimations significantly less than those who expected to experience more positive events.

The initial developers of PYD noted the untapped potential for programmes to make use of both biological and environmental “plasticities” inherent to being young. Lerner cites a number of well-known changes to the “self”, many of which arise as a result of puberty including cognitive, social and emotional characteristics (Atkins, Bunting, Bolger & Dougherty, 2012). Just as relevant though, he says, are various plasticities that young people experience in relation to groups of others, including “their families, peer groups, schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods, communities, society, culture, and niche in history” (Lerner, 2005, p. 8). PYD emphasises interaction and connection with these systems, in particular encouraging personal choice and reflection of who they aspire to be within them.

Combining RNR and PYD Approaches

Despite the differences highlighted above between RNR and PYD approaches, they also share a number of important similarities. For example, both RNR and PYD prioritise client engagement and motivation. The RNR does this through the responsivity principle; which some New Zealand-based researchers argue is especially important for treatment engagement in New Zealand’s youth (Henry, Henaghan, Sanders & Munford, 2015). Similarly, PYD emphasises the youth mentoring relationship as of paramount importance (Farruggia, Bullen, Davidson, Dunphy, Solomon & Collins, 2011; Rhodes, 2005). New Zealand researchers conducted a systematic review of non-forensic programmes (non-

forensic meaning those that did not *only* focus on reducing offending), and concluded that “mutual trust and respect” between staff and clients was “the most effective influence on the young people” (Fouché, Elliott, Mundy-McPherson, Jordan & Bingham, 2010, p. 18).

Identity change is also an extremely important goal held by both PYD and RNR approaches. New Zealand’s Youth Development Strategy explicitly states a goal of “feeling positive and comfortable with their own identity” (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002, p. 15). Similarly, the RNR identifies “pro-criminal attitudes” as one of the central eight criminogenic needs (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). Both aim to develop a prosocial identity based on research suggesting that young people’s internal identities shape their responses to aggravation, temptation, peer pressure, poverty and other life stressors (Maruna, 2001; Maruna & Roy, 2007). More recently McMahan and Jump (2018) followed 21 “high risk” English youth between the ages of 13-17 for six months, and found through a series of interviews that participants who desisted often made statements such as “I’m a family man now”. They concluded that changes in “identity”, “self-narrative” and “mindset” (used by McMahan and Jump interchangeably) were “a necessary if not sufficient condition for an individual to be able to desist from crime” (p. 154). Research in both the youth mentoring and youth offending fields continue to hold the difficult dialectic between acknowledgement of perpetuating socio-structural factors whilst also encouraging change of internal factors such as identities and self-narratives (Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph, 2002; LeBel, Burnett, Maruna & Bushway, 2008; Nugent & Schinkel, 2016; Patternoster & Bushway, 2009).

In New Zealand there are a number of legislative reasons why RNR and PYD approaches often intersect. The Youth Offending Strategy (Te Haonga, 2002) for example, recognises a need to both continue identifying low, medium and high-risk young people and allocating resources to target unique risk factors between these groups. Importantly though, it also emphasises prevention (i.e., interventions that target young people who have not yet offended), mentoring strategies, connection with whānau and community networks, strengthening protective factors and promoting “the healthy development and socialisation of children and young people” (Te Haonga, 2002, p. 28). The intersection between PYD and traditional forensic models is further represented in New Zealand’s youth justice laws. The Oranga Tamariki Act of 1989 has been described as having a unique focus on not only holding young people responsible for their (at times antisocial) actions,

but also improving their own quality of life. Research in New Zealand has similarly identified that effective interventions are those that balance accountability and wellbeing of YWHO (Henry et al., 2015). This balance is observed in the Act's direction that the "least restrictive" form of sanctions be imposed on YWHO (section 208), and its preference for young people to complete mentoring programmes up to 12 months in length when a "more restrictive" supervision response is deemed inappropriate (Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, sections 208, 238).

Programme Evaluation

Given the New Zealand government's increasing reliance on programmes designed for YWHO, a number of experts in the field have called for them to be subject to ongoing evaluation to prove their effectiveness (Gluckman, Low & Bay, 2011; Lambie & Gluckman, 2018; Sinclair, 2013). Evaluations in New Zealand and abroad have been found lacking in methodological consistency, clarity and quality (Farruggia et al., 2011; Fouché et al., 2010; Prior & Mason, 2010), which Fouché and colleagues suggest may stem from logistical challenges of monitoring outcomes, as well as difficulties defining and measuring indicators of "effective youth work". Among other things, Farruggia and colleagues (2011) discovered that a history of programme evaluation correlated with programme effectiveness, which simply emphasises the importance of evaluation.

While there are countless different evaluation methodologies (see Posavac, 2015 for a more extensive overview), the Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) is considered by many to be the "gold standard" for its ability to causally infer whether a programme is "effective" or not (Lipsey & Cordray, 2000; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The dominance of the RCT stems from the belief that the best way to get valuable information is from traditional scientific methods including discrete, objective measurement. The RCT is considered a "method-driven evaluation" because it uses the methodology itself to guide the intervention design. At a basic level this firstly involves determining one or more outcome variables that are understood as measuring the effectiveness of the programme. A set number of participants are then gathered and randomly assigned to either the experimental or control programme (although sometimes the experimental programme is compared against a group who complete no programme). All participants then complete

their assigned programmes, and any other predetermined measures of “effectiveness”. Differences in outcome variables between these two groups are then statistically analysed. The question that RCTs for youth justice programmes usually aim to answer is “are young people who complete the programme of interest statistically less likely to reoffend than those in the control programme?”

RCTs and method-driven forms of evaluation in general have several criticisms. One of these is the rigidity of their structure, which focuses on measuring a limited number of specific quantitative outcomes between programmes while glossing over more diverse and nuanced outcomes (Chen, 1990; Royse, Thyer & Padgett, 2015). Another is that there is often little involvement with key stakeholders, which many claim is paramount to both getting full cooperation and having a nuanced understanding of how the programme works and what it aims to achieve (Hall & Hall, 2004; Patton, 2008). Some also argue that despite many RCTs discovering no statistical effect of the programme, practitioners and evaluators often report observing subtle results (House, 1993; Patton, 2008). This discrepancy between measured and observed success may stem from RCT’s “black box” philosophy, which places primary importance on the question: “does X affect Y?” while either assuming knowledge of or having no interest in the answer to the question: “*how* does X affect Y?”; or in other words, “what happens between X and Y?”. Patton (2008) suggests that it is unhelpful to reduce the performance of complex programmes down to a few specific performance indicators that do not capture this complexity.

Those more interested in the investigative *how* and *why* questions tend to use a different form of evaluation; one that is “theory-driven” rather than method-driven. Theory-driven evaluation places an emphasis on trying to understand how a programme produces results by investigating what processes are occurring within the mysterious “black box” (Chen, 2014); appropriately, they are also referred to as “white box” methodologies. Izzo and Ross (1990) found through a meta-analysis that rehabilitation programmes for YWHO that placed an importance on understanding and adhering to a programme theory were on average five times more likely to have positive outcomes. Many advocate that understanding a programme’s theoretical processes is also an important first step for measuring a programme’s “integrity”; the degree to which programme theory is being operationalised.

The Theory of Change Methodology

The *Theory of Change* methodology of programme evaluation, as outlined by Kelsey Deane and her colleagues, utilises the advantages of both theory-driven and method-driven approaches by having two “phases” (Deane, 2012; Deane & Harré, 2014; Wilder & Deane, 2017). The first phase involves utilising theory-driven methodology to ask key stakeholders how they believe their programme creates change. This Theory of Change can then be used to guide method-driven analyses in phase 2, which can include RCTs but also often involves other means of measurement. In short, phase 1 aims to produce a theory of how a programme works, before phase 2 then investigates the extent to which data support this (Clinks, 2014; Deane & Harré, 2014; Rogers & Weiss, 2007). The development of such methodologies arose from “concerted attempts to address both the problem of black box evaluations endemic to the earliest approaches while also redressing the reputation that the utilisation-focused approaches of the second stage lack scientific rigor” (Deane, 2012, p. 115; Shadish, Cook & Leviton, 1991).

There are several general advantages of using the proposed Theory of Change methodology. Many researchers argue that the creation of a “logic model” should be the first phase of any programme or evaluation, especially those funded by public institutions (Gluckman & Hayne, 2011; Royse, Thyer & Padgett, 2015). Phase 1 of the Theory of Change methodology involves precisely this; it asks a range of individuals to produce a detailed stepwise depiction of how its actions or activities help achieve short-term and long-term goals. While other logic model methodologies have been criticised for being unrealistically linear and simplistic (Rogers & Weiss, 2007), Deane’s more detailed Theory of Change process can uncover “gaps” in a theory that had previously gone unnoticed. For example, programme management may have noticed that ensuring a structured morning exercise regimen tends to help young people have better “behaviour” during the day, but not know why. A Theory of Change methodology creates a framework where a number of hypotheses (e.g., “it wears them out”, “it helps them practice emotion regulation”) can be established and tested. Knowing the answer to these *how* questions can be beneficial; if, for the above example the answer is “it increases self-efficacy, which reduces bullying”, steps can be taken to emphasise the self-efficacy component to boxing and further increasing its effectiveness. Identifying goals of critical importance can also help determine

whether sufficient resources are being allocated to actions or activities that help achieve these goals.

Meticulously breaking down the programme into its constituent parts has also been given credit for helping programmes be more sensitive to the changing needs of their clientele (Donaldson, 2012). It does this by showing where resources should be directed according to client's stages of development or progression through the programme. For example, a new client and a client looking to transition smoothly out of the programme will likely have different short-term goals, and therefore are likely to benefit from different activities. A Theory of Change might suggest placing an emphasis on teaching new clients prosocial learning skills, while giving soon-to-graduate clients opportunities to practice and generalise these skills within their communities. Interviewing a variety of key informants, including programme management and clients, is also highly valuable. Firstly, involving YWHO in the research process who, in New Zealand are largely of Māori whakapapa, is a means of embodying the "participation" and "partnership" elements of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2002). Secondly, interviewing different roles may uncover unexpected differences between management's goals and actions compared to those of mentors or clients. These differences may reveal a more accurate representation of the way the programme is actually being implemented (as opposed to how management believe it is being implemented), compared to when only management is consulted (Deane, 2012; Donaldson, 2012). Some of the unexpected theories generated by clients and youth workers may even alert programme staff to new elements or goals worthy of being more formally embraced. Thirdly, interviewing more than just one group of stakeholders empowers all parties to take ownership of the programme and invest in the evaluation, potentially increasing the likelihood that findings will be implemented from all groups (Donaldson, 2012; Gugiu & Rodríguez-Campos, 2007; Kaplan & Garrett, 2005).

MYND

In 2018 I was asked to evaluate a programme for YWHO named *MYND* (originally "Mentoring Youth New Direction", however programme developers asked for it to be referred to as "MYND"). The following history and description of MYND is based on information obtained in 2-3 initial conversations with two members of MYND

management, as well as descriptive documents I was given at the time. This description is a “bare bones” one, since describing MYND’s components is an important part of the current evaluation and will be done in the results section.

Briefly summarising its history and structure, MYND was independently founded in 2001 out of a need for restorative programmes in the youth justice sector in New Zealand, working in partnership with government agencies and communities. In 2007 MYND was struggling with resourcing and programme development, leading to a proposed partnership between MYND and the *Foundation for Youth Development*. The Foundation for Youth Development was a larger charity organisation that aimed to help manage, fund and develop a range of other programmes for thousands of young New Zealanders each year. In 2016 the Foundation for Youth Development was renamed to the *Graeme Dingle Foundation*, and since then continued to support five separate programmes provided to over 27,000 young New Zealanders each year.

At the beginning of the current research project MYND was the smallest of the Graeme Dingle Foundation’s five programmes. Per-year MYND aimed to work with 20-30 male clients between the ages of 14-17 who had histories of offending (of a variety in nature) and who had been identified as at high-risk of reoffending in the future. MYND’s broad goal was “creating attitudinal and behaviour change”, although as stated above its more specific goals will be examined as part of the project (MYND Description of Services, 2019). Clients were referred by Oranga Tamariki, usually as a result of a supervision order or a court ordered Family Group Conference plan. MYND matched each client with one of eight youth workers, who over the course of the programme were required to develop strong mentoring relationships with each of their clients. From Monday to Thursday, youth workers delivered “life skills” lessons in 1 of 19 modules spread across five themes (Identity Development, Self-Management, Health, Problem Solving, Social Skills). Life skills lessons were taught in community settings including parks, libraries and gyms. The standard programme duration was six months.

MYND’s Manager Stephen Boxer and the Graeme Dingle Foundation’s Research and Evaluation Manager Julie Moore together highlighted the need for the programme to be evaluated, which aligned with the Graeme Dingle Foundation’s use of evaluation as a “key strategic driver” (Graeme Dingle Foundation, 2019). This process was overdue given MYND had undergone a number of structural and programme-delivery changes in recent

years. More broadly, an evaluation of MYND, which appeared to be a fairly unique programme in New Zealand, may add valuable research to the growing youth rehabilitation literature-base in New Zealand and afar. The revealed successes (and shortcomings) of MYND may therefore indirectly contribute toward the successes of youth interventions in the future. In reflection of the need for the proliferation of effective cognitive-behavioural based youth intervention in New Zealand (Ministry of Justice, 2016), Gluckman and Lambie (2018b) suggest the possibility of “scaling up” those that have already been found to be effective. While this is not currently an aim of MYND, an evaluation that leaves MYND on a path to small scale success may allow the option of larger scale success in the future, should MYND choose to do this.

Theory of Change: a Good Fit for MYND

There were a number of benefits of using the Theory of Change methodology to evaluate MYND. In a report prepared for New Zealand’s Prime Minister, Gluckman and Hayne (2011) suggest that young, small scale programmes with a relatively narrow scope first need to establish a Theory of Change before moving onto evaluative methods that seek to prove causality (such as RCTs; Gluckman & Lambie, 2018b). Indeed, such evaluations have already been found beneficial for a range of programmes for at-risk youth in New Zealand (Centre for Child and Family Policy Research, 2005; Deane, 2012; Dosmukhambetova, 2016; Kapiti Youth Support, 2013; Malatest International, 2016; Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit, 2016). Past research conducted with the Graeme Dingle Foundation has included the creation of Theories of Change, including for the Kiwi Can, Project K and Career Navigator programmes (Foundation for Youth Development, 2014; Wilder & Deane, 2017). The success of these evaluations led to recommendations that the Graeme Dingle Foundation use the Theory of Change methodology to guide evaluations in the future (Wilder & Deane, 2017). The resulting familiarity that the MYND Manager and Graeme Dingle Foundation research team have with the Theory of Change process may translate into a more streamlined data gathering process.

The Theory of Change methodology also appeared to be compatible with the specific research aims outlined by MYND’s Manager and the Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Manager. Their core interest was to discover if MYND was

effective at reducing client's risk of offending, however given the complexity of MYND they also wanted to know what MYND was doing well and not well, so that this more detailed information could be used to help keep MYND aligned with best practice. The Manager emphasised wanting to know how individual elements of MYND contribute to outcomes for the young people who go through the programme, which as noted above is a key strength of "white box" methodologies such as the Theory of Change. MYND's Manager and the Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Manager also noted an interest in assessing progress over time by conducting more regular evaluations, which the Theory of Change process is highly suited to (Gugiu & Rodríguez-Campos, 2007; Research to Action, 2015) in its ability to "provide direction for future evaluative activities" (Deane, 2012, p. 159). Given the above strengths of the Theory of Change and the degree to which it appeared to specifically meet MYND's needs, all parties agreed that this methodology would be a good fit.

In addition to benefitting MYND, the uniqueness of the programme means the study will also make valuable contributions to a wider body of literature exploring progressive means of rehabilitating young people who have offended. It may give insights into questions that are difficult to answer for programmes that focus on *either* youth development *or* reducing youth reoffending. What lessons can be learnt from community-based rehabilitation? Is it possible to combine theoretical models from the youth work and youth justice fields? Is it possible to balance the goals of reducing reoffending in young people while also helping them flourish as young adults? There is little research addressing these questions, and the MYND programme provides a valuable opportunity to contribute to them.

Section 2: Methods, Analysis and Results

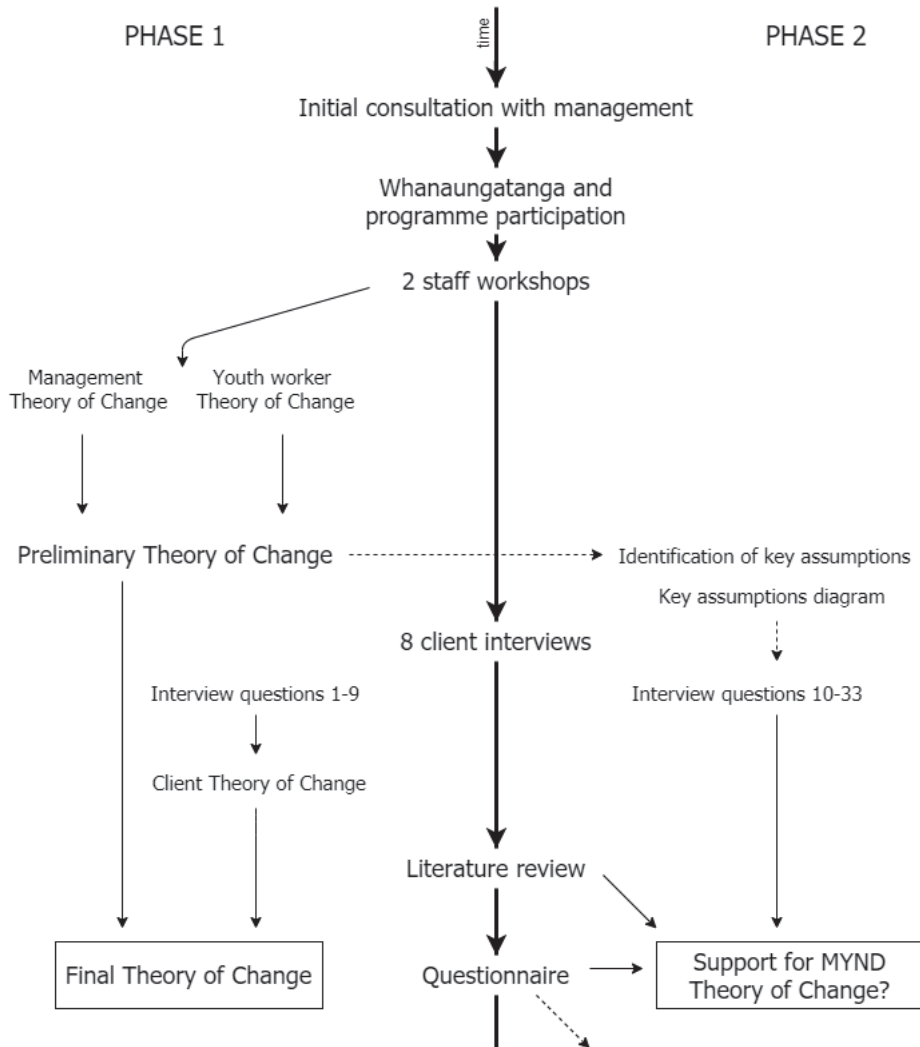
Procedure Overview

The current programme evaluation loosely followed Deane's Theory of Change methodology (Deane, 2012), which is based on the "theory-driven approach" and the broad family of logic modelling analyses that stemmed from it (see Donaldson, 2012; Shadish et al., 1991; Weiss, 1997). Following a period of initial consultation and whanaungatanga, I began the first of two phases. The goal of phase 1 was to create the programme logic model (henceforth referred to as the MYND Theory of Change). This was generated primarily from the perspectives of MYND staff through two workshops, but was also refined later in the study to reflect new data from MYND clients. Phase 2 intended to investigate the accuracy of the Theory of Change generated in phase 1, specifically by focusing on 12 key assumptions made by the Theory. Two methods were used to estimate the "truth" of these assumptions: semi-structured interviews with eight MYND clients, and a comparison of these assumptions with what is found in the extant literature. Phase 2 also involved the initial design stages of a questionnaire that could be repeatedly administered to clients at intake, graduation and follow-up to quantitatively track goals. This component of Phase 2 is primarily covered in the future directions section. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of the methods and the ways these interact across the timeline of the evaluation.

The following section begins with a discussion of researcher reflexivity, as well as the ontology and epistemology used throughout the research process. The section then reports and explains the initial relationship-building stage before moving into phase 1 and 2 of the Theory of Change methodology. The participant pool, procedure, analysis and findings for each phase are described in the order that they were carried out. Combining these three traditionally separate sections was necessary due to the non-linear nature of the data collection and analysis. Data from phase 1 for example required analysis before beginning phase 2, and some data and analyses in phase 2 also fed back into phase 1 results. Key meetings and other consultation with MYND stakeholders are included for the sake of clarity about when key decisions were made and by whom.

Figure 1

Timeline of the Mixed Methods Research Project



Research Approach

Reflexivity

Given the widespread understanding that there is no “non-subjective research”, it is a researcher’s duty to be aware of their impact on all parts of the research process.

Reflexivity, as it is termed, is the attempt to stay aware of one’s various experiences and identities throughout the research process, paying particular attention to how they may

affect participant's safety, as well as the quality of research produced (Bott, 2010). These contrasting identities can create the impression of the researcher as "the other" (Bott, 2010), which may make relating, and therefore forming a trusting relationship with the researcher, difficult. The following section will therefore be an attempt to "out" myself, as Linda Finlay (2002) describes, to show my understanding of my position in this research. Following Finlay's guidance, I will address three important parts of reflexivity; how the above identities influence a) my own subjective responses, b) intersubjective dynamics, and c) the research process itself.

Subjective Responses.

I am a Pākehā male in my late twenties, with a university education. I was raised in semi-rural west Auckland in a working-class household, and have no personal experience with domestic violence, poverty or racism. Some of these identities stand in contrast to those of many participants in the current research project; clients and staff alike. Despite the above differences, I have worked almost exclusively with Māori and Pasifika youth and staff over the last six years which I believe has allowed me to peripherally learn something of what it means to come from these cultures. Working with YWHO has also given me a "useful" degree of skepticism regarding the truthfulness of what YWHO tell me. Wertz (1984) highlights the need to be careful of how such biases can conceivably lead to "omissions or fabrications" of data. This skeptical attitude was therefore something that I had to be mindful of, especially given the obvious conflict between my skepticism and the expectation that a qualitative researcher listens with "openness and wonder" (Finlay, 2002, p. 536). My goal then, was to remain a "naive enquirer" throughout.

Intersubjective Dynamics.

Another part of reflexivity involves being aware of how my presence may impact participant's behaviour, which can have reverberating effects on my own behaviour as well as on data collection. One related point to consider is who (or what) I may represent to young people beyond "a researcher". Indeed, clients often casually compared me with other white men they had interacted with but had negative experiences with, such as police officers, school teachers and lawyers ("you're all right for a white boy"). Having yet another person fitting this description who is trying to elicit potentially incriminating or

sensitive information may to them have felt like yet another unpleasant interview with an institution. This dynamic was important to avoid, both in the interests of maintaining honest and accurate information, but also on an ethical level. As PYD researchers highlight, the relational “plasticities” of this age group means clients’ interactions with me could shape future interactions they have with other white men or “institutions”. Negative experiences with me could result in perpetuation of unhelpful relational cycles and future disengagement with systems, while positive ones may challenge unhelpful biases, instill trust in authority figures and (hopefully) lead to more positive outcomes for clients. It was for these reasons that I prioritised rapport throughout every interaction with YWHO.

There were a number of ways that I tried to prioritise rapport. I remained extra attentive to cues that they were disengaging, and by offering frequent breaks so that participants did not feel that I was “pushing” them. I also offered occasional lighthearted conversation and humour to break tension, allow participants to feel more comfortable, and by doing so minimise power imbalances (Finlay, 2002). When participants appeared to not understand a question or produced a superficial or vague response, I would occasionally offer an example (e.g., “some key life skills are things like communication, anger management... things like those, you know?”). At other times when they appeared embarrassed or disengaging, I would move on without an answer. While admittedly these last two interactions may have interrupted slower thinkers or potentially influenced client’s responses, my past experience taught me that rapport with was easy to lose if they felt embarrassed or investigated, and therefore that rapport needed to be prioritised.

Research Process.

I decided to write this thesis from a first-person perspective as another means of being reflexive, as it reminds the reader of my own subjectivity throughout the research process.

I also adopted various strategies into the research process itself to minimise the “other” identity that I may hold in the eyes of MYND clients. Again, one overarching theme was ensuring that the research process facilitated trust-building between myself and participants, which required particularly close attention to ethical guidelines (Cunliffe, Luhman & Boje, 2004). Specifically, this meant being extremely transparent about

confidentiality and its limits to avoid any possibility that I would have to break this (McLaren, 2007).

Another cornerstone of building trust, according to Bott (2010) is reciprocity. Before the workshops and interviews began, I had usually met the young person on one of the days that I had participated in MYND programming. I also usually spent between five and 15 minutes at the beginning of the interview offering some information about myself (e.g., my name, where I grew up, my work experience in organisations that they had often been involved with), with the intention of finding shared identities or experiences. In the New Zealand context this is known as *whakawhanaungatanga*; “the process of establishing relationships and relating well to others” (The Māori Dictionary, 2011).

Whakawhanaungatanga is an expectation for many Māori (and non-Māori) in New Zealand, making it potentially important for the many Māori research participants.

In the interest of thinking about reflexivity as an ongoing process rather than a one-off achievement, I attempted to continually reflect on each workshop and interview afterward. Common questions I asked myself included “what went well and not well?”, “did they appear comfortable?”, “were they being genuine?” While Finlay (2002) rightly points out that reflection in hindsight is not the same as reflexivity, which she defines as “a more immediate, continuing dynamic” (p. 533), I used reflection to build my ability to respond more reflexively during future workshops and interviews.

Finally, in addition to data collection, Wertz (1984) brought attention to personal and contextual factors that influence the more “macro” parts of research. The MYND organisation and its key stakeholders from which it either received funding or answered to in some way (such as the Graeme Dingle Foundation and Oranga Tamariki), had a significant influence over the research process. In terms of perspectives addressed as part of the methodology, I was interested in the viewpoints of all parties but the MYND Manager’s perspective was one in which I had a disproportionate interest in. This is because as the creator and director of the programme, he a) knew the history, core values and structures of the programme best, and b) required evaluation processes and outcomes to be relevant and useful, if they were to be utilised. He therefore played a significant role in processes such as finalising the visual representation of the Theory of Change and selecting the measures to include in the questionnaire. All of this is explicit in the thesis sections to follow.

Finally, the mixed methods nature of the current research aligned with the expectations of MYND and the Graeme Dingle Foundation in relation to research outcomes. However my own and my primary supervisor's experience with mixed-methods likely also contributed to the methodological decisions made. The next section discusses these methodological decisions and assumptions.

Ontology and Epistemology – Critical realism

This evaluation prescribes to the philosophical position of critical realism. Critical realism asserts that there are underlying “truths” about how the world and the people within it function. However, the critical realist also acknowledges that what we observe cannot be a direct reflection of these truths due to our subjective human perspectives, identities, biases and experiences. Critical realism is influenced by two other philosophies; ontological realism and epistemic relativism (Archer et al., 2016). Ontological realism claims that there is such a thing as objective truth and that information can be reliably and objectively gathered through sensory experiences. Realism is therefore often bound up in attempting to quantitatively “prove” that what is observed is the objective truth. Traditionally, programme evaluation has followed many of these realist assumptions (Ross, Ellipse & Freeman, 2004). Indeed, the current evaluation assumes that there is a “truth” for how the programme operates, and attempts to use realist methods such as statistical analyses to find objective “proof” of this reality.

The “critical” part of critical realism stems from broader philosophical ideas of the 1970s and 80s such as subjectivism and social constructionism, which states that all meaning and truth is *constructed* (by us) through shared experiences of reality (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). Critical realism agrees that while the truth exists, all attempts to describe or measure this are done through subjective *re*-presentation; that is through a lens of subjective experience. Critical realists depart from social constructionists and subjectivists in their belief that an objective “truth” does indeed exist independently of our awareness, but aligns with them in claiming that we can only ever examine experiences for approximations of truth. As a critical realist researcher, the onus becomes capturing as many perspectives as possible (MYND management, youth workers and clients) and using a

variety of methods (workshops, interviews, literature review, questionnaire) in the hope of finding the *best approximations* of truth.

The Theory of Change methodology fits well with the critical realist philosophy in the sense that it acknowledges that every client's experience of and response to the programme is different. However, the methodology also asserts that by exploring a range of different perspectives and methods it can find a version of what is true for *most* clients and use this information to provide a service that benefits the majority, while also remaining responsive to each client's unique needs.

Ethical Considerations

Given the vulnerability of MYND clients, ample attention was paid to ethical issues when recruiting and interviewing participants. Perhaps the most obvious ethical issue was that clients were not able to consent due to their age, and therefore required consent from a parent as well as give their own assent. Youth workers discretely approached potential interview participants who had participated in MYND for at least three months as this ensured they had a good understanding of the programme. Youth workers first reminded the client of who I was (most had already met me) and that I wanted to speak with some clients about their experiences of the programme. Youth workers also stated that participation is voluntary and would not impact their relationship with MYND, that what we talk about will be private (including from the youth worker giving them this information), and that they would receive two movie tickets as a "thank you" for their time. Clients were given a participant information sheet to read and share with a parent or guardian, an assent form indicating their own desire to participate, as well as a consent form that needed to be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to their youth worker.

Deciding to offer participants two cinema tickets as koha raises another ethical query about the potential for this to be viewed as more than a token of appreciation and perhaps a means of coercion. Youth researchers underline the importance of considering this in every study, but assert that incentives can be offered ethically if they are proportional to the time and effort exerted by participants, if extrinsic incentives are balanced with an intrinsic desire to contribute to the research, and if researchers emphasise the voluntary aspect of the research (Seymour, 2012). A discussion with MYND

management concluded that the cinema tickets were proportional to the time away from their usual routine. I expressed a lot of gratitude to participants and outlined the ways that their contributions may impact the future of the programme in order to increase their intrinsic motivation to participate. Furthermore, I stressed the voluntary element of participation by reinforcing that they could stop at any point and would still receive the koha.

Another ethical consideration relates to the cultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand, where Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) provides a number of principles that underlie the ways in which Māori interact with non-Māori (especially those in positions of power). The Treaty was important to consider in the current research given five of the eight MYND clients interviewed were Māori. Based on recent Waitangi Tribunal reports, Kendra Beri (2019) makes a number of recommendations for how to interpret and incorporate principles of Te Tiriti into organisations, which I attempted to follow. The first of these concerns *tino rangatiratanga*, which guarantees Māori the right to represent themselves how they see fit and grants protection over their autonomy and self-determination. This principle was well aligned with the power-sharing ethos maintained through the research, which could be seen as clients never being asked to represent themselves in a particular way and being able to ask questions or withdraw at any time. The second of these principles requires a *partnership* between Māori and non-Māori, and to involve Māori in all levels of decision-making. Indeed, the importance of what Māori clients had to say was of paramount importance to this project and was intended to empower clients to “have a say” in how the future of MYND was shaped. The third principle concerns the right of *equity* and equal outcomes for Māori. MYND attempts to address this in the very nature of running a programme which works with these marginalised populations, as well as in their commitment to improving the programme. I was aware of this in choosing to work with MYND.

Te Tiriti also informed *how* the above were carried out on an interpersonal level to ensure clients’ cultural safety through my interactions with them (Curtis et al., 2019). This began even before interviews in the whanaungatanga process (more detail below), which among other purposes was intended to provide clients the opportunity to learn who I was on a personal level prior to the research being discussed. Interviews were opened and closed with an offer of karakia or prayer to signal that I had *some* knowledge of tikanga. I

also spent some time on whakawhanaungatanga at the beginning of interviews to try to position my identity in relation to theirs, which again aligns with tikanga but also was an opportunity for me to demonstrate my honest and non-judgemental interpersonal style. In addition to the similarities and relationships that we share, the whakawhanaungatanga process also allowed me to make explicit our cultural differences and knowledge, which I positioned as something that I would appreciate learning about from them through the interview. Interviews used an open-ended style to minimise expectations about what a “right answer” is, and to provide a space for clients to safely share whatever unique perspectives or knowledge that they wanted. In between interviews I intermittently sought cultural supervision from a senior Māori clinical psychologist at the University of Auckland to ensure that I was practicing in a culturally safe way and to provide a Māori interpretation of the data provided by clients.

Research Phases and Procedure

Initial Consultation and relationship building phase

Initially, several short, introductory meetings were created whereby I aimed to establish relationships with the staff and gain an in-depth understanding of how the MYND programme operated (both practically and the theory behind it). I also conducted e-mail and face-to-face consultation with MYND management to determine the type of evaluative information desired by the organisation, and hence decide what evaluation methodology would be the right “fit” for the needs of MYND. A mutual decision based on the above points was made to follow a Theory of Change methodology, and two weeks later MYND management were informed of the expected timeline for the evaluation.

Throughout this initial consultation period and beyond, I attended five days of standard MYND programming. This involved participating in pick-ups and drop-offs of young people, a variety of life skills lessons, and recreational activities. I also participated in one day of the MYND “adventure programme” during the holiday period, whereby all MYND staff and clients spent the day interacting with one another, as well as the final Christmas lunch with the same group. I deemed these interactions important for the sake of cultural safety (see above), but also to gather an overview of how MYND functions first-

hand as well as to lessen young people's potential anxiety about speaking to me in future interviews.

Phase 1: Theory of Change Generation

Staff Workshops

Two workshops were used to gather data from both MYND management and MYND youth workers, which would be combined to form the initial MYND Theory of Change. Workshops were structured according to the guiding questions of Wilder and Deane's (2017) series of interactive workshop sessions, but combined into one 4.5-5 hour workshop.

Workshop Participants.

Potential participants of the MYND management workshop were identified through discussions with the MYND Manager. The aim was to find 5-8 people to form a variety of perspectives of how MYND operates, which included recruiting from other organisations that interact with MYND or MYND clients as well as from MYND staff. The final list of attendees included:

- *The MYND Manager.*

As both the founder and the head of the organisation, the Manager had the most experience to offer in the organisation, and had an important managerial perspective on the programme's operation.

- *The Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Manager.*

MYND is operated through the Graeme Dingle Foundation. The Research and Evaluation Manager's role is to manage research related to the Graeme Dingle Foundation's programmes. Her perspective was also important because of her professional experience with programme evaluation, including logic modelling methodologies.

- *Two MYND Case Managers.*

MYND case managers work with one or more MYND clients regarding their progress through the course and organising their eventual transition out of MYND. As well as

knowing MYND's various frameworks and values, they brought the perspective of how MYND operates according to potential employers and education providers.

- *The MYND Senior Social Worker.*

The role of the senior social worker is to manage the referral process and act as a liaison person between MYND and its client's families. This person's perspective was valuable because of his 15+ years of experience having worked in almost every role in MYND. His involvement in the referral process and in correspondence with client's families also gave him an additional perspective.

- *An Oranga Tamariki Social Worker.*

Oranga Tamariki is one of the many organisations that interact with MYND clients before and after their participation. This person's perspective was valued for his knowledge of MYND's reputation in this larger organisation.

- *Two local police officers.*

These individuals had experience interacting with many MYND clients and their families outside of the programme and therefore had first-hand experience of how MYND influences clients and their families. These officers 10+ years of local experience also gave them a wider angle of how MYND had developed recently.

Seven MYND youth workers attended the youth worker workshop. Four of these had been working with MYND for over six months, while the remaining three were newer and had worked for MYND for six weeks to three months. Their perspective on MYND was essential firstly because they were the individuals tasked with *delivering* the programme to the clients themselves (and therefore have valuable insight on how it is received). Their perspective was also valuable because of their uniquely deep relationships with their young people, giving insight into how they change over the course of MYND.

Recruitment involved the MYND Manager sending out e-mails to all of the above individuals with a brief message about the research project, the dates, times and locations of the workshops, and the relevant participant information sheets for each group. I specifically requested that the MYND Manager clarify in all recruitment e-mails to youth workers that a) participation is voluntary, b) they can choose to withdraw at any point

without consequence, and c) and their participation and the content that they contribute will not influence their relationship with the Manager or the MYND organisation. Participants confirmed their attendance with the Manager, who then relayed this information to me.

Workshop Procedure.

The two staff workshops followed the same procedure. The broad purpose of both workshops was for each to create a separate Theory of Change as understood by each group (MYND management, MYND youth workers). These separate theories would later be combined to get a Theory of Change that represented both perspectives. As seen in the workshop schedule (Appendix A), the first 45 minutes was allotted to introductions, confidentiality and consent processes, a brief explanation of what a Theory of Change is and a plan for how this Theory will be created over the ensuing few hours.

The first theory-building exercise, conducted over 30 minutes was building MYND's "antecedent condition". The antecedent condition was defined as being the social, political and historical contexts which together create the need for the MYND programme, as well as a profile of a young person that would benefit from the MYND programme. While data from this stage was not further used nor part of the visual depiction of the Theory of Change, the antecedent condition stage was included because it ensured that I had a full picture of the MYND clientele, and because it would highlight any knowledge differences between frontline youth workers and the (slightly more removed) MYND management. No clear antecedent condition differences were observed between workshops, indicating a similar understanding of MYND clients across youth workers and MYND management.

After morning tea, 45 minutes was spent brainstorming MYND's goals. These included both long-term goals for MYND graduates (five years after graduating) as well as shorter-term goals (achieved before the end of the MYND programme). Each idea was written on card that was colour-coded according to whether it was a long-term or short-term goal. An example question to prompt the generation of long-term goals was "what is MYND's ultimate goal for its participants years after graduating MYND?". An example question to prompt the generation of short-term goals was "what are some of the smaller, more specific goals that MYND tries to achieve as clients go through the programme?" I

explicitly commented on the usefulness of having tangible, measurable goals so that workshop participants felt more involved in designing a Theory of Change that could be tested.

Figure 2

Depiction of Key Elements Being Grouped in Workshops



Note. The photo on the left taken during the MYND management workshop features groups of key elements (purple cards) and the photo on the right was taken during the MYND youth worker workshop and features groups of short and long-term goals (green and orange cards).

Another 45 minutes was then spent brainstorming MYND’s “key elements”. These were defined as anything that was an “essential” part of the MYND programme. When needed, prompts included activities, rules, interaction styles, daily habits or structures, or anything unique to MYND. Key elements were noted on another colour of card that could be separated from goals. Given the complexity of MYND and the subsequent volume of

identified key elements, participants in both workshops expressed a desire to organise key elements into groups (see Figure 2). For example, MYND youth workers arranged key elements into groups according to organisational resources (staff qualities, staff training, supervision, physical property), frameworks and structures (theoretical models, formal processes and procedures), and important parts of teaching life skills (community environment, routine, work/play balance, role modelling). In contrast, the MYND management workshop arranged key elements into programme design (inter-organisational, reputation-management, staff qualities and training, underlying theories and models, 1:3/1:4 ratio), programme delivery (life skills, advocacy by case managers, role modelling, mentoring skills, smooth transitions), and tailoring the programme to the individual (information-gathering process, individualised development plan, unique behavioural strategies, case management, individualised and fluid engagement).

Following a lunch break, the final stage of the workshops was “building a rational theory”. This first involved arranging key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals into three respective columns from left to right, before identifying *assumptions* between components in different columns. An assumption was defined as a theoretical link between a key element and a short-term goal, or between a short-term goal and a long-term goal. One example assumption identified by both workshops was that learning in a public community environment allowed MYND clients to better acquire and apply these life skills in their everyday lives. Participants identified dozens of assumptions and eventually concluded that “everything is linked to everything”. I responded by requesting that participants focus on identifying *key* assumptions that link the most important or unique elements or goals of MYND.

To conclude the workshops, I asked participants to take a moment to look at their Theory of Change, and asked them if they felt MYND had been adequately captured, which they said it did. I also listed the key assumptions identified by the group as I understood them, questioning the importance of each until each workshop had finalised a group of less than ten key assumptions. Finally, I briefly explained what was to be done with the data that had been generated. More detail about how key assumptions were further reduced and prioritised for analysis will be included later.

Workshop Analysis – Generation of the Preliminary Theory of Change.

Outcomes from each workshop were firstly digitised into two separate Theories of Change (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). Despite all being members of MYND staff, there were some noticeable differences between theories produced by MYND management and MYND youth workers. However, many of these can be explained by differences in perspectives that are inherent to each role. For example, key elements identified by MYND management appeared more organisational in nature compared to the more “service delivery” elements identified by youth workers. Youth worker’s higher emphasis on personal development goals may also reflect this role difference. Generally though, these two perspectives had significant overlap, indicating that most MYND staff had a shared understanding and vision of the programme.

Initial analysis of the workshop data aimed to combine the separate Theories of Change and the factors comprising them (factors being groups of key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals) into one diagram. In this combined diagram, factors that occurred in some form in both workshops were combined under a single heading that best described the factor group.

For example, the “staff qualities” group of key elements arose in both workshops. Management identified the following staff qualities as important key elements: engaged, passionate, energetic, resilient, patient and having firm boundaries. Youth workers identified a slightly larger list of qualities: passionate, empathetic, interested, flexible, able to make “banter” (humour), team mentality, likeable, thick-skinned and being involved. Staff qualities identified by both workshops were then combined to create the following list: passionate, energetic, resilient, patient, professional, likeable and having a team mentality.

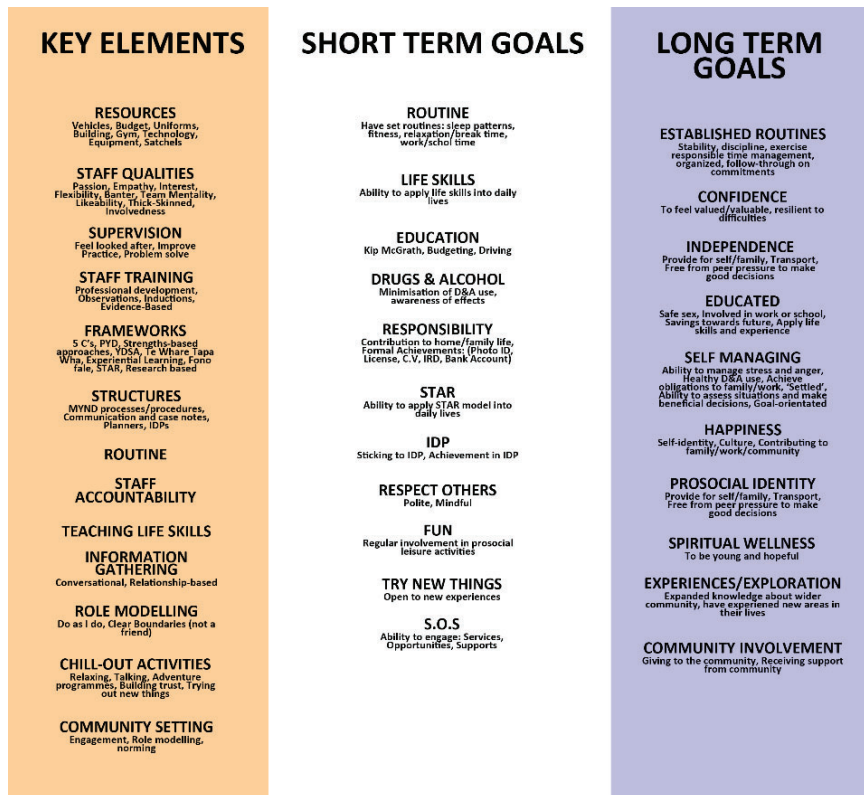
Figure 3

MYND Management Theory of Change



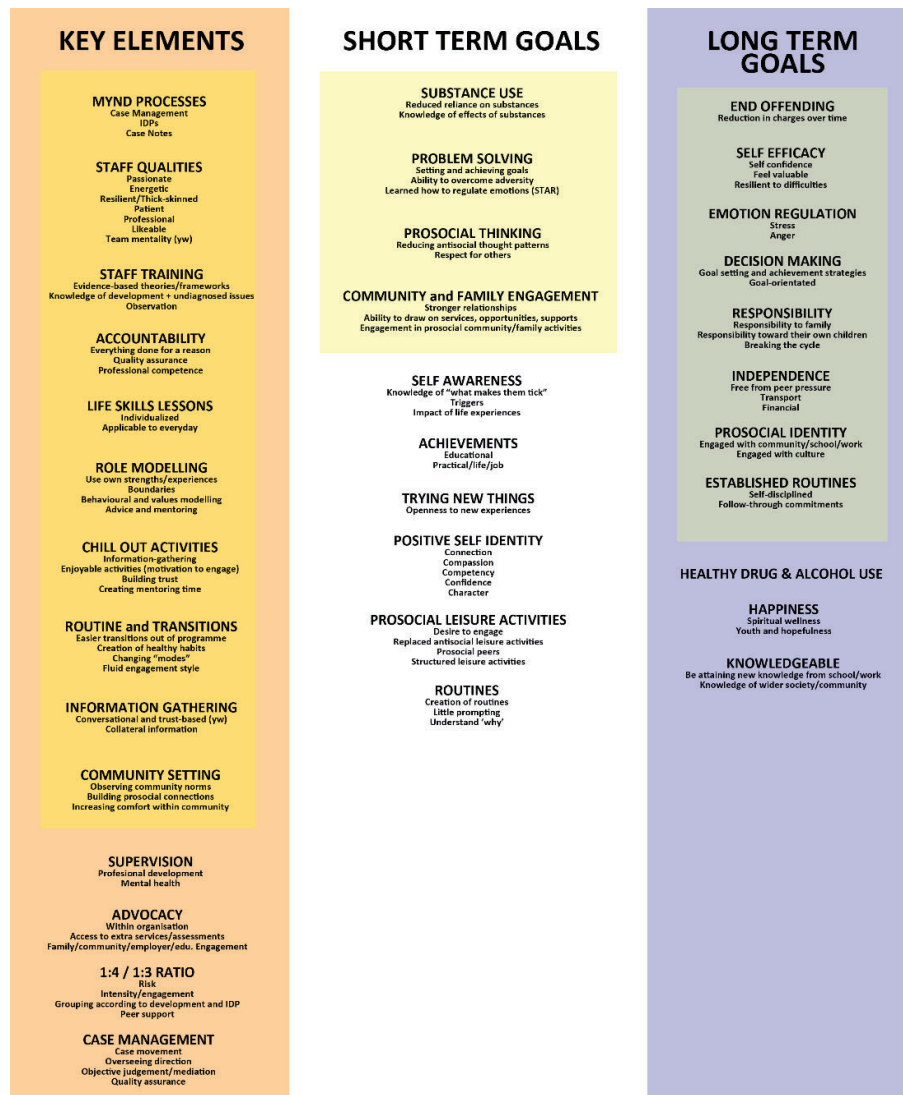
Figure 4

MYND Youth Worker Theory of Change



The preliminary Theory of Change (see Figure 5) combined the two that were produced separately by MYND management and youth workers. Common factors produced by both workshops are highlighted within yellow boxes, indicating groups of factors deemed important by all MYND staff as opposed to those that were deemed important by either management *or* youth workers.

Figure 5
Preliminary Combined Theory of Change



Note. Diagram of the preliminary Theory of Change, made from a combination of those produced by MYND management and MYND youth workers. Factors produced by both groups are within yellow boxes while those outside yellow boxes were factors unique to

one group. This proportion may be used as an indication of the degree of shared understanding of the MYND programme between youth workers and office staff.

Workshop Analysis – Generation of a Simplified Theory of Change Based on Key Assumptions.

The above preliminary Theory of Change is a complex depiction of the key elements and goals MYND, as understood by a variety of MYND staff. The next step was to simplify the MYND Theory of Change into a form that highlighted the assumptions made about the programme that needed more thorough investigation through a literature review and interviews with MYND clients (phases 1 and 2).

The MYND management workshop participants identified the following as the most important or unique assumptions held by MYND:

- Life skills lessons → life skill becoming learnt
- Life skills learnt → transferred to real life
- Life skills learnt → lower anxiety in real life
- Smooth transitions → lower anxiety in real life (safety net)
- Smooth transitions → less truancy during next stages of YPs lives
- 3:1 client/staff ratio → increase learning opportunities

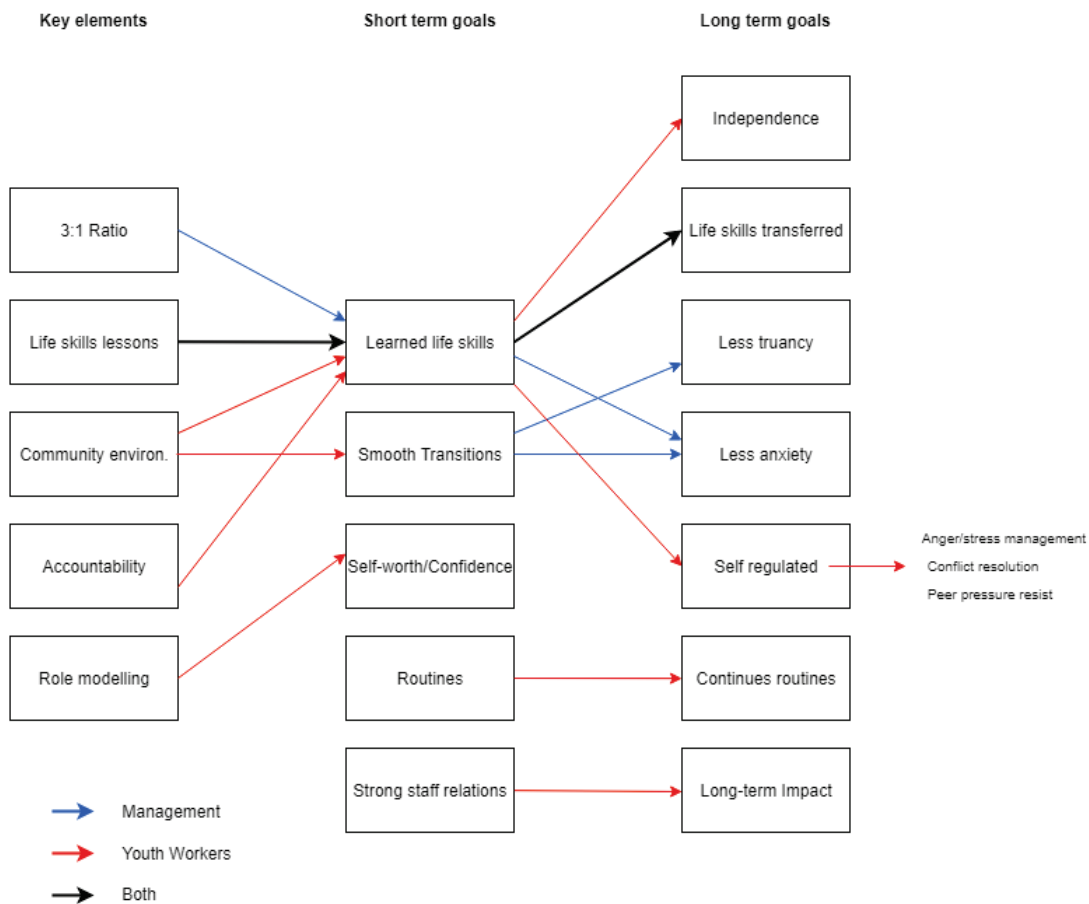
The MYND youth workers identified the following as the most important or unique assumptions held by MYND:

- Accountability of staff → better acquisition of life skills
- Role modelling respect → higher self-worth, higher confidence
- Experiential model → better acquisition of life skills
- Routines → ability to continue routines
- Community environment → pathway plan
- Community environment → better application of life skills
- Learnt life skills → independence
- Learnt life skills → self-regulated
- Strong staff relations → long-term impact

Both lists were combined into a single diagram featuring the Theory of Change’s “key assumptions” (Figure 6). Note: key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals that were not involved in one of the identified key assumptions were removed from this diagram for the sake of simplicity. They would be reintegrated later into the final Theory of Change diagram.

Figure 6

Initial Key Assumptions Diagram



Note. The list of MYND’s key assumptions were further simplified from the 14 depicted here, to 12 depicted in Figure 7.

Stakeholder Meeting 1 – Theory of Change Initial Presentation.

A meeting was arranged with The Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Manager, the MYND Manager and the MYND senior social worker. The first

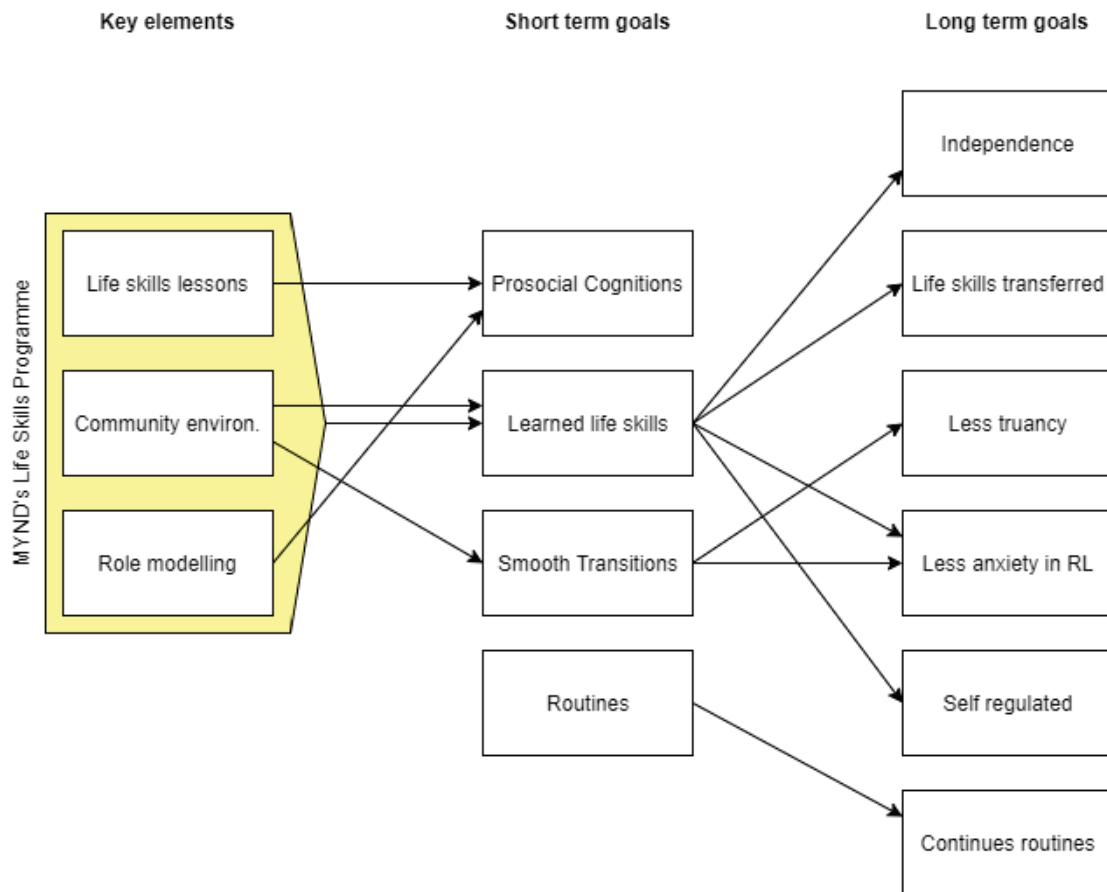
purpose of this was to present and seek feedback on the combined and simplified Theory of Change diagrams. The Manager expressed particular interest in two key assumptions: a) whether the community aspect of MYND leads to better outcomes generally, and b) whether life skills are acquired and transferred into their everyday lives. The Research and Evaluation Manager expressed some hesitation in the categorisation of life skills lessons as an independent element, since lessons were not the only provider of life skills. They suggested that I find a way to better represent this in the diagram.

Time was also spent discussing the list of key assumptions. One important change was in the specification of key elements as only things that are delivered directly to clients, or in other words, things which clients experience first-hand. This meant removing organisational and administrative processes, such as staff training and case management. Doing so was most consistent with later stages of the evaluation process that would draw largely on the personal experiences of MYND clients (client interviews and questionnaire). The “3:1 client/staff ratio” element was removed as this was also an organisational factor subject to external requirements. Other minor removals were made to simplify the Theory of Change further, and by doing so prioritise the remaining assumptions.

One addition to the Theory of Change was the short-term goal of “prosocial cognitions”. The Manager defined this as a positive, prosocial and future-focussed pattern of thinking that can also be observed in the content of client’s speech becoming less about violence, substances and criminal activity. This definition is roughly the opposite of “antisocial cognitions”; a well-researched phenomenon due to its appearance as one of the central eight criminogenic needs in Andrews and Bonta’s Risk, Needs, Responsivity model of rehabilitation for people who have offended (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). Attendees also requested that I investigate the extent to which prosocial cognitions were caused by MYND’s life skills lessons and/or role modelling by youth workers. The final list of key assumptions are depicted in Figure 7, in which each is represented by an arrow.

Figure 7

Final Key Assumptions Diagram



Note. Each of the 12 key assumptions is represented by an arrow. Since not all components of “MYND’s Life Skills Programme” could be investigated separately, some key assumptions refer the combination of lesson content, community environment and role modelling by others.

Stakeholder Meeting 2 – Client Interview Schedule.

A meeting with the Manager and two experienced MYND youth workers was organised following the above meeting. The objective of this meeting was to feed back a draft interview schedule that would be used for the next stage of research (for details on the general design of the schedule see the below section). The first set of questions were designed to generate a Theory of Change from the perspective of MYND clients. They were similar in content to those used in the prior workshops with MYND staff, and intended to

gather client's viewpoints of the antecedent condition, MYND's key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals (phase 1). The remaining questions were designed to investigate key assumptions held by the staff-generated Theory of Change, and targeted key areas such as life skills lessons, the community learning environment, transitions out of the programme, MYND's youth workers, and the establishment of routines (phase 2). Whilst designing this schedule, effort was made to create simple, non-leading questions, as well as word them creatively to keep clients engaged with the interview process.

Youth workers read through the interview schedule together, making changes to some questions in the interests of client comprehension. Youth workers and the Manager also stressed the paramount importance of making clients feel comfortable and enabling them to speak honestly. Suggestions stemming from this conversation included taking my time to establish rapport, taking half-time breaks to take a walk, and offer them something to eat or drink.

MYND Client Interviews

Structured client interviews were conducted, the data of which contributed to both phases of the current evaluation. The first two questions intended to gather a brief history of the client's offending ("when did you start getting into trouble" and "what made you choose MYND"). Questions 3-9 were designed to capture a version of the MYND Theory of Change from the perspective of clients, and thus are referred to as phase 1 questions. Comparing the client Theory of Change to the staff one would help shed light on a) ways in which staff and clients were not seeing eye-to-eye (e.g., mutual goals), b) key elements that are very important to clients but overlooked by staff; c) key elements that clients think are unimportant or ineffective. This data would be later interwoven with data from staff workshops (the preliminary Theory of Change), combining to form the final Theory of Change.

The remaining 33 questions were designed primarily to investigate the key assumptions identified in the different perspectives. These questions, and the way their responses were analysed are discussed more in depth during the phase 2 interview analysis. A minority of questions spread throughout both phases were used to gather more

general feedback about the MYND programme in several areas. See Appendix B for the final interview schedule.

Interview Participants.

Nine MYND clients responded to the offer of participation by MYND youth workers. Of these, eight remained interested in participating after the initial expression of interest and all of these eight individuals were interviewed. All clients were male and between 14 and 17 years old. Five identified as being Māori, two as Pasifika and one as New Zealand European.

Interview Procedure.

Interviews were conducted during MYND programme time, and in order to cause minimal disruption to MYND programming were organised primarily through client's youth workers. The general location of interviews therefore varied depending on where the scheduled activity was for that day. Interviews were conducted privately and where possible in a quiet area with few distractions.

Interviews were opened with an offer of karakia or prayer. The first few minutes were for introductions (or re-introductions), rapport building and another explanation of confidentiality as well as instances when I would need to break confidentiality (e.g., if they disclosed anything that indicated that they or someone else was in danger). Participants were then asked to sign an assent form in addition to the consent form that they had already given to their youth workers.

Five to ten minutes were spent on the first two questions, which were concerned with learning about the client's offending history and introduction to MYND. Questions 3-9, which took about 20 minutes were concerned with building a client Theory of Change and were grouped into three topics: key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals. Questions were modelled off those used during workshops for the sake of consistency, although wording was simplified in the interests of client comprehension.

Part two of the interview took approximately 35-40 minutes and consisted of 33 questions across five generalised topics. These were life skills (questions 10-19), the community learning environment (questions 20-27), youth workers (questions 28-35), routines (questions 36-37) and prosocial cognitions and values (questions 38-42). The

purpose of these questions was primarily to investigate client's perspectives as evidence for or against key assumptions identified in the preliminary Theory of Change (this contributed to phase 2). Effort was made to give clients the opportunity to openly share their general opinions about topics in each assumption by first asking questions vaguely relating to each assumption, before narrowing down on the specific assumption. For example, to explore the assumption that life skills lessons teach practical conflict resolution skills I asked the following questions:

Do you know what conflict is?

When you used to have conflict with others before MYND, what did you say or do?

What do you do differently now?

Why?

This questioning method was used to minimise the number of complex questions, and to make the interview seem more like a natural conversation (a point that was stressed by youth workers) thereby keeping clients engaged with the interview process. Participants were given two movie tickets as koha for their time and openness. See Appendix B for the full interview schedule.

Interview Thematic Analysis.

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines a process of thematic analysis was followed. Thematic analysis of responses to phase 1 questions were used to describe a common Theory of Change as experienced by MYND clients. Analysis of phase 2 questions in this same way was also later used to find common types of experiences described by MYND clients, which in turn would help provide evidence for or against key assumptions. A more thorough discussion of the type of thematic analysis used in the current research and why (theoretical, essentialist) can be found in the appendices.

Interviews were transcribed and I familiarised myself with the data by reading through each at least twice. I then summarised every response under each question into as few words as possible, a process that reflects Braun and Clarke's (2006) second "coding" phase of thematic analysis. For example, question 4 was *"if you were your youth worker, what are three things you would teach your boys?"* Participant eight's response was *"... get their shit together while they can coz even though they've stuffed up, there's always time*

to turn that around... so encourage them to get a job and if they don't want to, encourage them to do something they want to", which was summarised as "encouragement to pursue goals". In some cases, multiple responses could be easily coded with the same language. This can be seen in responses to a question about goals, which included "finding work", "getting a job" and "finding employment". When clients offered multiple responses to a single question, responses were each coded individually. Conversely, some questions did not contain answers from all eight participants due to client fatigue, disengagement or not understanding the question. For such questions, the summary of participant's answers is reported as though there were only seven participants.

Aligning with phase 3 onwards of Braun and Clarke's (2006) methodology, coded responses to each interview question were then grouped together according to whether they appeared to share a common theme. Due to the theoretical, rather than inductive nature of this thematic analysis, the grouping process was influenced by the questions themselves, as well as the knowledge that I would later need to apply these groups of responses to key assumptions. Data was coded to fit with specific questions, even if responses were not directly stated in the anticipated form (e.g., personal stories that I felt clearly illustrated improvement in a domain were coded as such). I held a cautious approach to interpreting client's responses and applying them to questions, excluding responses that I felt did not clearly answer the question.

Additional Interview Analysis – Generating the Client Theory of Change.

Using the above methodology, separate thematic analyses were applied to all questions. The following section details the additional analyses conducted on the phase 1 questions in order to generate the client Theory of Change.

All responses were first categorised by question using the programme NVivo, meaning each question had groups of the most common answers. Key elements in the client Theory of Change were generated from the groups of responses from questions 3 ("what three things would you remember most about MYND?") and 4 ("what three things would you teach your boys if you were your youth worker?"). This was one area where I exercised flexibility because initially only question 3 was intended for this. This decision was made in light of the large amount of perceived overlap in coded responses to questions 3 and 4, as well as the conceptual similarity to clients between parts of MYND

that are most memorable (question 3) and parts of MYND that are most important (question 4). I decided to categorise the key elements generated by clients into either “staff contributions” or “activities”.

Another area where flexibility was exercised was in the way responses to question 5 (“what would you change about MYND?”) were analysed and integrated into the final Theory of Change. The most common initial response was that there was nothing or very little that they would change. When I pressed them for why they thought this, four clients claimed that the most important factor was their own “determination to change”, and that changing MYND would not affect this. Responses by participants 1 and 4 accurately summarise this assumption: “coz I guess it’s all up to the, like the youth, if they wanna listen or not” ... “the bros they just come in here, don’t wanna change”. Another common response to question 5 was a need for more junk food and fizzy drinks, which clients felt would keep them motivated and would not feel as controlling. I decided to label “junk food/fizzy drinks” and “client determination to change” as moderators due to the way that many clients spoke about these factors as impeding client’s success in MYND.

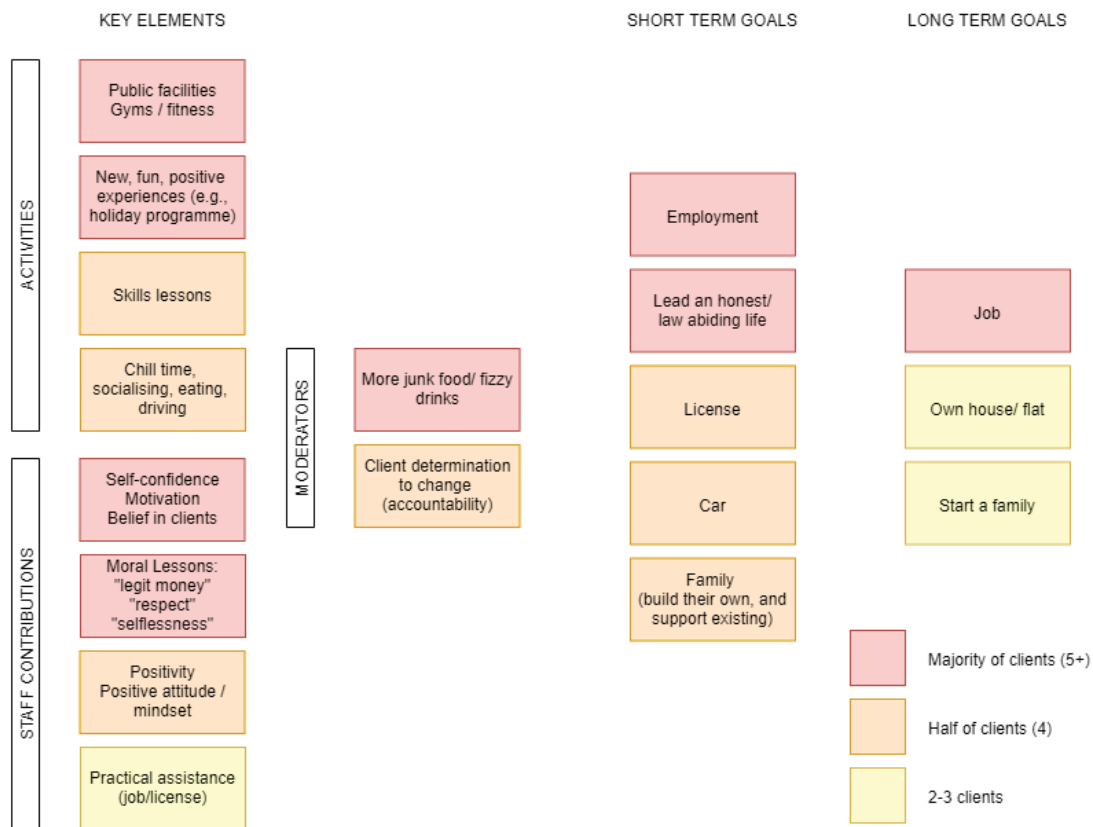
Coded responses to question six (“what are some of your personal goals over the next six months?”) were used to create groups of short-term goals in the middle column, and coded responses to question eight (“what do you want your life to look like in five years?”) formed the data for the long-term goals in the right column. Responses to these questions were short, concrete and homogeneous, which simplified the analysis process.

Following the initial grouping phase, a review of the key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals groups was conducted. Coded responses were each checked for whether they fit best into their assigned group, or whether they seemed to fit better in another group.

The following diagram (Figure 8) was created applying the above analysis method of client’s answers to questions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8. Importantly, I depicted *groups* of coded responses in the client Theory of Change diagram, as opposed to defining themes using a single word or phrase. This was done to avoid oversimplification of the data, and also because it keeps the level of detail similar to that found in the combined staff Theory of Change diagram. For example, this can be seen in the “self-confidence/motivation/belief in clients” key element group, to which five clients contributed.

Figure 8

MYND Client Theory of Change



Stakeholder Meeting 3 – Comparing and combining Theories of Change.

A meeting was scheduled with the MYND Manager and the Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Manager, with the intention of comparing and integrating the client Theory of Change with the preliminary, staff-generated Theory. It was observed that clients identified similar key elements, although appeared to place higher importance on youth workers. It was also noted that clients identified a higher proportion of goals that involved acquiring something “concrete”. In contrast, goals identified by staff focused more on clients developing internal, personal characteristics. Possible reasons for the cause of these differences can be read in the discussion section.

The second part of the meeting focussed on how the client Theory of Change should be integrated into the preliminary Theory of Change, and what this final Theory of Change should look like. One suggestion included using the concept of client “determination to change” as a moderating variable of the achievement of short-term

goals. Staff agreed that determination to change was an important factor in deciding whether clients engaged in MYND and whether their offending reduced. They decided to name this concept “accountability”.

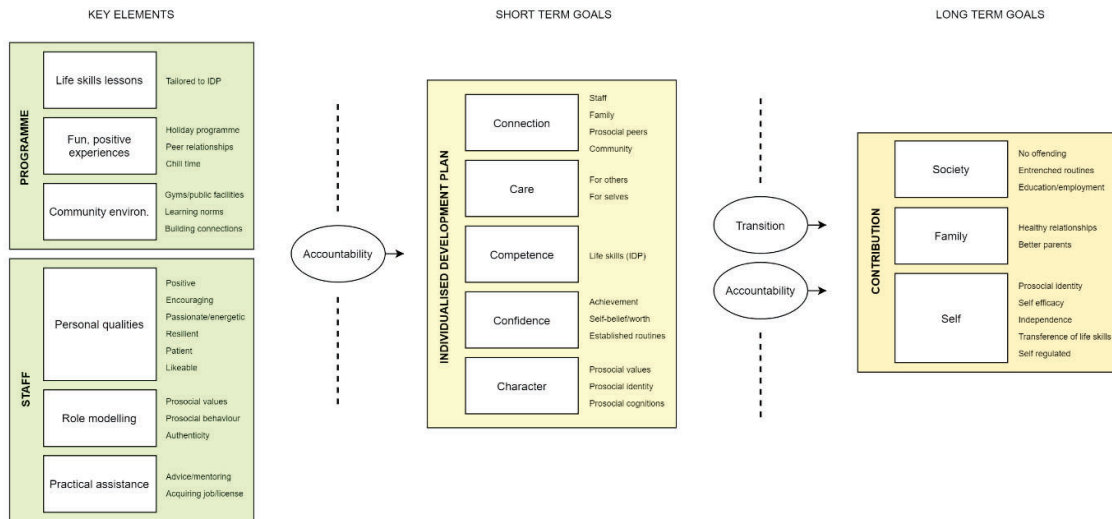
The MYND Manager and Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Manager also pointed out the need for a clear structure in the final Theory of Change so that it can be easily understood by key stakeholders. They asked that I experiment with different ways of organising the key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals into groups, just as MYND staff had done during workshops. I was afforded a fair amount of creative licence in this regard, resulting in a number of different refinements that were exchanged via email over a period of six months (see Appendix C).

The Final MYND Theory of Change

The MYND Theory of Change represented in Figure 9 (henceforth referred to as “the Theory”, was the final iteration, which managers felt best represented MYND during the study period. Once again, this “final” Theory of Change was intended as a working diagram and was therefore expected to change over time. The following section describes the final Theory of Change’s key elements, short-term goals, long-term goals and moderators, with a particular emphasis on how staff and client perspectives were integrated and why elements and goals were grouped in the way that they were.

Figure 9

Final MYND Theory of Change



Note. The above diagram is the result of the combined data from the MYND staff workshops, client interviews, existing MYND documents, and feedback from the Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Manager and the MYND Manager.

Managers were happy with the way that key elements were split into programme elements and staff elements. They felt that this represented both the planned, designed and programme-driven elements (life skills lessons, fun positive experiences, community environment) as well as the personality and relational qualities of youth workers which were less controlled but just as important. Practical assistance and other key elements that had been excluded from the key assumption diagram (see Figure 7) seemed to also fit well into this structure.

Perhaps the most obvious difference is in the integration of PYD’s “5 Cs” into MYND’s short-term goals. Again, this did not change the specific short-term goals themselves but applied a new way of grouping these goals that clearly showed the importance of the PYD model to MYND going forward. The high degree of compatibility between the five Cs and the existing short-term goals made this a relatively easy task; most short-term goals seemed to fit into one of the Cs and were spread fairly evenly across these groups.

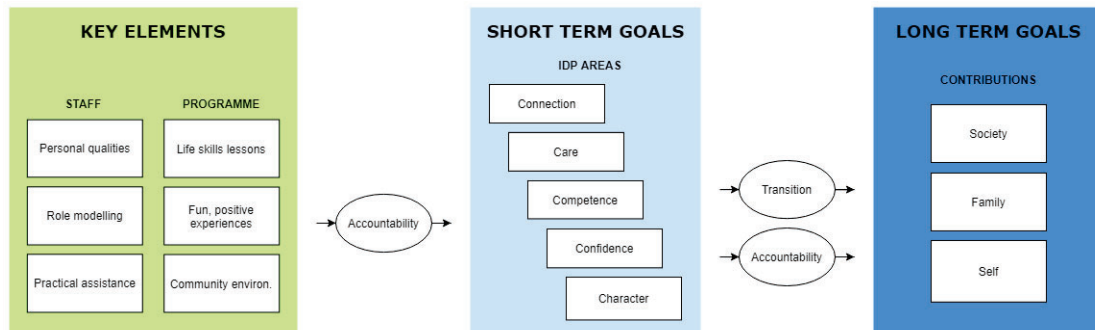
As indicated earlier, goals were clearly an area that required reconciliation between client and staff theories. A number of email exchanges between myself and MYND management concluded that the most useful way to integrate staff's "personal development" goals (e.g., prosocial peers, cognitions, life skills, self-belief, routines) with the more "concrete" goals identified by clients (e.g., job, licence, car, family) was that the former *enabled* the latter. Conceptualising such goals as indicators of a prosocial lifestyle, or what many clients described as a "normal life", also aligned well with the PYD model. Specifically, client's goals of having a normal life fit with PYD's "6th C": Contribution, which "is attained when a person has more fully realized the five Cs" (Bottomley, 2013). Having a job, licence, car and family from this perspective signifies a life of self-determination, where clients can control and contribute toward their own futures, as well as toward their families and prosocial society.

Moderators were changed in two ways. Initially MYND staff talked about accountability of staff and clients. A joined decision was made to simplify this to only *client accountability*. This rested on assumptions that staff were completing their assigned roles and that clients experienced all key elements, both for which there were already procedures in place to ensure. A smooth *transition* was removed as a short-term goal and added as a moderator between client's achievements at the end of MYND and their achievement of long-term goals, five years into the future. This was an obvious change because realistically, MYND could only attempt to prepare clients for this transition; whether this process is a smooth one or not is often decided by factors outside of MYND's control (i.e., whānau support, personal fulfilment felt from the work or education provider, opportunity to practice and apply life skills).

Drawing on recommendations by both Deane (2012) and Donaldson (2007), a "more parsimonious version" of the Theory of Change was also produced (Deane, 2012, p. 116; see Figure 10). This simplified version was thought to be more palatable for donors and other key stakeholders, and also could be used as an educational tool for MYND staff and even MYND clients.

Figure 10

Simplified Theory of Change



Phase 2: Theory of Change Assumption Testing

Phase 2 of this evaluation involved investigating the 12 key assumptions that were identified by MYND staff earlier in phase 1. Two different methods were used to investigate key assumptions in the current research project; the second part of client interviews and a review of relevant literature. A repeatable questionnaire is also planned which will contribute valuable longitudinal data to these investigations, however this is not included in the current methods, results and analysis. Conclusions from phase 2 investigations were thought to help MYND distinguish between key elements that were having their desired outcome (and therefore should be supported) from those that were not and that required re-thinking for MYND's future.

Interview Analysis – Looking for Evidence of Key Assumptions

The final stage of interview analysis was using client's responses to questions 10-42 as evidence for or against the key assumptions (listed below). The following analysis involved allocating groups of (already thematically analysed) responses to specific key assumptions. Since many questions were designed to answer specific key assumptions, all key assumptions had at least one set of relevant questions (and responses). However, I noticed that responses to some questions appeared to be relevant to multiple key assumptions. One example of this can be seen in responses to the question "What parts of MYND helped you change your mindset?". Five client's responses included themes of the youth worker *role modelling* "responsibility", "maturity", "encouragement", "positivity

toward others”, and that they learnt from “1-on-1 talks with youth workers”. This question contributed relevant data to the key assumption that role modelling leads to confidence but also to the assumption that it leads to prosocial cognitions (a component of the short-term goal of having *character*).

This more flexible methodology differed from that used to create the client Theory of Change, which only used specific questions to form specific parts of the theory. It also appeared to better fit the data, since client’s responses were at times tangential to the question being asked, and they would often circle back and extend on stories already told. This was especially so in questions that I used the “vague-to-specific” questioning style outlined earlier, or in multiple questions that were similar in topic.

Interview Results

The following section lists the 12 key assumption investigated, before summarising interview findings relevant to each.

1. Role modelling → prosocial cognitions
2. Life skills lessons → prosocial cognitions
3. Life skills lessons → learnt life skills
4. Community environment → learnt life skills
5. Community environment → smooth transition out of programme
6. Learnt life skills → more self-regulation
7. Learnt life skills → independence
8. Learnt life skills → life skills transferred
9. Learnt life skills → less anxiety in everyday lives
10. Smooth transitions → less truancy
11. Establishment of routines → continuation of routines unsupervised
12. Smooth transitions → less anxiety in everyday lives

1. Role Modelling → Prosocial Cognitions.

Clients often referred to changes to “mindset”. These included daydreaming about crime less often (five clients), more often valuing and considering the effects of their actions on their families (five clients), having less angry thoughts and less conflict with

others as a result (four clients) and thinking more about the future and long-term goals (four clients). Five clients spoke of the central role that their youth workers had in changing these thought patterns. As referred to in the example above, client's mindsets were influenced by having a role model for responsibility, maturity, positivity and encouragement, and that key changes often occurred in the context of one-on-one time with youth workers. The importance of youth workers role modelling prosocial morals or values was also commonly mentioned (seven clients). Such values included becoming "legit" or earning money legally (four clients), respecting others (two clients), hard work (two clients), helping others (two clients), and maturity (two clients).

Interview data strongly support the claim that MYND's positive role modelling increases prosocial cognitions. Interestingly, the tendency of clients to discuss cognitions alongside more general changes to their values suggests that these concepts may be interwoven.

2. Life Skills Lessons → Prosocial Cognitions.

A "positive attitude" was identified by two clients as one of the three most important things that they had learnt from life skills lessons. Specifically, these clients reported thinking less about criminal or negative topics, and having more positive beliefs in themselves due to life skills lessons. However, for many clients, noticing and recalling specific thoughts in hindsight were difficult. Furthermore, while a majority of clients claimed some form of increase in prosocial thoughts since beginning MYND (see above), they found it difficult to ascertain whether the driver of this change was life skills lessons, or whether this was due to other factors such as peer influence, distraction from negative thoughts, role modelling, or natural maturity.

At least some part of MYND's life skills lessons appeared to have an effect on prosocial cognitions for some clients, indicating moderate evidence for this assumption. However, the specific lesson or part of the lesson that influenced prosocial cognitions is not clear.

3. MYND's Life Skills Programme → Learnt Life Skills.

Seven clients remembered the principles of the STAR model (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) indicating good retention of this cognitive life skill. However, the next most

commonly recalled life skills related to “communication” and “positive attitude/self-belief”, both of which were only recalled by two individuals. Two clients remembered no life skills other than the STAR model, recalling other skills that they had learnt only when prompted. Furthermore, five clients could not recall any part of their Individualised Development Plan created at the beginning of MYND, which had their key learning goals (life skills) in it.

The assumption was that MYND’s life skills programme (defined broadly here as a combination of the lesson content, environment and youth worker role modelling) helped clients learn specific life skills. Interview data appears to suggest that only life skills that are repeated a lot during lessons are retained by MYND clients. One explanation for this could be that clients learnt these life skills in a more practical rather than theoretical sense; they may struggle to recall the knowledge from these lessons verbally yet still use some of this knowledge without realising. This is extended on more in the discussion.

4. Community Environment → Learnt Life Skills.

MYND clients were overwhelmingly in support of learning in the community, with all eight finding it a positive learning environment. Four clients preferred community learning than indoors in a classroom. The reasons for this were that they found learning in the community less constricting and stuffy, it was more relaxing being around nature, and that being outside made them feel less “trapped”. Two clients preferred learning at school as they enjoyed talking to their peers. No clients reported embarrassment learning in front of members of the public. Five clients reported being more confident meeting new people, using public facilities and interacting with the public as a result of MYND being based in the community.

The assumption that learning in the community enabled better learning of life skills was generally supported by interview data.

5. Community Environment → Smooth Transition out of MYND.

The above five client’s daily practice at community participation and interaction may result in a smoother transition into community-based institutions or employment. Five clients expressed appreciation for MYND helping them get jobs and transition them

out of the programme through this means, with two reporting that this helped them adjust to the real world while still having MYND support.

There was moderate evidence to support the assumption that being based in the community enables a smooth transition out of MYND. This may apply more for clients transitioning into employment or further education that is also outdoors-based. Interviews could not provide stronger evidence for this assumption because all of the interviewed clients were still attending MYND at the time.

6. Learnt Life Skills → More Self-Regulation.

All clients reported having particular strategies that they used to deal with stress or anger. Six clients reported using the strategy of walking away from conflict or to relieve stress. Three clients reported continuing to use old strategies of marijuana or cigarettes to cope with stress or anger. Other unique strategies used to self-regulate include attending to bodily signs, using a punching bag, talking to others, and listening to music. Only one client reported intentionally using antisocial means of resolving conflict (threatening violence), which was not a strategy supported by MYND. When asked whether MYND had influenced their anger or stress in any way, five clients reported that their self-regulation had changed due to things learnt in MYND, while three reported that their self-regulation had either not changed, or had changed but not because of MYND (such as becoming more mature naturally, or use of substances).

The assumption that MYND clients learnt to self-regulate anger or stress from life skills was supported by interview data, although these life skills may not necessarily replace old habits.

7. Learnt Life Skills → Independence.

Three clients reported feeling more independent as a result of MYND, while the remaining five either did not feel more independent, or that changes to their independence were unrelated to MYND (again, such as their own maturity). Clients who claimed that MYND had helped them feel more independent attributed this change to MYND staff helping them get work experience, the “making you think” workshop, and one client described having a strong relationship with youth workers, which allowed him to

slowly detach from negative whānau dynamics. Three clients also described feeling more comfortable resisting and opting out of peer pressure situations.

Overall, there was some evidence supporting the assumption that MYND's life skills help provide a sense of independence, however this was an area where it was difficult to separate MYND life skills with help provided by youth workers. Five clients reported feeling either no more independent, or that independence was not important to them. The implications of this finding will be explored in the discussion.

8. Learnt Life Skills → Life Skills Transferred.

The STAR model was a life skill explicitly and consciously transferred into client's everyday lives. Six clients reported success using it in the context of conflict with others or during moments where they were considering criminal activity, four of them using it every day or almost every day. One client also described often using the STAR model to avoid drug-taking behaviour. Two clients reported not transferring the STAR model to their everyday lives, one because he felt it was not needed, and another claimed that it did not work when he was under the influence of alcohol. Clients reported no other instances when they used a specific skill or strategy learnt in MYND in their everyday lives.

While the STAR model appears to have a high rate of transfer into client's everyday lives, there is limited evidence that many other life skills are transferred. Again, this may be partially a result of client's transferring life skills subconsciously, which will be discussed later.

9. Learnt Life Skills → Less Anxiety in Everyday Lives.

Five clients reported feeling more interpersonally confident as a result of life skills, particularly those that encouraged them to practice positive interactions with other clients, MYND staff and members of the public. Two clients also reported being more physically confident in their bodies and their ability to achieve goals at the gym, however they both reported that this was a result of encouraging youth workers rather than learnt life skills. Five clients felt confident in their ability to overcome barriers to achieving their goals after MYND, while two reported still being unsure of how to deal with these barriers. Despite most clients reporting that anxiety was sometimes mentioned during life skills lessons, five

reported minimal attention being paid to their own specific experiences of anxiety and only three clients felt there was no need for this.

There appears to be moderate evidence supporting the assumption that life skills help lessen client's anxiety in various areas. This link could potentially be strengthened by talking about and addressing each client's specific anxieties, as well as teaching skills specifically related to anxiety management.

10. Smooth Transitions → Less Truancy.

Clients reported a number of reasons for past truancy, such as boredom or not believing it useful for them (four clients) and relational problems with teachers or authority figures (four clients). While three clients did acknowledge truancy at MYND as being a problem for them (low energy, boredom and negative peer influence), six reported less truancy at MYND than school or other formal education programmes.

Six clients reported that MYND had helped them establish a clear routine at home, but six also believed their current routines would not last after MYND. Specific examples of this suggested by clients were staying up late, being tired throughout the day and having unhealthy eating habits.

The current interview data suggests that truancy is a common difficulty for MYND clients, and that a smooth transition into work with ongoing support from MYND *may* reduce the risk of truancy in their future endeavours. Crucially, since all interviewed clients were all still in the MYND programme, client's responses were based on their histories and their predictions of future truancy. Interviewing clients several months after beginning a new job or education programme would give better insight into the truth of this assumption.

11. Establishment of Routines → Continuation of Routines.

Only one client claimed that practicing routines and expectations for future work was one of the most important elements of MYND. Six clients claimed that the routines they had established during MYND (particularly their sleep patterns) would likely continue only if they were involved in continued education or work to keep them stable. Furthermore, two clients felt unsure about their ability to continue school or education

due to practical things such as waking up in time, or having transport to and from work or school.

There was little evidence supporting the assumption that clients continue routines established in MYND after leaving the programme. In particular, interview data hinted at the various other contextual factors which must also be satisfied if routines are to continue.

12. Smooth Transitions → Less Anxiety in Everyday Lives.

Six clients expressed being nervous about at least one part of finishing the MYND programme. Three felt nervous about reoffending, but other unique anxieties included losing trust from family, being tempted by drugs, not being able to continue established routines for further education, finding and maintaining a job, and being disappointed by failure of goals. Five clients reported feeling more confident meeting new people and interacting with others, which suggests some initial anxiety in this area in particular. In terms of addressing this anxiety, MYND clients praised staff for their ability to give practical aid throughout their transition to employment or education, which may help lessen some anxieties concerning this transition. For example, one client described his youth worker helping him attain a bus card and encouraging him to practice using it before beginning work. However, clients recalled fewer conversations with MYND staff about their own mental/emotional experiences of anxiety, except those that were concerned with “not thinking about it, or thinking about something else”.

Overall, while clients acknowledged the existence of anxiety surrounding the transition out of MYND, it was less clear whether a smooth transition lessens this anxiety. Furthermore, MYND’s emphasis on practical support throughout this transition may not fully address more general anxiety difficulties experienced by clients. Nonetheless, the prevalence of anxiety surrounding the transition out of MYND reinforces the importance of monitoring it closely.

Other findings

Factors That Instigated Offending

While forming (phase 1) and evaluating (phase 2) a client Theory of Change were the primary objectives of client interviews, some interview questions were interspersed that were included as separate points of interest. One such question asked clients for a short narrative account of their lives around the period when they started offending. Responses were thematically analysed using the same methodology as above. The most common theme of responses, made by seven participants involved *encouragement and normalisation by peers* (who were often older). An example of this came from participant 3: "... I was hanging out with like teenagers... people twice my age... getting high, drinking..." and participant 6: "...I saw all the big one's aye, they were cracking on it... so that was that aye". The second most common theme of responses was a *gradual increase in severity of offending* (five clients): "... I got older up here, and then I started doing like worser shit, like the crimes started coming more bigger". This was followed by *role modelling within the family*, such as parents or older siblings who normalised offending and antisocial behaviour (four clients): "... just coz I've been around it all, like my parents too". *Boredom* and *money* each featured in narratives of three participants. Finally, *having moved recently* and *family stress* were each cited by two clients as important experiences around the time that they began offending. These shared experiences appeared to align with many of Andrews and Bonta's (2010) criminogenic needs: antisocial peers, substance abuse, dysfunctional families, learning of antisocial values and attitudes (from older role models) and lack of prosocial leisure activities. This information suggests that MYND clients appear to follow a similar offending trajectory as those in the extant literature.

Youth Worker Feedback

Some time was set aside in the youth worker workshop to provide youth workers with an opportunity to give anonymous feedback to MYND management. Additionally, due to the high youth worker turnover between the beginning and end of the current evaluation, many of MYND's youth workers toward the end of the research timeline had not had the opportunity to offer anonymous feedback to management. Sixteen months

after the initial workshop I therefore sent the new “cohort” of youth workers an email offering another opportunity for anonymous feedback, resulting in a number of email and phone exchanges with individual youth workers.

One discussion concerned a need for more autonomy and trust afforded to youth workers over their practice. In particular this involved the ability to organise life skills lessons with less oversight, and also fewer pressure to “hit all targets”. While youth workers agreed with the life skills curriculum, they felt that more professional freedom would help them build upon their own individual experiences and skills, which they thought would help them become more effective youth workers.

While the ability to operate more autonomously was valued, youth workers also needed patience and understanding from management in circumstances where youth workers had unsuccessfully put a lot of effort into resolving a difficult situation in their work. Some felt too embarrassed or criticised to ask for help from management, and thought a more supportive, team-orientated approach to problem solving (some referred to this as having more “feminine” energy in the workplace) could be useful when youth workers needed it.

Youth workers felt that access to professional, confidential supervision from an external source would be greatly beneficial. This would enable them to have some time set aside purely for reflecting on their professional development from someone who is completely detached from their very “tight-knit” service. They felt this would allow a more honest and objective relationship in supervision.

Literature Review

In line with the second phase’s objective of finding evidence for the revised Theory of Change, a literature review was conducted to investigate the level of empirical support for each. Deane refers to this stage as a *direct logic analysis*, which “... involves comparing stakeholder conceptualisations of a programme against recent and/or foundational academic literature relevant to the programme under investigation and/or to expert opinions” (Deane, 2012, p. 120).

The literature review for each key assumption involved entering both factors into Google Scholar alongside the phrase “youth offending” (e.g., “role modelling prosocial

cognitions youth offending”). Terms were occasionally changed when I noticed different ones being used in a specific area of research (e.g., “juvenile delinquency” was more common than “youth offending” in key assumption searches involving client truancy). The first 20 results were searched for relevant findings. Considerable effort was spent attempting to find peer-reviewed studies that matched MYND clientele (male teenagers, offending histories, New Zealand-based). I attempted to share my time equally among all key assumptions, however more time was spent researching the “life skills lessons → learnt life skills” key assumption due to the importance both workshops placed on this assumption, and because of the complexity of literature relating to life skills lessons.

Literature Review Findings

A summary of the findings of the literature review are below in Table 1, split into three columns. The first lists the key assumption investigated in the literature along with the specific research question. The second column represents key findings in the literature and the third assesses MYND in relation to these findings.

Table 1

Summary of Literature on Each of MYND’s Key Assumptions

Key Assumption and relevant references	Key findings	MYND in comparison
<p>Role modelling → prosocial cognitions</p>	<p>Social modelling is a long-established phenomenon that has the ability to influence behaviour. However, the effect of social modelling on internal processes is less understood. The study of moral formation indicates that young people do not simply mimic modelled behaviours in a passive way, but that the formation of morals (and therefore maybe also thought processes) are formed by young people “reading into” the rules or values underlying the behaviours of their role models. Research has found that at least in classroom environments, teachers verbalising positive, approach-goal cognitive processes result in students displaying behaviours that indicate similar thought processes.</p>	<p>MYND youth workers attempt to model internal processes in various ways. MYND staff are trained to explain the logic behind each life skill, rather than simply teaching clients “what to do”. They refer to examples of how they themselves have used these skills, verbalising their thought processes throughout this. Youth workers are also encouraged to share their own values and thinking patterns with clients outside of the life skills context, which are thought to gradually become adopted by clients. The concept of modelling cognitions and values is expanded on in the discussion section.</p>
<p><i>Do youth adopt prosocial cognitions that their mentors have modelled to them?</i></p>	<p>Research has found that at least in classroom environments, teachers verbalising positive, approach-goal cognitive processes result in students displaying behaviours that indicate similar thought processes.</p>	<p>Research has found that at least in classroom environments, teachers verbalising positive, approach-goal cognitive processes result in students displaying behaviours that indicate similar thought processes.</p>
<p>Bandura, 2014</p>	<p>Research has found that at least in classroom environments, teachers verbalising positive, approach-goal cognitive processes result in students displaying behaviours that indicate similar thought processes.</p>	<p>Research has found that at least in classroom environments, teachers verbalising positive, approach-goal cognitive processes result in students displaying behaviours that indicate similar thought processes.</p>
<p>Greitemeyer, 2011</p>	<p>Research has found that at least in classroom environments, teachers verbalising positive, approach-goal cognitive processes result in students displaying behaviours that indicate similar thought processes.</p>	<p>Research has found that at least in classroom environments, teachers verbalising positive, approach-goal cognitive processes result in students displaying behaviours that indicate similar thought processes.</p>
<p>Turner et al., 2002</p>	<p>Research has found that at least in classroom environments, teachers verbalising positive, approach-goal cognitive processes result in students displaying behaviours that indicate similar thought processes.</p>	<p>Research has found that at least in classroom environments, teachers verbalising positive, approach-goal cognitive processes result in students displaying behaviours that indicate similar thought processes.</p>

<p>Life skills lessons → prosocial cognitions</p>	<p>Since antisocial cognitions (attitudes, beliefs and thoughts that support crime), are among the least understood of the central eight criminogenic needs, recommendations for how to change these in a life skills context are scarce. Again, looking to the more abundant literature on the development of moral reasoning may help answer this question. A large amount of research suggests that boys in mid to late adolescence tend to make moral decisions based on mutual interpersonal expectations, conformity and relationship-maintenance. In this sense, the establishment of prosocial norms and mentor-mentee relationships built on enjoyment and respect are key factors in encouraging prosocial cognitions in youth. The most common evidence-based interventions that target prosocial cognitions involve recognising “risky” thoughts and feelings, forming alternative, less risky thoughts and feelings, and attempting to form a prosocial identity.</p>	<p>MYND youth workers prioritise forming and maintaining strong relationships with clients (consistent with the importance of mentor-mentee relationships as shown in the literature), as they believe this will encourage clients to be more engaged and participate fully during life skills lessons. MYND life skills lessons involve several topics that use a cognitive-behavioural framework, such as “problem solving” and “identity”. MYND’s STAR model is also an example of a specific cognitive-behavioural skill/strategy used to consciously make prosocial decisions. However, clients may also benefit from more general cognitive knowledge such as recognising thoughts and emotions as they arise, and becoming aware of the link between thoughts, emotions, body sensations and behaviours.</p>
<p><i>How can life skills increase prosocial cognitions?</i></p>	<p>Andrews et al., 2006 Eisenberg & Morris, 2004 Lowenkamp, Hubbard, Makarios & Latessa, 2009</p>	<p>Wooditch, et al., 2014</p>

	<p>Curriculums that aim to restructure cognitions through teaching problem solving skills and alternative cognitive patterns have also found moderate success.</p>	
<p>Life skills lessons → learnt life skills</p>	<p>Avoid “one size fits all” intervention strategies or uniformly imposing sets of predetermined lessons. Instead, work alongside youth flexibly to achieve mutual goals.</p>	<p>MYND creates an individualised development plan alongside each client, and utilises youth workers to creatively implement this plan.</p>
<p><i>How should life skills be taught in a way that engages youth and ensures that they retain the information that they learn?</i></p>	<p>YWHO generally prefer a focus on practical strategies to address everyday issues. These have been termed “life skills” by many researchers and practitioners in the field, and have been identified as being of higher need for institutionalised adolescents. They learn these better with cognitive-behavioural and social learning approaches including specific verbal guidance, modelling and practice of these behaviours through strategies such as role playing.</p>	<p>MYND’s curriculum focuses heavily on teaching clients practical life skills, rather than traditional “academic” education taught in schools. MYND uses modelling and role playing for some life skills including conflict management and resisting peer pressure.</p>
<p>Curtis, Ronan & Borduin, 2004 Dowden & Andrews, 2003 Guerin & Denti, 1999 Hanniball et al., 2018 Hollin, 1999</p>		

Kadish et al., 2001	Engaging the various systems young people are part of (families, communities, cultural groups, peers) is an effective way of supporting young people to learn and apply life skills across various contexts.	While MYND acknowledges the importance of engaging different systems, its capability to do so is often limited. Regardless, key workers attempt to keep a dialogue open with families, peers and potential employers/education providers regarding client's progress.
Ludbrook, 2012		
Mohammadzadeh et al., 2017(a)(b)(c)(d)		
Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman & Maxine, 2002		
Smith et al., 2009	The most powerful youth work programmes involve learning tasks or content that increase in complexity over time.	MYND achieves this in the sense that client's pathway plans gradually increase the amount of content learnt by clients. However, the complexity of skills content does not intentionally change with progression.
Trotter, 2012	Programmes must be strengths-based rather than deficit-focussed. This means building upon skills that clients already have rather than highlighting and focusing on areas of "deficiency".	MYND operates under the umbrella term of "positive youth development", which involves increasing protective factors and utilising client's pre-existing skills and assets.
Community environment → learnt life skills	For some disadvantaged young people, classrooms are places associated with negativity, failure and	Consistent with literature, MYND clients sometimes described classrooms as environments in which

<p><i>Does learning in a community setting allow YWHA to more effectively learn and practice life skills, compared to a private or classroom environment?</i></p>	<p>being trapped. For such youth, learning in a community setting may be more familiar, comforting and inclusive, which creates a context for better learning. However, little research exists on how and in what circumstances the community can be educationally beneficial. A more commonly cited benefit of community-based learning is that it acts as a “transitional” environment whereby youth can gradually practice skills that they learn in the context in which these skills will be applied.</p>	<p>they felt trapped. MYND has been specifically designed to teach life skills in areas of the community where youth are able to practice life skills, including speaking to strangers, shopping and using public facilities. The discussion expands on many of these principles.</p>
<p>Abrams, 2006 Bonta et al., 2008 Loy & Gregory, 2002 Propp, Ortega & Newheart, 2003 West et al., 2014</p>		
<p>Community environment → smooth transition out of MYND</p>	<p>Reintegrating into the community is widely agreed to be among the biggest challenges to client’s ability to stay goal-orientated and focussed on leading a prosocial lifestyle. This is largely due to their reconnection with antisocial associates, often</p>	<p>MYND recognises the importance of community connection by explicitly connecting clients with community structures throughout the programme, including meeting potential future employers or education providers. MYND also helps clients get</p>

<p><i>In what ways does community engagement influence the likelihood that youth will remain goal-focussed after leaving the programme?</i></p>	<p>resulting in distraction from achievement of goals set out during the programme. A large amount of research suggests helping youth establish multiple prosocial connections within the community prior to reintegration. This strategy has been found to result in reduced influence from antisocial associates, theoretically because more time and energy is spent with prosocial businesses and organisations.</p>	<p>their learner’s driver licence or a fork hoist licence as these also help clients function better in the community and achieve their goals. MYND does not explicitly attempt to create connections between clients and new prosocial peer groups.</p>
<p>Bayer, Hjalmarsson & Pozen, 2009 Folk et al., 2016 Martinez & Abrams, 2013 Wright & Cesar, 2013</p>		
<p>Learnt life skills → more self-regulation</p>	<p>Self-regulation is deemed an important life skill both in the interests of reducing recidivism and in improving quality of life for youth. Those able to use active self-regulation strategies in response to stressful events, in combination with venting, humour and planning, have been found to be less affected by such events. Cognitive-behavioural strategies, supported by active practice,</p>	<p>The STAR (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) model is a prominent feature of MYND’s life skills. This is a simple cognitive-behavioural strategy designed for ease of learning (hence the acronym), and among other things can be used to manage intense emotions and stress.</p>
<p><i>What sorts of life skills lessons can help improve self-regulation?</i></p>		

Himelstein, Hastings, Shapiro & Heery, 2012 Hollin, 1999 Mohammadzadeh et al., 2017(c) Raymond et al., 2018	reinforcement and modelling are recommended as the primary mode of delivery for these skills.
<p>Learned life skills → independence</p> <p><i>What life skills can help provide youth with a sense of independence?</i></p> <p>English, Kouidou-Giles & Plocke, 1994</p> <p>Kadish et al., 2001</p> <p>Mohammadzadeh et al., 2017(c)</p> <p>Propp et al., 2003</p>	<p>Readying YWHO for a prosocial adult life by teaching skills that allow them to live independently, is a core aim of many interventions. Such skills include those that are both tangible (e.g., specific behaviours such as health maintenance) and intangible (e.g., generalisable and flexible cognitive strategies such as decision-making and planning). Researchers also emphasise the importance of transitional independent living services which allow youth to practice these skills with support.</p> <p>MYND's Theory of Change identified three specific goals related to independence: financial independence (finding clients employment), transport independence (attainment of public transport cards, driver licence, plans for buying a vehicle) and independence from peer pressure. While financial and transport independence are maybe better described as one-off acquisitions, independence from peer pressure requires actively learning and practicing both tangible (refusal skills) and intangible skills (STAR model). Other tangible independence skills may be implicitly present in activities such as setting alarms in the morning,</p>

cooking healthy meals, and establishing fitness routines.

<p>Learnt life skills → life skills transferred</p>	<p>Skills-orientated programmes have demonstrated among the largest effect sizes on behavioural changes, for YWHO. While repeated practice of</p>	<p>MYND's individualised development plan is created alongside clients, so that they are motivated to learn relevant life skills and apply them outside of</p>
<p><i>In what circumstances are programme's life skills spontaneously utilised in client's everyday lives?</i></p>	<p>specific life skills is an important strategy in allowing skills to be transferred into their everyday lives, many researchers point out the importance of mentors explicitly discussing the link between specific life skills and the underlying desirable values and personality characteristics. This involves noticing and praising youth when they demonstrate these characteristics in other ways. Research also suggests providing opportunities for youth to reflect on their use of life skills. Perhaps most importantly, in order for clients to be motivated to implement life skills outside of a programme, the potential outcomes of using these skills must be relevant to</p>	<p>MYND. Mentors encourage repetition of some life skills, especially those that require a lot of practice such as interpersonal communication. Interview results indicate that many clients internalise positive underlying characteristics, although the exact process of this could be better understood.</p>
<p>Camiré, Trudel & Forneris, 2012 Jacobs & Wright, 2018 Lipsev, 1992 Weiss, Bolter & Kipp, 2014</p>	<p>More explicit emphasis on the values that underlie MYND's life skills, and frequent reflection on these, may be beneficial to the programme.</p>	<p></p>

them, and they need to see evidence that using them works.

<p>Learnt life skills → less anxiety in everyday lives</p>	<p>Despite the prevalence of anxiety difficulties in YWHO, the tendency for anxiety to be expressed internally rather than externally means few programmes for YWHO target anxiety. However, several studies have found significant reductions in anxiety or stress (both terms are used interchangeably in the literature) following participation in life skills programmes. This is theorised to be a result of client’s newfound beliefs that they can better predict future challenges, increased self-confidence in their ability to utilise life skills to meet future demands, and a mindset which views problems as challenges to be overcome rather than impassable obstacles. Cognitive-behavioural strategies for reducing anxiety are supported by a large evidence base.</p>	<p>MYND’s emphasis on regular practice of life skills is adopted largely in the interest of increasing client’s confidence in a variety of situations, which may indeed reduce anxiety. MYND also teaches some cognitive-behavioural life skills including a topic called “stress management”, which teaches clients what stress is, how to identify it and some positive ways to respond to it.</p>
<p><i>Can learning life skills reduce anxiety?</i></p>		
<p>Jamali et al., 2016</p>		
<p>Kase, Ueno, Shimamoto & Oishi, 2018</p>		
<p>Listwan, Sperber, Spruance & Van Voorhis, 2004</p>		
<p>Mohammadzadeh et al., 2017(c)</p>		

Smooth transitions → less truancy	Disadvantaged youth with histories of institutionalisation are among the most likely to abscond or be truant from programmes or placements. Some of the reasons for this include wanting to maintain significant relationships, boredom, frustration, and feeling controlled or constricted. Researchers in the United Kingdom have found that youth work programmes that respect the unique needs of each individual by providing extra support across transition periods in ways that are easily accessible, have significantly reduced client truancy in new transitory environments. Programmes that balance a line of having expectations of attendance yet can also exercise flexibility and respect of client's decisions, act as a healthy intermediary step between restrictive placements (which many youth come from) and total autonomy (which many youth move on to).	MYND understands that its clients are among the most likely to abscond or be truant from education programmes or employment, and it attempts to provide individualised levels of support across transition periods. MYND ensures that clients understand that attendance is entirely their decision, but that there are negative consequences of not attending. When faced with truancy difficulties, MYND attempts to discuss the reasons for this decision and create a shared agreement on how to address this in the future. MYND youth workers are trained to exercise flexibility and problem solving with regards to truancy.
<i>Do smooth transitions into and out of MYND reduce truancy of clients at MYND and their new education provider or employer?</i>		
Bowden & Lambie, 2015		
Bowden, Lambie & Willis, 2018		
Dickson, Vigurs & Newman, 2013		
O'Mara, Jamal, Lehmann & Cooper, 2010		

<p>Establishment of routines → continuation of routines unsupervised</p>	<p>Research shows that criminal behaviours do not occur in a vacuum; they are usually supported by routines (or lack thereof) in everyday life, such as peer socialisation, the location in which spare time is spent, consumer activities and involvement in clubs and sports. The research also acknowledges that the saying “the devil finds for idle hands” is true in the sense that being occupied by a prosocial routine prevents the intrusion of antisocial routines.</p>	<p>MYND prioritises the establishment of routines. This can be seen in its intentional similarity to work and school hours, as well as having a consistent schedule involving meals, exercise, and learning occurring at the same time every day. MYND also attempts to create routines that would most likely match those required to sustain a job or education, so that the transition into their “new lives” after MYND is easier. MYND clients may experience more successful transitions if MYND also prioritised the establishment of strong interpersonal relationships within these new routines.</p>
<p><i>How do routines interact with criminal behaviours, and what methods can be used to help YWHO continue established prosocial routines?</i></p>	<p>Establishing structured, positive routines as alternatives to previous “antisocial” routines is widely considered to be best practice. Research notes the particular importance that strong social bonds play in the continuation of routines, as well as consistent reinforcement for continuing these routines.</p>	
<p>Bernburg & Thorlindsson, 2001 Bullis, Yovanoff, Mueller & Havel, 2002 Miller, 2013 Taylor, Freng, Esbensen & Peterson, 2008</p>		
<p>Smooth transitions → less anxiety in everyday lives</p>	<p>One common cause of anxiety disorders in disadvantaged youth is exposure to stressful or</p>	<p>Graduating MYND is intended as a slow process over a period of months rather than a discrete</p>

<p><i>Does a smooth transition into life after MYND help reduce client's anxiety throughout this transition?</i></p>	<p>unpredictable life events, which in turn can result in increased anxiety in response to unpredictability or threat. Gradual exposure to the focus of anxiety is a common cognitive-behavioural strategy used to reduce this anxiety. This technique can be either be <i>in-vivo</i>, which involves using client's imagination to adjust to an anxiety-provoking thought or image, and can also involve behavioural activities such as physically visiting an anxiety-provoking place. Research also suggests that having a stable adult or mentor figure through transition periods can help reduce anxiety.</p>	<p>event. After "graduating" the standard full-time programme, MYND youth workers continue engaging clients for a few hours per week through phone calls and/or by transporting them to and from their new workplaces or educational institutes. MYND youth workers are also encouraged to generate conversation with clients about the end of MYND in the interests of in-vivo exposure. There is no predetermined schedule for frequency of check-ins.</p>
<p>Abrams, Shannon & Sangalang, 2008</p>		
<p>Foa, Rothbaum & Furr, 2003</p>		
<p>Townsend et al., 2010</p>		
<p>Weersing & Weisz, 2002</p>		

Summary of Main Findings

Phase 1 Outcomes – The MYND Theory of Change

The overarching goal of phase 1 was to create a Theory of Change for the MYND programme from the point of delivery to clients. Refer back to Figure 8 in the results for a diagram of this.

Key elements were defined as things observed directly by clients that were believed to be essential to the MYND programme. The final Theory of Change splits key elements related to the programme content itself and those related directly to interactions with MYND staff. “Programme” key elements were split into three themes (*life skills lessons, fun, positive experiences, and community environment*), and “staff” key elements split into another three themes (*personal qualities, role modelling, and practical assistance*). Specific key elements that fit into the first group of themes were: tailored life skills lessons, holiday programmes, peer relationships, chill time, use of gyms and public facilities, observing public norms, and building prosocial connections. Specific key elements that fit into the second group were staff that are positive, encouraging, passionate, resilient, patient and likeable, who role model prosocial values, behaviours and authenticity, and also provide practical assistance such as advice, and helping youth to achieve tangible goals (driver licence, job).

Moderating the effect of MYND’s key elements to its short-term goals is *client accountability*, defined as the client’s degree of readiness or motivation to change to a lifestyle free from offending. These interwoven concepts are expanded upon later in the discussion section.

Short-term goals were defined as achievable in six months, or around the time that most clients would “graduate” the standard MYND programme and begin transitioning into work or further education. They were identified through workshops with MYND management and youth workers, and were consistent with the five Cs of PYD, with staff indicating that these were a useful way to characterise these goals. The specific short-term goals, categorised by the five Cs were: *Connection* to staff, whānau, prosocial peers and their communities, *Care* for others (e.g., whānau) as well as themselves, *Competence* in applicability of learnt life skills to client’s everyday lives, *Confidence* and self-belief

generated by achievement of tangible goal(s) and well-established routines, and a *Character* who holds prosocial values, identities and cognitions.

In addition to continued client *accountability*, the smoothness of the *transition* between MYND programming and into structured education or work was also identified as a moderating variable of client's success achieving long-term goals.

Long-term goals were defined as those that were hoped clients would achieve five years after finishing MYND. Long-term goals of the current MYND Theory of Change were categorised into three forms of contribution (the subsequent "6th C" of Positive Youth Development): contribution toward *society*, toward their *families*, and toward their own personal development (*themselves*). Specific long-term goals within these groups were: reduced offending, entrenched routines, participation in education or employment, healthier whānau relationships, becoming more effective parents (if applicable), an established prosocial identity, stable self-efficacy, increased feelings of independence, continued use of life skills in everyday lives, and the ability to self-regulate emotions and impulses.

Phase 2 Outcomes – Testing MYND's Theory of Change

The aim for phase 2 was to examine evidence of key assumptions of the MYND Theory of Change generated in phase 1. This was done using both interview data and a review of the extant literature. Results regarding MYND's life skills were mixed. Interviews with MYND clients revealed that life skills lessons were among the most memorable parts of MYND, and that most clients had learnt the STAR model effectively and could apply it to their everyday lives. However, aside from the STAR model clients appeared to struggle to recall and apply life skills content. Furthermore, they claimed that other parts of MYND had just as much, if not more, of a positive long-term impact on their lives. These included new, fun experiences such as the holiday programme, the use of public facilities, and the small but significant moments *between* programming such as socialising, eating and driving in the vans.

Regarding findings unrelated to youth workers and life skills, data from client interviews and the literature review reinforced the importance of learning in the community and implementing a slow, supported transition into further education or employment. Both

client interviews and the literature review revealed that factors such as boredom and negative relationships with others in new workplaces or education providers can hinder the smoothness of this transition, which could have been overlooked by MYND. Furthermore, anxiety surrounding the transition out of MYND was experienced by some interviewed clients. They reported that this was often addressed pre-emptively and pragmatically by MYND staff (practicing skills, minimising external barriers to client achievement) rather than by spending time talking about and understanding experiences of anxiety. Finally, while there was some variation in client's understandings of the term "independence", MYND used several strategies to help clients feel more financially, geographically and relationally independent and in control of their lives.

Overall, client interviews revealed a significant amount of evidence that MYND's key elements led to their short-term goals, and the literature review showed that the links between these key elements and goals are largely supported by empirical evidence. The results of the current evaluation appear to shed light on a significant portion of the MYND Theory of Change, but inevitably, are unable to completely uncover the contents of MYND's "black box". The following discussion section attempts to make sense of areas that have been uncovered through the evaluation, as well as elements of the programme that remain unclear. Discussion of the most important or surprising findings of the evaluation will lead to a number of practical and research-related suggestions for MYND.

Section 3: Discussion

The following section aims to comment on several important components identified by the MYND Theory of Change, beginning with three groups of key elements. The first of these relates to the client-youth worker relationship, which is used to role model not only prosocial behaviours but also prosocial values and identities. Further utilising this relationship, the second section highlights the ability that MYND youth workers have to teach and model new ways of thinking about themselves and about their experiences. The third section focuses on the learning environment itself; the community, which the current research identifies as crucial to translating the above life skills into client's everyday lives.

The remaining three sections broadly focus on MYND clients' goals as well as the factors that motivate them to achieve these goals. Key differences between the goals identified by youth workers and clients are understood using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and may be explained by clients' historical (and ongoing) deprivation of basic needs: poverty, instability and trauma. The fifth section discusses the tensions associated with seeking independence whilst also pursuing relational needs through connection to social systems, particularly their whānau. Addressing wider systems such as whānau can therefore be thought of as both an "intervention" that reduces recidivism, but more specifically it could also enable clients to become more motivated by psychological and self-actualising needs; which is the focus of the sixth and last section.

The following discussion is in no way exhaustive of all points raised by MYND clients and staff, or all parts of the Theory of Change. For example, less attention will be paid to new, fun and positive experiences, which were identified by both clients and staff as a key element of the MYND Theory of Change. Expanding on this briefly, the particularly high value that clients placed on *new, fun, positive experiences* was likely because these events made the programme more enjoyable, keeping attendance high. Since for many these events were among their first prosocial community experiences, this key element may also have the added benefit of building new positive associations between clients and their communities, over time helping to transform the relationships that clients had with their communities (Osborne, McCord & Higgins, 2016).

While this point and many others could no doubt be expanded into separate sections, topics were prioritised based on several factors including how crucial managers felt

the related element or goal was to the success of the programme, and the likelihood that MYND would implement changes in each area. New, fun, positive experiences were a lower priority for MYND managers because they took up comparatively less programming time and because changing the frequency or form of these activities was deemed “unlikely” from a programming perspective. The topics discussed below therefore represent those that I believed MYND staff would find most interesting as well as those that I felt, in consultation with MYND Managers, were most feasible and consistent with MYND’s role as a social provider.

Role Modelling Prosocial Behaviours and Prosocial Identities

Among the most consistent findings in MYND staff workshops and in client interviews, was the importance of relationships between clients and their youth workers. Half of the key elements identified by clients in interviews related to these relationships, a pattern that was also represented in the final Theory of Change. Clients reported learning from their youth workers how to be self-confident and how to maintain a positive attitude and mindset. One particularly common claim made by six interviewed clients, was that youth workers were in some way instrumental to changes to what they believed was right and wrong, the importance of respect and selflessness; what one client referred to as his “morals”. The frequency that this was raised by clients meant that role modelling prosocial values eventually became incorporated into the final Theory of Change. A very brief review of related literature was done in phase 2, however, given the importance and complexity inherent to this assumption I expand on it here. The following section will therefore attempt to better understand the psychological processes underlying the learning of “morals” from youth workers. I will first explore how the traditional definition of learning applies to explicit behaviours modelled by others, as well as what else is implicitly learnt through role models. I will then review the concept of a prosocial identity in relation to what MYND clients reported during interviews, and why youth workers appear to be instrumental in instigating this change.

Before delving into the above, perhaps it is appropriate to introduce some of the core psychological concepts involved in learning something from another person. Social learning is a well-researched phenomenon in the human sciences. Originating from Albert

Bandura's Social Learning Theory, it broadly states that new behaviours can be "acquired" through observation and imitation of others (Bandura, 2014). Numerous studies clearly reveal people's innate tendency to imitate others. Even at just 14-months old, babies are capable of imitating complex facial expressions and actions from their parents (Meltzoff & Moore, 1977). SLT acknowledges the long-supported principles of behaviourism, which state that the frequency of an individual's behaviour can increase if this behaviour is followed by an appetitive stimulus (reinforcement), and can also decrease if this behaviour is followed by an aversive stimulus (punishment). The principles of SLT and behaviourism work in tandem in instances of "vicarious" reinforcement or punishment, which is when the frequency of one's behaviour is influenced by merely observing someone *else* become reinforced or punished for a behaviour (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985; Chong, 2000; Hackman, 1992).

Predictably, modelling of antisocial behaviours by others appears to have played a uniquely large role in why MYND clients began offending. In interviews, all but one client reported that their initial offending began in the context of involvement with antisocial peer groups, with most clearly recognising the impact that others had on their own learnt behaviour: "it was buzzy back then coz I was only a little kid and you're just looking at it and then you grow up and start doing it and you're like fuck".

Just as social learning is implicated in the production of antisocial behaviours, it is also used by youth workers who role model desired behaviours such as respectful language, effective communication, healthy eating and exercise habits, and approaches to problem solving (Zand et al., 2009). In both MYND staff workshops, participants identified *role modelling* as a key element of the programme. Management and youth workers explicitly defined a number of behaviours that were intentionally role modelled, such as waiting patiently, respectful communication and boundaries. During interviews, several MYND clients also raised positive behaviours that their youth workers role modelled, such as honesty, hard work, listening and respectful language. In both workshops and in interviews however, the term role modelling was more often used in relation to youth worker's personal and relational qualities. For example, MYND clients most often raised concepts such as relatability, authenticity and whānau-first values when asked what they had learnt from their youth workers. Similarly, workshop participants raised the particular importance of role modelling passion, resilience, learning from personal experiences/strengths and

values. Further cementing this point, the goals in the finalised Theory of Change were based on the principles of Positive Youth Development, which primarily promotes internal factors such as beliefs, values and identity, rather than explicit behaviours (Catalano et al., 2004). The more permeable nature of these internal factors (i.e., they are implicitly demonstrated in all interactions with youth workers) suggests they could be more impactful than explicit, discrete behaviours; however, these same factors also make them more difficult to study. The process of how young people learn these more stable, internal characteristics from role models is therefore less well-known.

Studies with young children have found an early capability to understand the abstract goals of a modelled behaviour, seen in the performance of different behaviours to achieve this same goal (Schwier, Van Maanen, Carpenter & Tomasello, 2005). For example, a hugely influential study by Bandura found that 3-6 year old North American children used a variety of novel actions not previously modelled to them (in the experiment) to achieve an underlying goal of their adult role model: to hurt or harm a bobo doll (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1961). This abstraction of the underlying goal behind a modelled behaviour is referred to by some as “rational imitation” (Gergely, Bekkering & Király, 2002).

There is additional evidence supporting this theory in organisational and industrial psychology. Leaders are frequently found to subtly encourage values of collectivism, self-enhancement and self-sacrifice to their employees (Friedman & Lobel, 2003, Scherer, Adams, Carley & Wiebe, 1989; Sosik, 2005). This is done by demonstrating specific behaviours (i.e., working late) with the hope that employees will understand the desirable personality characteristic beneath this behaviour (being a hard worker), and consequently demonstrate other behaviours that align with this by going “above and beyond” in other areas at work. New behaviours arising from this are then able to be explicitly (i.e., payment) or implicitly reinforced (i.e., social or peer group approval) and subsequently strengthened.

Despite its ability to explain the generalisation of some behaviours in certain contexts, rational imitation may not fully account for why someone might internalise “hard work” as a personal value, or “hard worker” as an identity outside of their workplace. In the context of MYND, rational imitation might explain why clients align their behaviour with youth worker’s prosocial goals during programming hours, but does not clearly account for their description of deeper “moral” changes as a result of their youth workers.

The concept of identity may be useful to help understand these deeper, personal changes. The Social Identity Approach posits that every person identifies themselves according to their relationship to many different groups (Turner & Reynolds, 2011). These groups are subjectively defined according to perceived similarities or differences in any number of variables (ethnicity, interests, geographical separation, offending history, etc). Similarities and differences are subconsciously “accentuated” by individuals to help them more clearly conceptualise their own identities (Turner & Reynolds, 2010). One of the reasons for why I use the term “YWHO” relates to this; referring to young people as “offenders” is likely to accentuate and solidify this antisocial identity, both to YWHO themselves and those whom they interact with. Importantly, the degree to which an individual identifies with a group can change over time; a process that has been recognised by many as an important step for those with identities tied to antisocial or offending behaviour, including proponents of the RNR model (Bonta & Andrews, 2007).

The Social Identity Approach to desistance aims to develop an identity or self-concept that is inconsistent with offending (Kay & Monaghan, 2019). Considerable research has examined the role of mentors in helping those who have offended develop a new prosocial identity. Two leading theories of this process have arisen as a result. The first suggests that mentors primarily function to model prosocial cognitive processes in mentees. This in turn “crystallises discontent” and gives them agency in deciding whether their current “working self” aligns with their “possible self” (with a prosocial future) or their “feared self” (if they were to continue their antisocial trajectory; Paternoster & Bushway, 2009). The second theory argues that mentors build off their own “social capital” (connectedness to other prosocial groups) to link YWHO to prosocial support systems and structures in the community, and that it is through these new connections that new prosocial identities can be fostered (Sampson & Laub, 1993; Wyse, Harding & Morenoff, 2014).

While these two theories are often thought about as competing, perhaps they are both at play in the mentoring relationships between MYND youth workers and clients. Many MYND clients recalled situations supporting the first theory, where their youth worker intentionally modelled prosocial cognitions. This was often done by intentionally contrasting the prosocial, whānau-focussed identity with the “crim” identity that was sometimes glorified by YWHO. For example, one client said that his youth worker often reminded him

“... that there’s options... like compared to crime, and crime ain’t the only way, you can work for your money”. Clients praised youth workers for reminding them of their own independence; that it is their own thinking and decision making that will ultimately get them the lives they want: “they’re trying to get us to new levels... but they’re not gonna force you, oh, you have to do that”. Another reported that his youth worker helped him make his own plan for what to do when confronted with old antisocial peers; “he helped me go through the process of like saying nah I can’t do that, that’s yours, you can do it”.

Perhaps as a result of the above, there was evidence that clients internalised many of the prosocial cognitions modelled by their youth workers. For example, one client said that his youth worker “always told me... you don’t need that, you’ve got a family, it’s not worth it”, and later added “now my mindset is focused on my life... mindset is focusing on my goals, focusing on my family... like it’s a priority, straight up”. While many reported disliking their youth workers at first, five clients felt that their youth workers were relatable (due to having a sense of humour, being “chill”, “friendly” and “fun”) and two even said that they wanted to be youth workers later in their lives; both clear indications of increased identification with their youth workers.

MYND youth workers also appeared to intentionally utilise their own “social capital”. Social capital can be thought of as a resource that comes from being connected to a network of people. Christopher Kay, a researcher with notable contributions in the fields of social identity and desistance, highlights that not all social capital is the same, and it is certainly not all pro-social (Kay, 2020). Indeed, many YWHO have a lot of what Kay refers to as “anti-social capital”; resources available through connections to anti-social relationships. Given this distinction, MYND youth workers were able to reorient clients away from networks that provided *antisocial* capital and toward those that imbued a newfound prosocial capital, and *prosocial* identity. For example, youth workers would prioritise regularly connecting MYND clients with prosocial institutions, such as gyms and libraries, where they would practice interacting and building relationships with a prosocial group of people every day. Five clients reported being more confident meeting and interacting with new people in the community, one even linking his new confidence to his decision to take part in the interview: “if I was the old me, I wouldn’t even be talking right now... I always just used to keep to myself”. Helping clients to study the road code and get a driver licence

was another way that youth workers helped clients participate in prosocial institutions, and therefore begin identifying with others who also subscribed to them.

There was evidence that MYND youth workers were involved in both linking clients to prosocial societal structures as well as modelling the behaviours and cognitive processes that can be used in this “new” context. This intention was not lost on many MYND clients, who were very aware of the effect that these strategies had on them. In response to a question I asked about what a youth worker should be trying to do with their clients, one said “... you're giving them a different perspective on life. You show them something different and they can expand their mind and make them feel that’s another way they can go instead of just going down the same path.”

Whatever processes are occurring, Brown and Ross (2010) emphasise that both modelling prosocial cognitions and utilising social capital are built upon a trusting and genuine relationship between client and youth worker, which was perhaps the most unanimous feedback given by MYND clients. One client’s description of his relationship with his mentor, stood out:

Yeah, we clash, but we're like all good. I've got mad love for [youth worker], straight up. He's one of the reasons why I come every day. He can bring a lot. His personality is on. He's talented, he's straight up, he's always encouraging me, he's always got love for me. Like he's always got time for me. He's a hard worker too, even though I give him hard times, he'll still push me to be successful.

As captured in the Theory of Change, MYND clients described significant changes to their morals and values, which the existing literature understands as the creation of a prosocial identity. Client’s above descriptions of increased confidence participating in prosocial norms and responding to reinforcement of these norms, is one common example that could represent this change. The following description given by one client, about a routine interaction at the park when he needed tomato sauce, does well to capture this: “[youth worker] said go ask those people, go ask those people for the tomato sauce... miss, are you done with the tomato sauce? Oh yeah, shot, thank you... yeah, so, confidence.”

Another client even indicated a desire to participate in a reciprocal prosocial relationship with *me*:

Interviewee: before, no one could relate to how I was... but now... there are people like you that come in questioning, like helping people, like your research to help people find their path. Little things like that where people don't see it but like heaps of people try to make the world a better place.

Me: It's true. You reckon you'll be one of those people?

Interviewee: Yo, a mechanic fixing your car? Or fixing your bike, yo.

This young person raises a final, perhaps understated point about the role of youth workers in helping YWHO feel accepted by society. After all, becoming "prosocial" hinges not only on whether YWHO can adopt a prosocial identity, but also whether a prosocial society is able to adopt them. This is hinted at by the above client, whose newfound desire to contribute toward society appeared to follow the feeling that others could finally relate to him. In this sense, youth workers not only function as role models and a means of accessing prosocial capital; they also represent a society that understands, cares and accepts YWHO. Mirroring international findings, MYND clients who described internalising new, prosocial morals, values and identities appeared to link these in a variety of ways, to the influence of their primary role models, their youth workers (Brown & Ross, 2010).

Book Smarts or Street Smarts? Learning from Experience

While life skills featured as a key element of the final Theory of Change, MYND staff appeared to place more importance on this in workshops compared to clients. In both workshops, *life skills lessons* were identified immediately and unanimously agreed as a key element, while in interviews only four of eight clients identified life skills lessons as among the most memorable or important parts of MYND. This was further reinforced by the finding that many clients could not recall the content of most of these lessons and that only life skills that were repeated a lot during lessons were retained and applied by MYND clients. While this difference seems to be relatively minor, it does illuminate an area where the priorities of MYND clients and staff could perhaps be better aligned.

Communication errors could be one simple explanation for this finding. For example, clients may not have understood what was meant by “life skills lessons” if their particular youth worker usually referred to them differently. This may partially explain why some clients more easily recalled practical ways that life skills lessons had influenced them when asked more specific questions in targeted areas, such as independence, self-regulation and conflict.

A more nuanced explanation could be that clients were only passively engaged in the learning process, making it difficult for them to recall the knowledge from these lessons intentionally, despite retaining and using some of this knowledge without realising. *Tacit* knowledge, as this subconscious category is often called, far exceeds the amount of *explicit* knowledge, which in contrast can be consciously reproduced (Illeris, 2016). The previously discussed phenomenon of social modelling is one example of a tacit learning process, since much observational learning is thought to take place without the learner being explicitly aware of the learning process (Bandura, 1972; Passi & Johnson, 2016). For example, MYND clients are probably not always conscious that their youth worker’s respectful language is being modelled to them, nor are they likely to realise that their own language is changing as a result. While tacit learning therefore still has merit, it is also widely acknowledged that full attention to the learning process greatly aids the learner’s ability to consciously recall and utilise learnt information (Matthews, Warm, Reinerman, Langheim & Saxby, 2010; Postman & Sassenrath, 1961; Richter & Courage, 2017). If clients were usually passively involved in life skills lessons, this could indicate that they were not highly invested in them, and therefore did not prioritise remembering their content. This hypothesis is consistent with various comments by clients expressing boredom, requests that less time be spent in life skills lessons, complaints about starting lessons, and nonverbal indicators of disinterest that I personally observed during life skills lessons at the beginning of the research process (e.g., checking the time, drowsiness).

One possible solution to increase engagement may be in utilising a simple model of learning that is more practical and experiential in nature. At the time of writing, MYND documentation reported already using a 7-step “Experiential Learning Framework” (MYND, 2019) to teach life skills, indicating an existing recognition of the value of learning through real-life experiences. However, this was not explicitly identified by MYND staff during workshops nor by clients in interviews, perhaps because this 7-step process is too

complicated for young people to practice in their everyday lives without visual aids or cues provided by youth workers. The STAR model (“Stop, Think, Act, Reflect”) on the other hand was a simple strategy that was applied to client’s everyday experiences, and was also the *only* life skill consistently recalled as useful by clients during interviews. The memorability and usefulness of the STAR model in its application to the Problem Solving module hints at the potential benefit of applying a similar experiential learning process to other areas of client’s lives.

David Kolb’s *Experiential Learning Model* is one such process (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). It was originally developed within the field of adult education in North America, however Kolb’s model itself has roots in child development, and has since gathered international recognition as useful for youth and adults (Kolb, 2014). It is an active learning tool in the sense that it inherently *requires* constant contribution and participation by clients, allowing less opportunity for them to switch to more passive learning modes such as reading or listening (Envision Experience, 2015). It does not rely on learning and retaining content knowledge (which is perhaps an area that MYND clients struggled with), but instead creates a habit of applying a 4-stage learning process to almost any area in which they want to improve:

1. Concrete experience (e.g., attempting to ride a bicycle, falling over)
2. Reflective observation (e.g., reflecting on what was done and what did and did not work)
3. Abstract conceptualisation (e.g., thinking of how to improve based on the above reflections)
4. Active experimentation (e.g., carrying out this new method, noting this as another concrete experience to later reflect on)

Kolb’s Experiential Learning model is highly compatible with existing components of MYND. While fitting especially well with the Problem Solving through Decision Making module (as the STAR model does), it can be applied to a range of other modules within MYND’s life skills curriculum. Kolb’s model could also supplement some of the difficulties that some MYND clients reported having with the existing STAR model; many clients reported that the STAR model helped them “Stop” in high stress situations, however two

clients reported sometimes getting “stuck” after this point, going on to make poor decisions regardless. Kolb’s model acknowledges that everyone tends to struggle more with one stage of the process more than the others, and suggests some questions to resolve this “stuckness” (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1975). Youth workers could use prompting questions such as those in Table 2 to help clients continue to move through these stages of learning in a variety of different life skills modules.

One final strength of Kolb’s Experiential Learning model lies in the importance it places on the reflection of internal psychological phenomenon. Clients are encouraged to connect with their emotional responses during the Concrete Experience stage and with their thoughts in the Reflective Observation and Abstract Conceptualisation stages. Kolb’s model therefore naturally aligns with the growing emphasis on integrating principles of cognitive-behavioural theory (i.e., reflection of the connectedness of one’s emotions, thoughts and behaviours) into programmes for YWHO (Farruggia et al., 2011; Murray, Amann & Thom, 2018). Normalising the discussion of emotions in male youth mentoring programmes can potentially deepen relationships between MYND clients and mentors (Spencer, 2007), and address aforementioned concerns about client’s needing a platform to discuss experiences of anxiety. Finally, and perhaps just as importantly, youth workers should continue to “be real”; utilising the strength of their relationships in order to explicitly model these cognitive processes, using examples in their own lives.

Table 2

Application of the Experiential Learning Model to Topics in the Life Skills Curriculum, With Example Prompting Questions

	Youth worker example questions	Topic area		
		Substance-use	Cultural reconnection	Time management
Concrete experience	What happened?	<i>I used cannabis</i>	<i>I did not know my pepeha when asked to recite it at the tangi</i>	<i>I woke up on time today</i>
	What did you feel?	<i>I felt pressured by them and embarrassed</i>	<i>I felt ashamed</i>	<i>I felt proud, mature</i>
Reflective observation	Why did that happen?	<i>I was scared of being made fun of or left out</i>	<i>I have not learnt it and everyone else had</i>	<i>I used a timer and didn't play Fortnite too late</i>
	Why did you feel that way?	<i>They have bullied me before</i>	<i>I thought others might judge me</i>	<i>I proved it to myself</i>
Abstract conceptualisation	What can you learn?	<i>I make bad decisions when I'm with that group</i>	<i>I need to put more effort into learning my culture</i>	<i>I can follow rules that I set for myself</i>
	What will you do now?	<i>I will try to chill with my other mates instead</i>	<i>I will ask my grandpa where I am from this week</i>	<i>I will try to do this every night this week</i>

Note. Prompting questions based on those by Pfeiffer and Jones (1975)

The Community Learning Environment

Little research has explored the specific learning environments that are most effective for YWHO. This may be because most programmes for YWHO are conducted in secure youth justice institutions with limited environmental options, but also because facilitators tend to be concerned with the potential risks associated with unpredictable variables such as clients interacting with the public. Despite this, researchers and practitioners alike point out the importance of acknowledging, accepting and working alongside the communities in which offending arises, especially since this is the environment they will usually return to (Bevan, 2015; Wright & Cesar, 2013). One of the strategies used by MYND to address this is captured by the *community environment* group of elements, and the associated key assumption that learning in the community aids the transitional process between MYND and future employment or education. The following section will build on comparisons clients made between the learning environments of MYND and school, aiming to understand why community learning was preferred, if this preference translates to better outcomes after completing MYND and whether there is scope for a cultural component to be integrated into the learning environment.

Perhaps one means of understanding the pros and cons of MYND's community-based learning is by comparing it to the only other learning environment experienced by all MYND clients: the classroom. All clients reported positive experiences with MYND's community learning environment, with six preferring it to a traditional classroom setting. One of the most common reasons that MYND clients gave for truancy in previous schools or educational institutes, was negative relationships with staff (four clients). This was also found to be common (from the perspectives of teachers) in young people aligned with the "life-course persistent" trajectory, in research using data from the Dunedin Longitudinal Study (Moffit, 1993; Moffit et al., 1996).

Four MYND clients also described the classroom environment "constricting", "stuffy" and "trapped", and that in comparison, community learning felt "freer". Feelings of constriction and being trapped may have arisen in response to any number of vicious cycles found to be commonly experienced by minority and low socio-economic high school students in New Zealand. Common vicious cycles include but are not limited to negative teacher relationships (Okonofua, Walton & Eberhardt, 2016), ethnic discrimination (Crengle,

Robinson, Ameratunga, Clark & Raphael, 2012), inter-peer violence and bullying (Denny et al., 2015) and low expectations and poor performance (Hooley, Tysseling & Ray, 2013); all while being spatially “trapped” for six hours every day.

Unpleasant experiences at school may be one reason why two MYND clients specifically referred to the benefits of being outside and in nature during MYND programming. One client said “... at school you feel trapped and stuff, but the community makes you feel free... it makes you think, it’s good to have nature around you and trees and stuff... not having people talking or teachers telling you what to do... you can hear nature and stuff”. A large collection of research attests to the calming effects of being outside and amongst nature (Alvarsson, Wiens & Nilsson, 2010; Davis, 2004; Ulrich et al., 1991), which meta-analyses have found apply to both educational and therapeutic contexts (Annersted & Währborg, 2011). Participants in a range of other North American programmes for youth under age 18 have also reported this calming effect, as well as a number of other positive benefits such as a temporary escape from difficult home and school environments (Garst, Scheider & Baker, 2001; Gillis, Gass & Russell, 2008; Priest & Gass, 2017; Williams, 2000). Deane (2012) commented on the benefits of nature for New Zealand youth with low self-efficacy, including that nature was a useful tool to build resilience by overcoming challenges, and in its ability to connect youth to the rest of New Zealand through a shared identity.

Despite the above benefits of learning in a natural setting, doing so may also have limitations for YWHO. Programmes for YWHO based *entirely* in nature (i.e., wilderness adventure programmes) have been found to be less effective due to difficulty applying skills learnt in nature to completely different home and community contexts (Annersted & Währborg, 2011; Becroft, 2007). The re-activation of previously extinguished drug-seeking behaviours in animals as a result of sudden environmental change (“context-induced relapse”), has been observed neurologically and is thought to also occur to offending behaviours in people (Blagden, Lievesley & Ware, 2017; Chaudhri, Sahuque & Janak, 2008; Lacroix, Pettorelli, Maddux, Heidari-Jam & Chaudhri, 2017). While learning in a natural environment may be useful for clients transitioning to outdoors-based work (i.e., forestry, building, landscaping), most either did not say their desired area, or reported pursuing jobs or education in indoor settings such as mechanics courses, prison security or factories (seven clients). Given the limited applicability of natural environments to the prosocial futures of many MYND clients, nature may therefore be best used strategically such as

during breaks, special recreational activities or as a tool to learn resilience skills that can later be translated to other contexts.

“Applicability” and “usefulness” are terms that often seem to arise in research investigating the best learning environments for minority populations. Lloyd and Wilkinson (2016) for example examined the environmental learning needs of refugee youth in Australia, finding that classrooms may not be as useful for refugees without “access [to] the often invisible, more hidden systems of access” out in the community (p. 300). Refugees often share various life experiences with YWHO. For example, both populations often have disrupted educational backgrounds and experiences of trauma, poverty, discrimination and displacement. This is especially true for New Zealand’s Māori and Pasifika whose overrepresentation in offending statistics have been linked to being “suppressed, disconnected and abandoned” (Andrae, McIntosh & Coster, 2017, p. 119). Lloyd and Wilkinson reinforce the importance of first connecting young people to knowledge and resources that are most useful for them. This includes establishing interpersonal relationships with others in the community, familiarity with prosocial institutions (banks, libraries, gyms), and the public spaces themselves. Similar suggestions have also been made in recent research into best practice in the field of youth offending in New Zealand (Gluckman & Lambie, 2018a; Johnson, 2015; Ludbrook, 2012).

In addition to connecting MYND clients to systems of access, learning in the community could be particularly effective as a means of connecting Māori clients with their whenua (land), and their culture. Indeed, Hamley and Le Grice (2021) argue that “an indigenous approach to health and wellbeing invites thinking about systems of connection and relationality”; a theme that appears to repeatedly emerge throughout this discussion (p. 74). In addition to the “freedom” aspect of learning in the community, two Māori clients also noted their enjoyment of discovering new locations around Auckland. One client, who identified himself as an “outdoor person”, gave the example that his youth worker “took us out west for the first time in my life... I’d never been out west until he took us”. Many Māori scholars conceptualise “reconnecting people to place” as being an essential component of Māori wellbeing (Cooper & Rickard, 2016; Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019, p. 28), potentially explaining why this was important for some clients but also hinting at possibilities for how MYND’s community learning environment could be more responsive to Māori in the future. Unfortunately, the development of models that integrate whenua

connection into programmes for Māori who have offended are still in their infancy (Ministry of Justice, 2017b). In the short-term though, MYND youth workers could implement some simple changes such as prioritising locations of cultural significance including ngahere (forest), māra (Māori community gardens) and historical sites (Hond, Ratima & Edwards, 2019).

Despite the lack of research on community-based interventions for YWHO compared to ones in secure facilities, using the community as a learning environment to reduce reoffending is clearly supported at a theoretical level (Krisberg & Howell, 1998; McLaren, 2000; Mendel, 2000; Zampese, 1998; Zavlek, 2005). High rates of recidivism upon a sudden re-entry to the community stem from a failure to generalise skills learnt in these alternative environments (Ludbrook, 2012; Zavlek, 2005). The best learning environments are therefore those similar to the ones in which they will be asked to use these skills; their communities. Learning in natural environments within the community may be particularly valued by Māori clients as a way of reconnecting to whenua and their culture, however skills learnt in these environments the need to be “translated” to and practiced in contexts similar to those that they will transition into.

Goals: The Importance of a Common Vision

Short and long-term goals were areas in the compared Theories of Change where client and staff perspectives differed significantly. Clients only consistently identified five short and long-term goals between all eight interview participants: find employment, cease offending, get a car and licence, and start a family. In comparison, MYND staff initially identified at least 12 goals (a healthier relationship with drugs and alcohol, problem solving skills, prosocial cognitions, community and family connection, reduced offending, increased self-efficacy, emotion regulation skills, goal-orientated decision-making, increased responsibility toward family, financial and social independence, involvement in prosocial institutions, established routines). Comparison of the sets of goals produced by MYND clients and MYND staff bring to light two important differences. One of the differences relates to the *range* of goals identified (clients identified five goals, staff identified 12), while the other difference relates to goal *type* (clients generally identified tangible, concrete outcomes while staff identified a mix of tangible outcomes *and* personal qualities). Mutual

agreement of goals has been found to be a particularly important factor that youth work programmes do not always address, highlighting the need to understand these differences (Burrowes & Needs, 2009).

During workshops, MYND staff quickly produced a large range of goals that they hoped for clients to achieve. Staff had so many ideas about this that I had to put conscious effort into condensing and wrapping up this section of both workshops for lack of additional time, eventually resulting in 12 themes of short and long-term goals. In comparison, MYND clients often struggled to identify a mere three short or long-term goals during interviews, resulting in only five different goals identified between all eight clients. One explanation for client's comparative lack of goal range is that they simply lacked imagination or ambition, however a deeper analysis uncovers a number of other potential explanations that are both more likely and useful to the ongoing development of MYND.

An alternative explanation for the lack of range in client's goals is that they may have limited perceived possibilities of what they can achieve as adults. A lack of prosocial role models during their early lives may have contributed to this; as mentioned above, many clients were raised by only one parent, and had whānau who followed stereotypic patterns of offending, going to prison, and reoffending. Even for those with prosocial role models in their early lives, such individuals may have adhered to a limited range of masculine identities (i.e., husband, father, financial provider), who only slightly expand the breadth of identities that clients can draw from, to envision their own futures (Benokraitis, 1996). A large body of research has also found that school teachers often set less ambitious expectations for students with behavioural difficulties (Wang, Rubie-Davies & Meissel, 2018). As described previously, MYND clients who fit this description described negative relationships with teachers, whose lower expectations could also have contributed to client's limited range of goals. The short period of time spent in the MYND programme may therefore have been one of the earliest opportunities for clients to "brainstorm" for their futures.

A discussion with one MYND client about his long-term goals (i.e., for the next five years), gives some insight into this hypothesis. He described thinking little about his future because when he had done this before MYND, his goals did not come to fruition:

Interviewee: I dunno. I could be dead by then.

Me: Hopefully not.

Interviewee: Nah, hopefully not. That's why I don't like planning, I just go by my days. Coz heaps of times I'll plan something, and it just doesn't go to plan. As much as I try it just doesn't.

Me: And that's why you just don't bother?

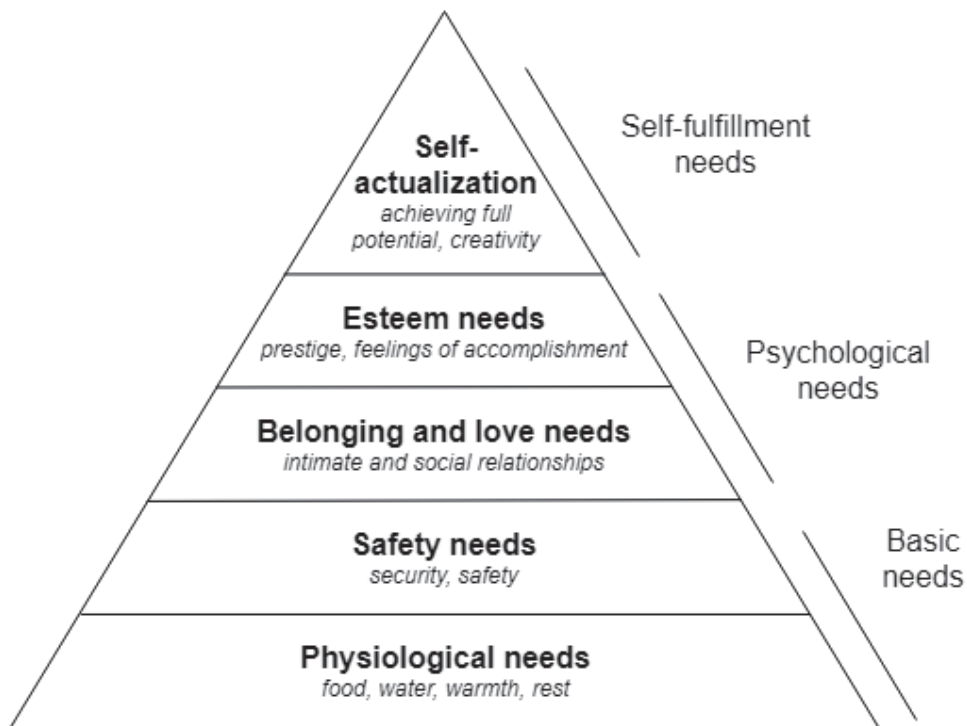
Interviewee: Yo. But when MYND came in, I started planning and it went to plan. Yeah, I can actually do something.

This client's statement about perhaps being dead in five years also points to differences between the *types* of goals identified by MYND clients and staff. The types of goals identified by clients could mostly be described as concrete, tangible outcomes that focus on the short-term (seen in lack of difference between short and long-term goals). Staff identified a mixture of both short-term tangible outcomes and less specific personal qualities that were hoped to continue improving years into the future. Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" provides a contextual explanation for this difference.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (see Figure 11) claims that humans are fundamentally motivated by five types of goals: physiological health (food, water, warmth, rest), safety (security), belonging (intimate and social relationships), accomplishment (self-esteem, prestige), and self-actualisation (creativity, achieving one's full potential; Maslow, 1943, 1981). Maslow's Hierarchy would assert that in environments of violence, unpredictability and poverty even the most basic needs are not met, which can detract from an individual's ability to focus on needs higher up, which are not as immediately important. Studies in New Zealand and Australia similarly highlight the difficulty that many programmes in New Zealand have with engaging YWHO in goals higher up the hierarchy (Haigh, 2009; Henry, Henaghan, Sanders & Munford, 2015). This may also have been found in MYND clients, whose daily focus on sustenance, comfort, security and belonging may have simply outshone longer term goals that require considerable commitment and stability to achieve.

Figure 11

Maslow's Hierarchy of Fundamental Human Needs



Indeed, MYND client's goals appeared to reflect a preoccupation with having a livelihood and shelter (job, house) and interpersonal belonging (whānau and support networks), and a comparative lack of goals that fit nearer the top of Maslow's Hierarchy. This is reinforced by the types of barriers that MYND clients felt could most significantly impact their chances of achieving their goals, which were often needs relating to their physiological health, safety and belonging. For example, some of the biggest barriers among clients included financial stress (one client), lack of sleep (three clients), reconnecting with antisocial peers (two clients) and familial instability (two clients). The following quote illustrates the impact of whānau insecurity on one client's "fifty percent" confidence in achieving his goals:

Me: Why only fifty percent?

Interviewee: I dunno if I'll actually do it. I've got a feeling that I can do it but it's gotta go my way.

Me: True. So what's one of the areas that you're not that sure about?

Interviewee: Just barriers.

Me: What are the barriers?

Interviewee: Things always get in the way... things always pop up.

Me: Like what?

Interviewee: Little things like my brother getting locked up or my brother dying. Mum not feeling good... but I don't wanna feed off it aye.

Me: So what do you do then if something like that happens?

Interviewee: Nah, barriers they do come up, I don't like to deal with it, but it just breaks me I think.

Addressing contextual factors in client's lives such as threats to their physiological and familial health and security, while also providing alternative means of connection and belonging may therefore allow clients to shift some attention toward the self-actualising goals identified by MYND staff (e.g., self-efficacy, emotion regulation, decision making, and prosocial identity). While Maslow originally implied that one needed to "achieve" the lower fundamental human needs before working toward any above it, research since has found that it is possible to work toward multiple needs at once (Deckers, 2015). It is therefore just as important to continue targeting the psychological and self-fulfillment needs identified by MYND staff; however one challenge that remains is how to get MYND clients more invested in them.

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) is a clinical modality originally designed to treat unhelpful behaviour patterns in individuals diagnosed with personality disorders, and may also provide a framework for helping MYND clients buy into some of the skill-based goals identified by MYND staff (Linehan, 2014). DBT was initially developed in North America however a vast amount of research currently supports its use with diverse youth populations internationally, including New Zealand's (Appleby, Staniforth, Flanagan & Millar, 2020; Morton, 2019). DBT asks clients to first define a number of "life worth living goals", which are concrete observable outcomes very similar to the goals identified by MYND clients (Coyle et al., 2019). The framework then works backward from here, asking clients

“what problem behaviours interfere with you achieving these goals” and “what skills do you need to minimise these behaviours and achieve these goals”. DBT therefore requires clients to not only think of *what* they want to achieve, but also *how* they will reach them. Explicitly and consistently linking client’s desired outcomes with the skills taught in MYND may help clients see these skills as more relevant. This may increase MYND client’s focus on the psychological and self-actualising goals that staff know will benefit them in the long-term, potentially increasing engagement in life skills lessons (which has already been identified as a difficulty for many clients).

To summarise, comparing the goals identified by MYND staff and MYND clients in the initial development stages of the Theory of Change revealed differences in both range and types of goals. There are a number of historical explanations for why client’s goals were more restricted in these ways, including a lack of prosocial role models throughout their upbringing that could have helped them achieve their goals, and disengagement with institutions that might otherwise have nurtured them to “dream big”. Ongoing instability in MYND client’s current lives may also explain their preoccupation with goals that align with Maslow’s basic needs, rather than a balance between these concrete outcomes and the longer-term development of personal qualities relating their own self-actualisation and fulfillment. Despite these differences, MYND appeared to be making a positive impact for at least five clients who reported feeling more supported and confident in achieving their goals. MYND may help turn client’s attention toward a broader range and diversity of goals by more explicitly linking client’s desired outcomes with the skills offered by MYND, and addressing contextual threats to their physiological, safety and belonging needs.

Client’s Wider Systems: from Goals of Independence to Interdependence

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs suggests a unique way of understanding and categorising different types of goals. Above the basic physiological and safety needs, it identifies the psychological needs of belonging and love; inherently relational terms that are satisfied only through relationships with others. The following section builds from the Social Ecological Theory to understand the various types of relationships held by YWHO with other groups of people. It extends on the above findings regarding the importance of whānau to MYND clients by questioning how (and if) the term “independence” fits into a Theory of

Change that also values interconnectedness. It ends with a number of suggestions for how MYND could better support whānau, as well as further integrate the programme into peer groups and client's cultural systems.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's *Social Ecological Theory* posits that an individual is nested within a collection of interrelated systems, including those involving the family, peer groups, school, community and culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see Figure 12). These systems are widely acknowledged as being key contributors to the development of an individual's initial offending. The RNR model's central eight, for example, considers antisocial peers, family problems, school/work engagement, and lack of prosocial leisure activities as dynamic risk factors. Data obtained from interviews in the current research supported this; as stated earlier, seven clients reported that initial offending began amongst antisocial peers. All eight clients reported various school problems around the time of their initial offending including but not limited to disengaging due to academic struggles, negative relationships with teachers, and peer rivalries and fighting. Five clients also identified serious difficulties within their families as contributing to their initial offending including family members who were frequently offending, familial drug use, violence, illness and socioeconomic stress.

Given the potential role that these systems may have in the perpetuation of offending in YWHO, it may be tempting for programmes to aim to distance clients from this system to some degree. Indeed, one client felt that his relationship with family was not helpful, and that finding support elsewhere would help him remain on his prosocial trajectory:

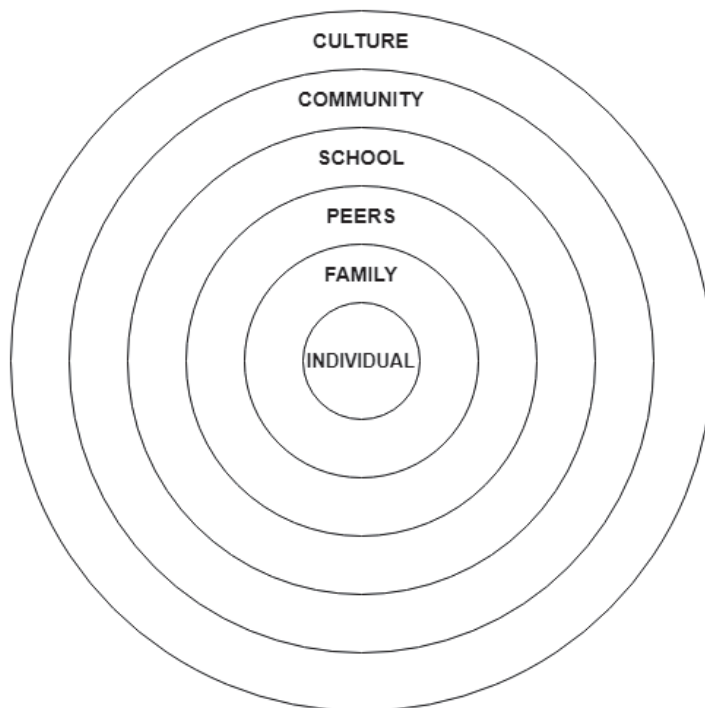
Yeah, I can look after myself, like without anyone helping. Coz I do got support at home, but I've been, really been supported by youth workers. Yeah, like I have family issues at home as well with my parents, like they don't really want to know me sometimes. But that doesn't affect me, coz I've got my own life to worry about now.

Such responses arose from conversations with MYND clients about what it means to be "independent"; a long-term goal identified by MYND staff. The first use of the term independence originated from MYND staff in workshops, who felt it accurately summarised several goals including being less affected by peer pressure, having their own transport and

being financially non-reliant on others. This understanding of independence subsequently became integrated into the Theory of Change as a long-term goal.

Figure 12

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model



Various other youth work models have also cited independence as an important goal for young people, although defined it differently. Researchers of PYD for example describe “a sense of independence and individuality” as a key component of their *Character* goal included in the “5 Cs” (Pedersen, 2018, p. 1). Five clients responded to queries about independence in ways that also indicated this individualistic understanding of the term; for example one saying “independent like being by yourself... relying on yourself”, and another responding “yeah, like on your own... looking after myself without anyone helping”. By this definition, many MYND clients (and perhaps YWHO in general) are in some ways already very practiced at being independent, given histories of relational and resource instability.

A valid cultural consideration was raised rather humourously by one client who, when asked whether independence was important for him said: “the only time Māori are by

themselves are when they're in the toilet". As noted earlier, the majority of interviewed clients (and MYND clients generally) belonged to either Māori or Pacific Island ethnic groups. These cultures are widely considered as having comparatively collectivist ideologies, and as such often place higher value on maintaining close familial relationships and are more likely to think of the self as a collective rather than an individual (Podsiadlowski & Fox, 2011; Tassell, 2004). Many researchers point out that youth programmes that emphasise more western, individualistic values and goals may be less suitable for young people from disadvantaged or minority populations with more collectivist cultures (Bessant, 2009; Propp et al., 2003; Owen, 2001; Slovenko & Thompson, 2016). While perhaps not intended by MYND, conflicting ideas between MYND staff and clients about what is meant by independence (and the degree to which it should be prioritised as a goal) could impact programme engagement and inadvertently perpetuate inequalities that already exist within these cultures. This point is aptly captured by one client, who said "MYND hasn't made me independent... in a good way though.... I just don't wanna go by myself... I'm a people person".

Indeed, five clients described a desire for increased closeness and responsibility with their families, rather than being independent from them. In response to questions about his long-term goals, one MYND client said "have a job, probably have a car and that... I'll probably still live with my mum and dad, pay board." Another said "I'm just gonna work for it aye, to be honest, I'll work for it... from now I'll just probably rely on my old lady until I get myself a job... then I'm gonna get a job, help mum out and stuff". Others were less sure of what they wanted for their futures except for the fact that it would involve their families: "I always have that vision in my head, of family". One quote captures this desire for increased familial closeness and responsibility particularly well:

Interviewee: I just wanna give back to my mum aye. I put her through a lot.

It's time for me to give back.

Me: What do you mean by giving back?

Interviewee: She's done everything for us, so it's just time to look after her.

Me: So what does looking after her look like? What would you do?

Interviewee: Everything... just give her everything. It doesn't have to be money, just give her love while she's here... When I was young, I just thought oh mum will be all good. She'll be always there, always in those court rooms. Then I just got to a point where I was like nah, I have to stop it. I hate seeing her behind the dock and her hands are on her face crying.

As was the case for the above young person, the goal of getting a job and having an income was for many MYND clients *not* to help them become more financially independent. Many clients were also opposed to the notion that all forms of peer pressure were unhelpful. These individuals described a form of “positive peer pressure” that was often applied by friends and families in ways that supported them to cease offending rather than encouraged them to continue: “positive peer pressure like seeing my mum or [youth worker] or my bros and they're like, bro, you can do this... you can get a job, you can go play rugby, you can do this stuff if you set your mind to it”. For clients who were on-board with the goal of becoming independent from antisocial peers, several considered the temptation to reconnect with them among their biggest challenges. Furthermore, rather than feeling empowered by becoming independent from their peers, many described processes involving anxiety, avoidance and vigilance: “if the boys are coming to my house, I'll leave... or if they're coming just get my missus to open the door and say that I'm gone with one of the other bros”. Such experiences echo those represented by Nugent and Schinkel (2016), who shed light on the pain and isolation that often arises from efforts to desist from offending. Furthermore, researchers widely agree that many desistance programmes are too individualistic in focus and often neglect the complex, but crucial role of social relations (LeBel, Burnett, Maruna & Bushway, 2008; Maruna, 2001; Weaver, 2015, 2019; Weaver & McNeill, 2015). Prioritising independence may therefore be problematic for several reasons, including misunderstandings surrounding the term itself, the possibility of many clients not sharing this goal, and for those who struggle to sustain the motivation required to remain independent.

Many researchers claim that youth work programmes should instead encourage values of *interdependence* (Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006; Propp et al., 2003). Interdependence, according to Irene Stiver (1991) is a blend of self-sufficiency and dependency. It combines an ability to be personally responsible for one's own life while also

utilising the benefits inherent to interpersonal relationships. Stiver describes interdependence as a state that “allows for experiencing one’s self as being enhanced and empowered through the very process of counting on others for help” (p. 160). Prior researchers of youth work programmes in New Zealand would seem to agree: “the need for autonomy... must be balanced with the maintenance of positive family ties as families continue to provide vital resources for positive growth” (Deane, 2012, p. 39). The concept of interdependence also seems to better align with the values of collectivist cultures such as Māori and Pasifika, than values of independence. Such perspectives were perhaps reflected in interviews with MYND clients, who identified relationships with youth workers as a key element of MYND, and relationships with family as important short and long-term goals.

Accordingly, programmes for YWHO have recently begun moving away from broad goals of independence and toward goals of interdependence; those that emphasise building individual skills that are also supported by positive relationships. Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) is one such approach that builds interventions into all of Bronfenbrenner’s systems. MST acknowledges that young people have many independent resources that can be drawn upon to build a prosocial identity; for example, knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences. However, MST also maintains that YWHO do not exist in vacuums and it is therefore crucial that their prosocial futures are supported by the systems around them. It primarily uses family-based interventions as the vehicle for changing the young person’s relationships with other systems (Henggeler et al., 2009; Henggeler & Sheidow, 2012). MST therapists generally aim to improve intra-familial relationships and parenting practices, but more specifically to help families identify “drivers” of undesirable behaviours before providing them with a range of strategies for addressing them. These include but are not limited to establishing a behaviour plan at home, increased parental monitoring, addressing parent or teacher disputes and supporting the young person to integrate with prosocial peer groups.

Randomised Controlled Trials for MST have found significant reductions in recidivism in YWHO, and have promising results in New Zealand (Gluckman & Lambie, 2018b; Henggeler, 2017; Lambie, Krynen & Best, 2016; Van der Stouwe, Asscher, Stams, Deković & van der Laan, 2014). International studies have linked MST to beneficial outcomes for siblings and parents of the “intended” client up to 25 years later (Johnides, Borduin, Wagner & Dopp, 2017; Wagner, Borduin, Sawyer & Dopp, 2014). MST could be especially beneficial

with MYND clients given meta-analyses that have found family interventions to be particularly effective for young people from ethnic minorities (Sawyer et al., 2015).

MYND certainly makes a respectable attempt to address the multiple systems of their clients, reaching all of them to some degree. Perhaps most obviously, the MYND Theory of Change clearly emphasises integrating clients into a prosocial community system, and provides a structured educational system that allows supervision of peer networks. MYND also attempts to remain in regular contact with parents, and integrates Māori and Pasifika culture into a variety of life skills modules relating to Identity Development. Despite these things, there is perhaps room for more “balance” in this regard. MYND client’s calls for familial interdependence and connection echo a significant evidence base; one that locates true empowerment in both individual responsibility and relational support. More specific applications of these findings to MYND are detailed in the future directions section.

Motivation to Change... as Simple as “Growing Up”?

While it is certainly useful to have goals, especially ones that are agreed upon by both staff and clients, movement toward these goals requires *motivation*, a term that is often used alongside goals. Motivation was a common theme that arose in conversations with MYND clients and staff alike. In client interviews, four MYND clients independently raised the idea that YWHO need to *want* to change at some point throughout the interview, without this question even being explicitly asked. Three MYND clients also reported that a loss of this motivation was among their biggest barriers to achieving their long-term goals. Similarly, MYND staff identified “client accountability” as a crucial moderator of the achievement of short and long-term goals; a concept that can be thought of as a form of sustained motivation. For the above reasons, the concept of motivation and the role it plays in MYND is clearly in need of extended discussion. Drawing on examples given in the current evaluation, the following section will attempt to uncover what drives YWHO to become motivated to change, and how various models provided by the extant literature could be used to help measure and influence MYND client’s motivation.

As alluded to above, motivation is defined as the client’s personal commitment to long-term prosocial goals. Motivation therefore has large implications for the engagement of YWHO in programmes that target these goals. Clients are less likely to put effort into

learning life skills, for example, if they do not believe they need them. Mossière and Serin (2014) reviewed a raft of research and found that while in general completion of programmes designed for forensic populations were effective, high dropout rates were a common issue. Similarly, Olver, Stockdale and Wormith (2011) conducted a meta-analysis and found that a lack of motivation was associated with high programme dropout rates, and ultimately recidivism. They concluded that “the clients who stand to benefit the most from treatment (i.e., high-risk, high-needs) are the least likely to complete it” (p. 6). While only two clients reported skipping MYND more often than school, interviews revealed anecdotal evidence that client dropouts were not an uncommon occurrence in MYND. One client in particular described partially completing the MYND programme previously, before dropping out, reoffending and then being later re-referred to MYND:

Yeah, I mucked up, got a little bit off track and stuff... it just got boring in the end... coz they already did everything that they could with me, and it was like, I just started graffitiing stuff. I just ended up not coming to course and that, started going out with the boys. But [now I've] come back on.

Others like this young person were perhaps under-represented in the eight clients who were interviewed, since they were all nearing the end of the programme and therefore had a high degree of motivation to engage in MYND. Nonetheless, those who were interviewed may still provide valuable insights into how YWHO become more motivated to change their antisocial behaviours and identities, to prosocial ones.

Many clients expressed opinions about motivation arising somewhat passively. Five reported having changed their opinions on their past offending behaviour not necessarily because of something related to MYND (although many acknowledged the role MYND also played in this) but because of perceived changes in their own personalities, as a result of their age and life experience:

Just like your brain expands, it's like you go through your teens. So say you're 12, and there's a 15 year old, you can tell the difference of experience. So it's experience that's just been brought on.

Coz I'm trying to get me a legit life. You just grow up, those people over there inside, they're fucken 16 or 18 still stealing and selling shit, still stealing cars. Nah fuck that.

Like just grow up a bit, head into the adult life. And probably better environment to like be around.

They helped me a lot too, MYND, but it doesn't really go for all young people. Coz some of them, they're still young, their brains are not developing properly... they're not like really ready to be adult. But I don't really know how to say it... if I was still young again I would still be doing it. I guess it's like... growing up, being an adult.

I don't really know how to say it but I think it's maturity or something.

The idea of an individual making a lifestyle change due to “growing up” and becoming “mature” is one that has received a lot of attention in the forensic literature. Moffit’s Developmental Theory of Crime for example, argues that offending trajectories of most YWHO often decrease steadily into adulthood according to the “adolescent-limited” classification (Moffit, 2018). Importantly though, age alone does not explain why adolescent-limited individuals desist, and by the same token, why those who follow the life-course persistent trajectory continue offending for much longer (Skardhamar, 2009). Perhaps there is something *about* growing up that some young people experience and others do not, that contributes to this maturity.

The concept of a “wake-up call” being the catalyst for a young person deciding to change has often been discussed within the context of the life course perspective for YWHO (Burrowes & Needs, 2009; Elder, 1998; Thomson et al., 2002; Urry, Sanders, Munford & Dewhurst, 2014). Urry and colleagues define a wake-up call as “a critical moment in their life and is a process wherein the young person experiences insight into their current, or prior course of action and recognises the opportunities they have to act on this” (Urry et al., 2014, p. 8). Urry and colleagues found these wake-up calls to occur frequently in the New Zealand YWHO that they interviewed. In the current study, two MYND clients described events that had qualities of wake-up calls:

I think it was when my sister got raped.

I just got to a point where I was like nah, I have to stop it. I hate seeing her [mother] behind the dock and her hands are on her face crying.

The above MYND clients felt that these events involving their families played a significant role in their motivation to change their lifestyles. Indeed, Paternoster and Bushway (2009) reported that such events could be particularly useful especially when youth workers explicitly attempt to help their clients make meaning from these experiences (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009).

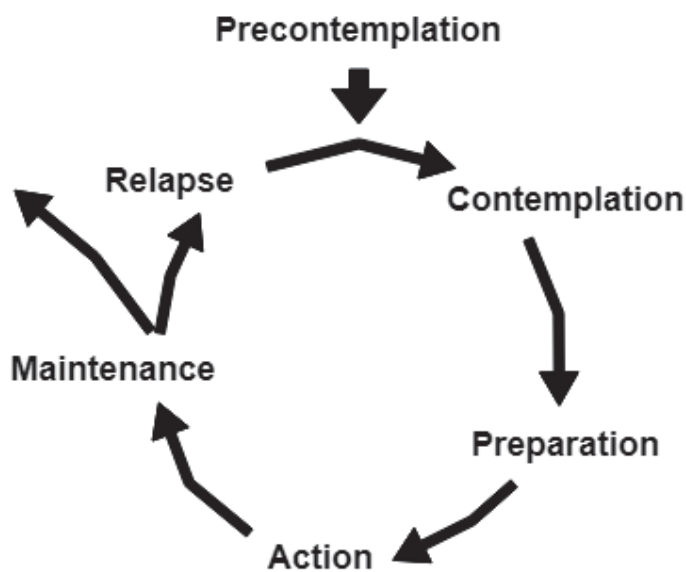
Despite this line of research, most agree that motivation to change does *not* arise suddenly, such as experiencing an epiphany or a sudden desire to turn one's life around, but instead that motivation arises gradually (Bersani & Doherty, 2018). Admittedly, much of the research on motivation to change in offending populations comes from adult samples (Yesberg & Polaschek, 2019), however several researchers have found this gradual change to also occur in youth (Knott, 2004; Lambie & Randell, 2013). This seems to align better with what clients reported in interviews; five clients reported a gradually increasing severity of offending when they were younger, and inversely, seven acknowledged that there were multiple factors that contributed toward their decision to cease offending. This is further supported by earlier discussion, which concluded that a prosocial ideal self is gradually developed by youth workers through at least two channels (modelling prosocial cognitive processes and building from role model's social capital). Just as offending does not "switch" from antisocial to social then, motivation to change most likely occurs on a continuum, and should therefore be thought of as gradual and non-linear (Bersani & Doherty, 2018; Harris, 2011; Yesberg & Polaschek, 2019). There are two leading understandings of this process of becoming motivated to change: the Transtheoretical Model and the Multifactor Offender Readiness Model. Both of these may be useful in conceptualising different degrees of motivation amongst MYND clients, as well as providing guidance for how MYND can best respond to this.

One useful way to conceptualise the change process was developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983) and became known as the *Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change* (TTM; see Figure 13). The TTM remains commonly used in the field of drug and alcohol addiction services, but in alignment with its "trans-theoretical" nature, remains applicable to a wide variety of behavioural therapies and interventions designed to elicit

some form of pro-health behavioural change, including offending behaviour (Friman, Huck & Olsson, 2017; Liu, Kueh, Arifin, Kim & Kuan, 2018; Polaschek, Anstiss & Wilson, 2010). Most researchers and clinicians understand the Transtheoretical Model of Change as being made up of six stages: *pre-contemplation*, *contemplation*, *preparation*, *action*, *maintenance* and *relapse*.

Figure 13

Transtheoretical Model of Change



People in the *pre-contemplation* stage have no intention of changing, and usually do not believe that there is any need for them to change. Those in the *contemplation* stage can acknowledge that their behaviour is problematic, however they either remain ambivalent about whether the pros outweigh the cons or simply believe that change is not possible. In the *preparation* stage individuals have acknowledged the need to change and are taking the initial steps. This includes taking practical action to ease the transition and finding support by informing friends and family of their decision. Individuals in the *action* stage have begun to implement change. This is arguably the most difficult, as it is this stage in which individuals are most likely to lose their commitment and fall back into old habits and relationships. To continue ahead they must learn new psychological strategies and behaviours such as substitution, reward and avoidance of temptation. The *maintenance*

phase is when new routines and habits are clearly established and they can experience the benefits of their change.

Avoiding *relapse* requires continued vigilance of tempting situations and the early signs of a slip back into old behaviours, which can arise as a result of stress, a sudden change of context or the re-emergence of old social or familial influences. This is an example of the non-linear nature of the TTM; individuals often move back and forth between stages, as well as around stages in a cyclical nature. The TTM therefore conceives relapse not as a “failure” to change, but rather an unfortunate yet often necessary process in the broader journey of long-term change (Casey, Day & Howells, 2005).

The TTM is useful in that it provides a relatively simple understanding of motivation to change. Since all clients who were interviewed reported an intention to desist from offending in the future, the model would likely place them in the preparation, action or maintenance stages. The TTM’s non-linear, cyclical conceptualisation would also appear to make sense of the experience of the above client who described being referred to MYND with high motivation, eventually lost motivation to attend, reoffended, and was later re-referred to MYND. Advocates of the TTM claim that knowing an individual’s stage of change is useful as it allows tailoring of treatment strategies according to client’s varying degrees of motivation (Casey et al., 2005). Doing this is considered to lessen the chance of individuals dropping out (Polaschek et al., 2010), and allow programmes to focus on unique psychological processes that are thought to be important for them to move into subsequent stages (Norcross, Krebs, & Prochaska, 2011; Willoughby & Perry, 2002). Briefly, these processes are: the reversal of pros versus cons of change, increasing self-efficacy, attaining facts, paying attention to emotions, creating a new self-image, noticing the effect of behaviour on others, noticing public support for new behaviour, making a commitment to change, finding social support, finding substitute behaviours, reinforcing new behaviours, and avoidance of old cues.

There is limited supporting evidence for all of the assertions of the TTM. Tailoring programmes to the stage of change that individuals have been categorised into has not been found to consistently result in clearer progression through stages (Casey et al., 2005). Evidence on stage-matched interventions is also mixed due to disagreement about the number of stages, the non-linear progression through these stages and even whether motivation to change should be thought about in terms of stages at all (Mossière & Serin,

2014). The TTM may have limited usefulness for MYND in particular, which in contrast to many RNR-based programmes is not purely interested in offending behaviour but also client's overall quality of life. MYND does not view the change process as a cognitive "decision" that takes place between the preparation and action stages, but rather as a gradual change in identity that results from a complex interaction of new life skills, prosocial role modelling and systemic support. Despite its weaknesses, even the TTM's critics acknowledge that the fault may not lie entirely with the model itself but rather the inadequate implementation of it to practice (Casey et al., 2005). Others advocate for the continued usefulness of TTM-based measures as a simple means of monitoring motivation (Anstiss, Polaschek & Wilson, 2011), risk of reoffending and programme dropout (Polaschek et al., 2010).

Another popular model of motivation to change applied to forensic populations is the *Multifactor Offender Readiness Model*. Rather than understanding motivation as stage-based, authors of the MORM define motivation to change as "the presence of characteristics (states or dispositions) within either the client or the therapeutic situation, which are likely to promote engagement in therapy and which, thereby, are likely to enhance therapeutic change" (Ward, Day, Howells & Birgden, 2004, p. 647). The MORM views motivation as a combination of conditions that can be categorised as both internal (cognitive, emotional, goal-related, behaviour, and identity) *and* external (circumstances, location, opportunity, resources, support, programme and timing; Ward et al., 2004). Ward and colleagues provide a detailed 14-page overview of the specific variables within each of the above factors and their relation to motivation to change. This makes the MORM a fairly complex model, but one that is often thought to represent the nuanced, contextual reality of what makes an individual motivated to change and motivated to engage in programmes (Casey, Day, Howells & Ward, 2007; McMurrin & Ward, 2010; Mossière & Serin, 2014).

While the TTM's understanding of motivation is centered around internal cognitive factors (Casey et al., 2005), the MORM distinguishes itself through its recognition that a multitude of external factors also influence motivation to change. This seemed to be a better fit for the complex picture of motivation given by MYND clients, which was often described as being tied to external factors such as whānau support and availability of financial resources. In particular, the MORM acknowledges the importance of external circumstantial motivators for engagement in programmes such as legal pressure, or what

Ward and colleagues term “coercion” (Burrowes & Needs, 2009; Ward et al., 2004). They argue that such external motivators may reduce engagement in programmes for people who have offended, especially if participants have different goals from those of the programme or if they do not believe the programme will help them achieve their particular goals. Interviews with MYND clients suggested a high degree of legal coercion involved in their engagement with the programme. Seven of the eight clients interviewed reported either having no choice to attend or were given a choice between attending MYND or being sent to a secure youth justice facility, with the one remaining client also having to choose between MYND and an alternative education provider:

No like you're on YJ and the only reason you can get out of YJ is if you're on MYND.

Well when I got out, when I got out of the cells... they said I was going on this course called MYND. I said, aye? He [the lawyer] said it was part of my bail conditions.

Well if I kept not coming then I'll have to do something else, or if I keep offending then I'll get locked up.

It was either go to MYND or do my full sentence.

The MORM’s distinct concepts of internal and external motivation share some similarities with *Self-Determination Theory’s* (SDT) intrinsic and extrinsic goals. Kasser and Ryan (1996) define intrinsic goals as those that are expressive of desires congruent with actualising and growth tendencies natural to humans” (Kasser & Ryan, 1996, p. 280). More specifically, intrinsic goals have been described as those that best represent an individual’s true values and interests, and can be traced to universal human desires of feeling autonomous, competent and related (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon, 2004). In contrast, they identify extrinsic goals as those that less directly represent their underlying values and interests and instead “depend on the contingent reactions of others... [and] are typically engaged in as a means to some other end” (p. 280). Aligning with the above assertions, a large number of research studies suggest that intrinsically motivated individuals are better able to maintain effort toward their goals over time, are more satisfied when they reach these goals, which subsequently benefits their long-term wellbeing (Brdar, Miljković &

Rijavec, 2011; Sheldon, 2004). Predictably, extrinsic motivation has been linked to higher disengagement rates in non-custodial community interventions and higher problematic and antisocial behaviours during these programmes (Brooks & Khan, 2015).

Much research has attempted to understand why some individuals are more intrinsically motivated while others are more extrinsically motivated. Kasser, Ryan, Zax and Sameroff (1995) for example found that eighteen year-olds brought up in lower socio-economic groups in North America and had less nurturing home environments and were more extrinsically motivated. They theorised that these negative early life experiences may have produced feelings of inherent insecurity, which drive the need for external recognition, rewards and praise. Of course, these appear to be experiences shared by many MYND clients, who expressed a significant degree of extrinsic motivation to engage with MYND; their attendance was contingent on the reactions of the judges, lawyers and the legal system that they were subject to. Their engagement with MYND was therefore, at least to some degree, a means to another end: avoiding youth justice or alternative education. Extrinsic motivation may also partially explain why MYND client's goals were shorter term, and why some individuals reported problems staying motivated to achieve their goals in the past (Koestner & Losier, 2004; Sheldon, 2004). While SDT was never applied to a specific population, it contributed to the offending field by highlighting the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic goals, and argued that a fulfilling life is one driven primarily by intrinsic motivators; value-based actions that are fulfilling in and of themselves.

The Good Lives Model (GLM) applies many of the principles outlined by SDT to a model of offending and desistance. It holds a similar underlying values-based understanding of behaviour (both prosocial and antisocial). It conceptualises offending behaviour as a secondary means of achieving one or more primary human goods; a means to another end. It understands motivation to change then, as a process of identifying primary human goods (the "ends") and redirecting YWHO toward more prosocial "means" of achieving them. Doing so aligns with the PYD approach, which emphasises that approach goals, rather than avoidance goals, are the more powerful drivers of behaviour (covered earlier; Prescott, 2013). Clare-Ann Fortune, a prominent GLM researcher in New Zealand states "ultimately the objective of practitioners is to tap into individual's motivations and goals... in short, it is a process that happens *with* young people not *to* them" (Fortune, 2018, p. 23).

How then, can programmes such as MYND influence the motivation of clients? Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a widely used therapeutic technique for helping clients explore ambivalence and uncertainty about a specific behaviour, with the intention that through this exploration the client will eventually recognise a need to change this behaviour (Miller, 1996; Miller & Rollnick, 2012). While MI was initially used to build awareness and resolve internal conflict for adults with drinking and substance addiction behaviours, it has since been applied successfully to other demographics and problem areas, including with youth and in the field of offending (Austin, Williams & Kilgour, 2011). Moreover, it has been linked to all of the above theories of motivation, some of which have further demonstrated this through independently developed measures of motivation (Anstiss et al., 2011; Austin, Williams & Kilgour, 2011; Casey et al., 2007; McMurrin & Ward, 2010; Mossièrè & Serin, 2014; Ward, Yates & Willis, 2012; Willis & Ward, 2013).

MI requires the clinician or facilitator to operate under four fundamental principles (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). These principles are:

1. *Expressing empathy*: empathetic, non-judgemental reflections on what clients have said.
2. *Developing discrepancy*: increasing awareness of the negative effects of their behaviour and juxtaposing this against the life that they want.
3. *Avoiding arguments*: arguing with clients is usually counterproductive to client motivation and to the relationship; client resistance should instead be met with affirmations of their own autonomy in the change process.
4. *Supporting self-efficacy*: highlighting client strengths and past successes, no matter how small.

There is a growing body of evidence that suggests the principles of MI can be used to increase motivation to engage with subsequent programmes designed for individuals who have offended, ultimately decreasing reoffending rates (Day, Casey, Ward, Howells & Vess, 2010). One increasingly promising application of MI to offending populations is the Short Motivational Programme (SMP). These are brief “pre-treatment” programmes (usually under 2 months), that are low intensity and designed to increase individual’s motivation to change offending using MI principles (Devereux, 2009; Yong, Williams, Provan, Clarke &

Sinclair, 2015). Despite a scarcity of research on the effects of SMPs on young people's motivation and engagement in programmes (Sturgess, 2016), research by New Zealand's Department of Corrections indicates promise for the application of a 5-session SMP to New Zealand men, which targets a range of internal and external factors including "unhelpful lifestyle balance", "offending-supportive associates" and "offending-supportive attitudes and entitlement". Austin and colleagues (2011) found this SMP effective in increasing motivation to change in New Zealand men, and that this motivation was maintained in participants up to 12 months later. Similarly, Anstiss and colleagues' 4-session SMP for New Zealand men reduced the likelihood of reoffending regardless of their stage of change at programme entry (Anstiss et al., 2011). To date, these specific programmes are yet to be applied to youth offending populations, however researchers in New Zealand are beginning to understand the particular importance of motivation to youth (Ludbrook, 2012). Furthermore, global research suggests that MI may be even more effective with ethnic minorities (Hettema, Steele & Miller, 2005; Lundahl, Kunz, Brownell, Tollefson & Burke, 2010). This finding is echoed in the New Zealand literature with particular emphasis on New Zealand's Māori, of which many of MYND clients identified.

Increasing motivation in YWHO from a GLM approach differs somewhat from the more "persuasive" techniques involved in MI (Fortune, 2018). This includes building a joined understanding of a YWHO's primary human goods, and formulating their offending not as something that sets them apart from others, but rather a secondary good; an attempt to fulfil a need shared by many other humans. A GLM approach also involves working collaboratively alongside YWHO to identify a "good lives plan", which interweaves attainment of their primary goods with their interests, talents and various identities that they hold across multiple systems (e.g., sibling, friend, student, cultural roles, etc). This may, as a result, reduce some of the extrinsic, avoidant motivation driving client's engagement with MYND (such as avoiding youth justice confinement or a less desired programme), replacing it with a good lives plan that is "personally meaningful and, therefore, intrinsically motivating" (Fortune, 2018, p. 28).

Overall, whilst MYND clients and staff all agreed on the importance of young people's motivation to change their offending, understanding their framing of motivation as caused by aging or a single wake-up call is perhaps an oversimplification of a complex and multi-layered concept. It is helpful in some ways to think of motivation to change as a

process as the TTM does, which lends itself to simple means of predicting or monitoring client engagement with programmes such as MYND. Motivational Interviewing techniques and the implementation of SMPs are evidence-based means of addressing low motivation in clients and may benefit MYND in a number of ways, as will be discussed in the future directions section. Other models (e.g., MORM, SDT, GLM) all point toward the existence of a type of “core” internal motivation that underlies all behaviour; prosocial, antisocial and otherwise. These models suggest working together with YWHO to better understand their motivations for antisocial behaviour (e.g., intrinsic goals, primary human goods), and finding prosocial means of pursuing them. Tapping into MYND client’s internal drivers rather than appealing to external contingencies may increase their engagement, reduce dropout and help clients go beyond just “completing” MYND, but doing so in a way that contributes toward their own values and goals and therefore indirectly reduces their desire to continue offending. A number of strategies for helping MYND measure and increase client motivation will be discussed in the future directions section.

Section 4: Limitations, Future Directions and Conclusion

Limitations

There were a number of limitations concerning evaluation methodology and the data gathering process.

Observing the Delivery of MYND

One methodological limitation is the absence of a thorough implementation phase of evaluation (Deane, 2012; Donaldson, 2012; McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999). An implementation phase is where the researchers methodologically observe all elements of the programme in the interests of building an overarching picture of what is delivered to clients, and how. Including this phase acknowledges the possibility that differences may exist between programme theory and practice. An informal version of this was done in the current evaluation where several days of the MYND programme were observed but not formally recorded or analysed. I attended a shared dinner, a holiday programme and an awards ceremony. The size and complexity of the programme meant I could not observe and report all parts of it; for example, not all youth workers and life skills modules were observed and I did not review all note-taking and communication processes. This observation phase also fell on a holiday period with less “normal” MYND programming. This meant I was unable to verify through observation if *all* parts of the Theory of Change were implemented.

Despite this limitation, there were certainly no obvious inconsistencies between what was reported and what I observed. Furthermore, the fairly high level of similarity between Theories of Change produced by MYND staff and MYND clients could be interpreted as evidence that the key elements delivered by MYND staff align with client’s experiences. The Theory of Change is therefore best used as a tool to discuss the “optimum” delivery of MYND, rather than to investigate ways the Theory has been compromised.

Simplifying the Theory of Change

Kelsey Deane states that most programmes are “too complex to allow a test of the comprehensive theory” (Deane, 2012, p. 117). This was indeed the case for MYND, which

resulted in a number of simplifications to the final Theory of Change when seen alongside the elements mentioned by participants. This limited the scope and detail of potential investigations made in phase 2 of the current evaluation.

One obvious area that the Theory of Change was simplified was in the way MYND's life skills lessons were represented; specifically they were grouped into a single key element. This meant the current evaluation did not note the specific content of life skills lessons, nor the outcomes of them. MYND's life skills modules were based on Brooks' (1984) "taxonomy of life-skills". While this is still regarded as valid and continues to be used internationally (e.g., Goudas, 2010; Slicker, Picklesimer, Guzak & Fuller, 2005), it may have been useful to unpack and integrate the taxonomy of MYND's life skills into the Theory of Change in more detail (e.g., separating life skills lessons into the five themes that these lessons were organised into; identity development, self-management, health, problem solving, social skills). In the end though, the final Theory of Change represented all life skills lessons as a single key element.

More detailed representation of life skills lessons could firstly have allowed more specific investigations into which life skills themes or modules were most and least effective at achieving their specific short-term goals. Secondly, the age of Brook's taxonomy implores a need to check its relevance to the different sociocultural and technological world that it is being applied to almost 40 years later. Thirdly, there may be cultural differences between the values held by YWHO in Aotearoa compared to the North American values that underlie the taxonomy (for example as discussed earlier, New Zealand's Māori and Pasifika YWHO may hold more collectivist values compared to more individualistic North American values). Despite these advantages, splitting the life skills key element into its constituent parts and testing the dozens of new assumptions would have added another layer of complexity to the evaluation that very few studies have the time or resources for (Weiss, 2000).

Some simplification also had to occur in the number of theorised links (assumptions) between key elements and goals, meaning MYND staff had to select a limited number of "key assumptions" that were investigated. This selection process followed the suggestion of Weiss (2000), who said key assumptions should be a) critical to programme success and b) uncertain (i.e., not obviously true). Whilst this criterion provided some direction, participants in both workshops commented that the task was at times overwhelming and difficult because "everything leads to everything". Specifically, they found it difficult to

identify which assumptions were most important due to the sheer number of programme elements and short-term goals, and the inability to separate them in order to identify the essential causal mechanisms. For example, building connections in the community, learning norms and receiving encouragement and advice from a youth worker could all occur simultaneously during a single life skills lesson. Since many of these processes almost always occurred in tandem, it was difficult to identify which assumptions caused the most change or which were “most essential”, meaning some important assumptions may not have “made the cut”. Indeed, it would be unrealistic to expect that every element of MYND had a linear relationship with one short-term goal, which had a linear relationship with a long-term one. It is also possible that having gone through this reflective process encouraged staff to pay extra attention to how young people respond to each element, helping them become even more effective practitioners in the future.

Furthermore, key assumptions would ideally have been selected from the final Theory of Change based on all perspectives rather than only MYND staff ones. However, the dual purpose of client interviews as both a means of refining the staff-generated Theory that had already been developed and investigating its assumptions, made the above impossible without conducting two rounds of interviews. This “staged” process also meant that some key assumptions changed as the final Theory of Change was refined; for example, the assumption that smooth transitions out of the programme would lead to “less truancy” became less relevant to the final Theory, which reframed “less truancy” into an approach goal: “entrenched routines”.

Anticipatory Evidence for Long-term Goals

Client interview data that contributed toward assumptions between short-term and long-term goals was presumptive. Clients who were interviewed were still in MYND, which meant they were being asked to predict how their life would look in five years; the time that MYND’s long-term goals were expected to be achieved. Ethical and legal restraints prevented clients who had completed MYND five years prior from being contacted; furthermore, since MYND had changed significantly since then, this data may not have been as useful given the objective of evaluating the *current* operation of the programme.

The questionnaire, which will be developed and implemented in MYND's future, could be used to verify these predictions by following up with clients who have left MYND (expanded on below). Longitudinal data obtained through this questionnaire is hoped to provide additional data for whether the MYND programme helps clients achieve long-term goals.

Misunderstandings

A number of terms appeared to have inconsistent meanings between myself, MYND staff and MYND clients. To recap one example, "independence" according to MYND staff referred to abilities of young people to resist peer pressure, financially support themselves and use their own form of transport. In contrast, clients sometimes conceptualised independence as a form of emotional or physical separation from their loved ones. Of course, it is entirely possible that there were other misunderstandings that clients noticed but did not raise, and perhaps needed a higher degree of rapport that could not be established in a one hour interview. Furthermore, the presence of such misunderstandings raises the question of whether they were limited to interviews or whether they represent an ongoing communication mis-match between MYND staff and clients. Nonetheless, while misunderstandings were a limitation in one sense, this knowledge could also be seen as a valuable outcome of the evaluation, potentially encouraging useful conversations about what *exactly* clients want in their futures. MYND staff could attempt to remain "on the same page" as clients by using explicit behavioural descriptions of these common terms. For example, if a client states a desire to be independent, MYND staff could use this as an opportunity to have a brief conversation with the young person about what an independent person's life looks like, what they would do, say and believe.

Future Directions

Results of the evaluation were gradually fed back to MYND across the duration of the research, some of which MYND's Manager had already begun responding to, including updating the life skills curriculum and hiring several female staff. The following section builds upon the findings of the evaluation to suggest a number of additional programme changes and recommendations for future research, which are summarised below and

expanded upon further in the following section. These results and recommendations were fed back in a number of ways including a) provision of the written thesis to MYND's Manager and the Graeme Dingle Foundation's Research and Evaluation Manager, b) a presentation of the outcomes and recommendations to the above two individuals and five other Graeme Dingle Foundation key stakeholders, c) a presentation of the results to MYND youth workers and d) an in-depth meeting with MYND's Manager where finer details could be discussed.

To continue:

- *Role modelling.* Encourage youth workers to continue being empathetic and genuine, modelling prosocial behaviours as well as the underlying identities beneath these behaviours.
- *Community setting.* Focus learning and practicing life skills in contexts in which these skills will be tested in the future (e.g., communities, work places, peer scenarios, family homes). Continue linking clients with prosocial institutions and community groups, including peer networks where possible.
- *Life skills.* Ongoing development of MYND's life skills curriculum (already begun) ensures it remains aligned with the evolving evidence-base. Consider simplification; focusing on learning and practicing a few life skills that can be applied across many situations, such as the STAR or experiential learning models. Integrate psychological concepts into this model, aimed at increasing psychological awareness.
- *Theory of Change.* Continue using the MYND Theory of Change as a working document. Update it as new elements are incorporated and consider investigating new assumptions.

To consider:

- *Multi-system involvement.* Increase whānau involvement throughout MYND as well as the transition period. Develop connections to external services that can be utilised to help clients and whānau overcome challenges to their basic and relational needs. Find other ways of linking clients to prosocial peer groups.

- *Motivation and goals.* Monitor client motivation to change using the University of Rhode Island Change Assessment or the Corrections Victoria Treatment Readiness Questionnaire. Consider training youth workers in motivational interviewing techniques. Consider providing Short Motivational Programmes to those in the pre-contemplative stage of change. Consider using a Good Lives Model or other values-based framework for understanding client's intrinsic motivators, forming goals based on these things. Explicitly and consistently link client's goals with skills taught in MYND.
- *Supervision.* Provide external supervision for youth workers, or train someone within the Graeme Dingle Foundation to fulfil this as an independent role distinct from others within MYND.
- *Questionnaire.* Create a questionnaire that measures constructs relevant to the short and long-term goals of the Theory of Change. Administer this to clients at intake, graduation and a follow-up period to generate longitudinal data.

Whānau and Peer Involvement

MYND's clients are likely to benefit from additional whānau and peer involvement with the MYND programme. This aligns with the large evidence base supporting Multi-Systemic Therapy, where the goal is to integrate interventions into as many of the young person's systems as possible (Lambie et al., 2016). The family is represented as the closest and most influential system in Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Theory and indeed they hold a crucial role in supporting YWHO change. This seemed to be especially true for MYND clients, who placed less importance on independence and instead described identities and goals that were interwoven with those of their whānau.

Possible ways of addressing the whānau system include more regular informal check-ins with parents, where youth workers listen empathetically to the family's recent successes and challenges; importantly, not only those specifically involving the young person. Having this valuable contextual information may help maintain strong relationships with whānau, monitor stress levels in the home and, if needed, link families to other forms of support. On the level of the individual, this contextual information could deepen relationships with clients due to a shared understanding of the environment they come

from, help youth workers make sense of (and remain compassionate toward) difficult behaviour, and could also be useful in forming a more relevant Individualised Development Plan.

For example, hearing from a young person's mother about violence happening within the home allows this topic to be tentatively raised with the young person themselves (after establishing very strong rapport). This conversation may lead to a mutual recognition of the need for a plan for what the client can do in these situations to keep himself and his whānau safe (calling the police, escaping), which does not involve putting himself in more danger or breaking the law (e.g., fighting back). Having the ability to form and execute a plan like this is unfortunately a very relevant life skill for some MYND clients, if their long-term goals are to be recognised.

There are a number of more structured forms of whānau involvement. Whānau hui are a tool that many have found empowering in their ability to provide a forum for whānau to express different perspectives on a range of issues and form shared plans to resolve them (Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre, 2021). Importantly though, research suggests that for "high-risk" YWHO this approach needs to be combined with other whānau interventions (Slater, 2009; Slater, Lambie & McDowell, 2015). Provision of or referral to parental training sessions, marital counselling and Functional Family Therapy may therefore be of use to the security and stability of the whānau, and therefore the lives of the young people within them (Henry et al., 2015; Sawyer et al., 2015).

Finally, further thought could perhaps also go into the ways MYND addresses peer-level systems. Most clients reported ongoing engagement with antisocial peers who were not part of MYND. MYND's approach to this seemed to be primarily independence-orientated; aiming to help clients resist peer pressure and distance themselves from antisocial peers. Interviews revealed that MYND clients at least *felt* better able to resist peer pressure from antisocial peers at their respective points in the programme, however three clients admitted that temptation to reoffend in the context of peer pressure remained their biggest challenge to continuing a prosocial lifestyle. Such peer independence strategies may not be sufficient in the long-term, especially after leaving MYND when daily peer interaction is no longer facilitated and supervised. One strategy might be to help clients find other means of fulfilling their psychological needs for social belonging and accomplishment. This could involve making more conscious attempts to link clients to prosocial peer groups such

as youth groups, clubs or sports teams. Importantly, these must be groups that clients enjoy and are intrinsically motivated to remain involved in after leaving MYND.

Psychological Life Skills

Integration of more psychological components into life skills may be beneficial for MYND clients (Farruggia et al., 2011; Murray, Amann & Thom, 2018; Tolan, Henry, Schoeny & Bass, 2008). One suggestion is to integrate the reflection of internal experiences into the Experiential Learning model already utilised by MYND. Specifically, clients could be asked to reflect not only on “what was done and what did and did not work” in the *reflective observation* phase of Kolb’s model, but also what thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations they experienced. Examples of these are depicted in Table 3. Understanding one’s experiences through the interconnection of thought, emotion, sensation and behaviour is the basis for cognitive-behavioural theory (Chen et al., 2014; Redondo, Martínez-Catena & Andrés-Pueyo, 2012). This model can help clients understand the internal experiences that preclude or trigger unhelpful behaviours (i.e., offending). It could also provide a safe, structured process that helps clients express and discuss their emotional wellbeing including feelings of anger, depression and anxiety.

Table 3

Examples of Cognitive-Behavioural strategies during the Reflective Observation step of Kolb's Experiential Learning

	Youth worker example questions	Example: emotion dysregulation	Example: anxiety
1. Concrete experience			
Situation (trigger)	Where were you? Who were you with? Had you taken any substances? Had anything important happened earlier?	<i>I was at home playing PS4 with my brother. Mum and dad were yelling at each other. I wanted to play but my brother wasn't giving the controller to me.</i>	<i>I was at home in my room, by myself. It was going to be my first day of work.</i>
2. Reflective observation			
Thoughts	What were you thinking at the time? Were you saying anything to yourself? Was your conscience saying anything? What images were going through your mind?	<i>He's such a _____ I'm going to smash him if he doesn't give it right now. Imagining hitting him.</i>	<i>I'm probably going to make a stupid mistake in front of the boss. What if I can't do what he wants? Imagining getting fired. Imagining lots of embarrassing situations.</i>

Emotions	What were you feeling?	Angry	Nervous
	Use one word to describe yourself in that moment.	Frustrated	Sad
	What did you <i>want</i> to do in that moment?	Boiling Hit him	Stay home
Body sensations	What were you feeling in your body?	Hot, tight muscles (neck, hands, chest), grinding my teeth, heart	Fidgety, tight neck, biting nails, clenched jaw.
	Did your muscles feel tight?	beating quickly, fast and short	
	Was your heart rate normal?	breaths, my fists were clenched.	
	What was your breathing like?		
	What were you doing with your hands?		
Behaviours	What did you do in the moment?	Started yelling and threatening him.	Smoked weed and played PS4 to calm
	What did you do afterwards?	Eventually punched him. He cried and ran outside. I didn't really enjoy the game.	down. Lost track of time and ended up staying home since I'd be late anyway.
3. Abstract conceptualisation	What can you learn?	If I think negative thoughts I'll feel more angry and act on them.	Imagining and telling myself negative things makes me more anxious.

My body reacts a certain way when I'm getting close to exploding with anger.

Using weed just avoids dealing with something that I'm anxious about.

4. Active What will you do now?

experimentation

Pay attention to my body and thoughts to keep an eye on how angry I'm feeling.

Next time I am anxious try and distract myself in ways that still let me do what I planned.

Experiment with thinking positive thoughts.

Try to stay positive and focussed on my goals when anxious.

Try to go outside when I notice these signs.

Measure Motivation to Change

Measuring client's motivation to change may help MYND respond more effectively to the varying degrees of motivation experienced by clients, as well as track patterns of motivation across the duration of the programme. In relation to the Theory of Change developed in the current evaluation, these changes could be represented by the "client accountability" moderator variable (Brooks & Khan, 2015; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Developers of the two most popular models of motivation to change (the TTM and the MORM) have both developed independent measures of this construct, either of which could be useful for MYND.

The University of Rhode Island Change Assessment scale (URICA) is a 32-item, Likert-style, self-administered questionnaire and produces scores on four of the TTM's stages of change (Precontemplation, Contemplation, Action and Maintenance). Developers of the MORM have also produced the Corrections Victoria Treatment Readiness Questionnaire (CVTRQ), which is a 20-item questionnaire that was designed to measure motivation to engage with a cognitive skills training programme (Casey et al., 2007). It understands internal motivation as being made up of four internal factors: Attitudes and Motivation ("attitudes and beliefs about programs and the desire to change"), Emotional Reactions ("emotional responses to the individual's offending behaviour"), Offending Beliefs ("individual's beliefs about personal responsibility for offending") and Efficacy ("individual's perceived ability to participate in programs"; Casey et al., 2007, p. 1432). While the CVTRQ may be more useful for MYND as its 4-factor structure provides direction for which internal or external factors to focus on to promote engagement, the URICA's simplicity and extensive research backing means this also remains a valid choice for measuring motivation. The chosen measurement tool could be integrated into the repeatable questionnaire as a reliable way of tracking individual and group motivation throughout, and beyond the MYND programme.

Motivational Interviewing Strategies

As noted earlier, previous findings have indicated the effectiveness of Motivational Interviewing techniques for increasing motivation to change and in lowering recidivism (Anstiss et al., 2011). Motivational Interviewing can be used effectively in casual, day-to-day

interactions with young people. For example, MYND front line professionals could learn how to integrate the four principles of MI into their existing practices (see Table 4). Doing so would utilise the strength of pre-existing relationships with youth workers, perhaps making these strategies more effective at keeping motivation high throughout the programme. Admittedly, the current evaluation makes a number of suggestions that place further professional expectations on youth workers. While in some ways this is inevitable due to the importance of youth workers to the programme, management should try to remain mindful of overburdening youth workers in this way.

Table 4

Examples of how the four principles of Motivational Interviewing can be integrated into everyday conversations with clients

Principle	Client Example	MI Technique	Youth Worker
Express empathy	<i>How am I supposed to achieve that with all of these things holding me back? There's no point.</i>	Show warmth and use an attitude of understanding (not necessarily agreement or approval).	<i>It sounds like you're feeling really hopeless and I can see why changing seems so out of reach. If I'd experienced what you have, I'm sure I would also find this just as difficult.</i>
Develop discrepancy	<i>I don't want to change; I like my current way of life.</i>	Bring attention to the pros and cons of changing, and how this fits into their long-term goals.	<i>Are there any downsides of continuing on in this direction? What do you think your future might look like if you decided to change?</i>
Avoid arguments	<i>You can't tell me what to do. Why should I do what you say?</i>	Avoid using a coercive or authoritative style, respond to resistance without judgement.	<i>You're right, it does come down to your decision. Maybe this new plan is simply too much to take on?</i>
Support self-efficacy	<i>I've tried to pursue my goals in the past but I always fall back into old patterns sooner or later.</i>	Highlight client strengths and experiences of small personal success.	<i>It sounds like you've put so much thought into your goals. You've struggled a lot with changing in the past, but you've also shown that you are able to do this for shorter periods of time.</i>

For those especially low in motivation as measured by one of the above tools, implementing a Short Motivational Programme may be an option for pre-emptively addressing engagement difficulties before clients join the standard MYND programme. This may be especially important for pre-contemplative clients (as measured by the URICA), who may be more extrinsically motivated to attend MYND and are therefore at highest risk of dropping out. One specific programme that has been recommended in New Zealand is the Motivational Enhancement Treatment programme (Lambie et al., 2016). This 5-session programme is intended to assess motivation while also teaching brief cognitive-behavioural skills. It is best delivered by a trained psychologist or counsellor, as suggested by Austin and colleagues (2011).

Intrinsic Motivation and Primary Human Goods

As discussed earlier, many argue that the most powerful sources of motivation are intrinsic in nature; goals that stem from the pursuit of core needs that are shared amongst all humans. However, these same researchers also argue for the need to address more practical, contextual difficulties in individual's lives: *"intrinsic motivation... requires supportive conditions in order to secure cognitive and social development"* (Brooks & Khan, 2015, p. 353). Similarly, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs would suggest prioritising the minimisation of threats to physiological health, safety and belonging (e.g., poverty, whānau conflict, housing instability). Addressing these contextual factors may be an effective way of increasing MYND client engagement with more intrinsic, long-term, "personal development" goals that MYND staff identified in the Theory of Change. As suggested above, this might include offering psychological and relational assistance to the whānau, as well as more practical assistance such as being linked to accommodation providers or food parcels. Admittedly, given the chronic nature of these contextual factors in MYND client's lives, it is probably unrealistic to expect them to be resolved completely; addressing them should therefore be balanced with Maslow's needs of self-actualisation.

Helping MYND clients pursue self-actualisation could involve a collaborative process that aims to help MYND clients discover their primary human goods, understand their offending as a secondary good, and envision a future where their primary goods are pursued in prosocial ways. While psychometric measures of primary human goods (PHG) are

still in the early stages of development and validation (Harper et al., 2020), several GLM researchers have agreed on a semi-standardised set of questions that can be posed to individuals with offending histories (see Appendix D; Loney & Harkins, 2018; Yates, Kingston & Ward, 2009; Yates, Prescott & Ward, 2010). These questions could be integrated into an initial assessment or the repeatable questionnaire (expanded on below), which could help MYND staff tailor life skills to the intrinsic motivations of their clients. Perhaps more importantly, these questions could help MYND clients better understand the values that motivate their own behaviour, reflect on the ways that pursuing their PHGs has had on others, and form a vision for their futures for how they can achieve the same “ends” through more prosocial “means”.

Youth Worker Supervision

Despite youth worker feedback being a unique point that only peripherally relates to the Theory of Change, I felt that responding to this was important to the ongoing sustainability of the MYND programme. This is especially true considering the amount of face-to-face time youth workers spend with clients as well as the high burnout rates associated with youth work, something perhaps also reflected in the turnover of youth workers at MYND (Savicki, 2002).

One specific request related to supervision. MYND youth workers felt uncomfortable with their supervisor having dual roles within MYND (manager and supervisor), resulting in some hesitation to discuss all topics openly and without this potentially impacting other areas of their practice. Beddoe (2010) acknowledges this as a common concern, where supervision can be used for both reflection but also for “surveillance”. Herman (2012) suggests the ideal supervisory relationship as one “where advice is not given but the worker is enabled to explore their situation and reach their own decisions” (p. 119). This may be difficult to do for the MYND supervisor, whose job as the manager is also to instruct, direct or give advice to youth workers on a daily basis. Provision of external supervision as youth workers requested, may be a simple way of resolving this. If this is not possible, it may be beneficial to devote resources to training supervisors within MYND or the wider Graeme Dingle Foundation (Mor Barak, Travis, Pyun & Xie, 2009). In this case, MYND managers

might consider the use of Herman's Framework for Reflective Supervisory Practice, which is expanded on more in the Appendix E.

Future Evaluation of MYND

As alluded to above, MYND may benefit from a more thorough implementation phase to more formally record the programme that is being delivered. If this occurs, one particular aspect to pay attention to is how the experiential learning model is implemented in youth worker practice. This is an important model for MYND given the relatively low amount of life skills consolidation found in interviewed clients.

The Theory of Change methodology is particularly suited to ongoing evaluation since the Theory of Change itself is thought of as a "working document" that changes with changes to the programme. The introduction of new elements and goals will create new assumptions, which themselves should then be investigated. Additionally, the exclamation that "everything leads to everything" in the current Theory of Change hints at the existence of numerous other assumptions that would benefit from identification and investigation. Providing MYND with a methodology for these ongoing investigations is therefore important.

Questionnaire

The design, implementation and analysis of a repeatable questionnaire is one method that MYND could use for longitudinal investigations into its Theory of Change. The questionnaire will help to measure changes in MYND participants over time; specifically their progress through the MYND Theory of Change and their achievement of MYND's short and long-term goals. Gathering this data will involve administering the questionnaire at the beginning and end of the programme (to gauge accomplishment of short-term goals), as well as years after graduating (to gauge accomplishment of long-term goals). This was initially planned for the current research project, however due to time constraints this stage was left primarily to the MYND Manager and the Graeme Dingle Foundation Research and Evaluation Manager. The following section outlines a number of general guidelines for constructing this questionnaire, as well as some more specific measures that MYND may consider.

The questionnaire should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete ideally; longer than this may be arduous and disincentivise MYND clients from completing it with full effort. In terms of selecting the constructs to include in the questionnaire, those involving MYND's key assumptions should take priority, particularly those crucial to the Theory's goals or those deemed important but lacking empirical evidence. Effort should also go into finding measures that are empirically validated for a young, less educated New Zealand population. A list of suggested measures that relate to elements and goals of the MYND Theory of Change are included in the Appendix F.

Combining and Comparing RNR and PYD

Just as the current evaluation raised further research questions for the MYND programme, it raised others relating to the general field of forensic youth work programmes. MYND's approach combines Positive Youth Development with traditional Risk Needs Responsivity, seemingly with some success at achieving the goals of both (e.g., the RNR's goal of reducing offending and PYD's goal of contribution toward society). Notwithstanding MYND's success, much research can still be done to better understand the pros and cons of these combined approaches; in particular, whether targeting these two sets of goals reduces the achievement of either. Indeed, the RNR's exclusive focus on factors that have strong and direct causal relationships to offending appears to be at odds with the variety of psychological and self-actualising goals outlined by PYD and other more strengths-based approaches (Andrews et al., 2011).

The Good Lives Model is one such approach that attempts to reconcile these two perspectives, and can therefore be drawn upon to inform future research into community-based programmes for YWHO. Designed primarily for use in forensic settings and with people who have offended, the Good Lives Model acknowledges the importance of the RNR's goal of reducing offending. In terms of how it addresses offending though, the Good Lives Model aligns closely with the principles of PYD in that it seeks to empower clients to pursue their own prosocial self-actualisation, arguing that this is a less direct but more conceptually sound means of understanding and addressing offending than the RNR's criminogenic needs (Ward and Willis, 2016). Application of the Good Lives Model to programmes for YWHO in New Zealand remains mostly theoretical in 2021, however

evaluation of such programmes when they are implemented would be a valuable contribution to the debate between traditional RNR and other strengths-based approaches to working with YWHO.

In the meantime, there are a number of other methods that could shed light on the pros and cons of each approach. It may be beneficial for future research to compare programmes for YWHO that exclusively target discrete criminogenic needs, with programmes that have more general goals such as the five Cs, and a “good life”. Perhaps using a RCT methodology (as suggested by Gluckman & Hayne, 2011), this research could measure both short-term rates of recidivism as well as longer-term outcomes, since finding alternative secondary goods to offending may take more time yet be more sustainable than the abstinence and avoidance goals that are often inherent to addressing criminogenic needs. Of course, these comparisons should also factor in client motivation, engagement and programme completion, which impact rates of recidivism yet are often not considered in studies that seek to prove the effectiveness of RNR-based interventions.

Vignette – “Wiremu”.

Wiremu initially agreed to attend MYND because if he did not, he would be sent to a youth justice facility. This extrinsic avoidance goal may have been insufficient in motivating Wiremu to engage meaningfully with MYND, especially since attendance and minimal engagement was enough to satisfy the court’s order. Similarly, the threat of prison in his adult life was a distant one, and was therefore unlikely to motivate him to change his identity. Violence from his step-father toward his mother made it difficult for Wiremu to sleep and also made him anxious throughout the day. Frequent communication with his mother allowed a trusting relationship to be built with both Wiremu and his whanau, and eventually led to a plan for MYND to link his mother to a family violence service, who were better equipped to address this particular issue. The resulting increased stability of Wiremu’s basic needs allowed him to better focus on his psychological (e.g., mastering his own difficulties with anger) and self-actualising needs (e.g., participating in a local sports team, building prosocial peer relationships). Helping him connect to his underlying reason for wanting to remain out of youth justice also resulted in him realising the high value he placed on supporting whānau; a value that then informed many other decisions in his life. As the shared goal of finding (and keeping) a full-time job was more explicitly linked to his values and primary human goods, Wiremu was more intrinsically motivated to engage with MYND.

Summary and Conclusion

MYND is a small-scale programme for young people who have offended. It builds upon a strong mentoring relationship in order to teach life skills to clients whilst in the community. Part of the claim of being an evidence-based programme means conducting regular evaluations to monitor the goals it sets itself, as well as staying up-to-date with the changing evidence base. The Theory of Change methodology asked MYND staff to construct a theory for how components of the programme interact to achieve certain short-term and long-term goals (phase 1). Creating this theory revealed a number of key assumptions between programme components and goals. These were then tested against a) the extant literature, b) the opinions of MYND clients and eventually longitudinal data gathered through c) a client questionnaire.

MYND staff workshops, client interviews and additional refinement revealed a unique Theory of Change that combined traditional models of desistance (Risk, Needs, Responsivity) with Positive Youth Development (which has broader aims of human flourishing and contribution). Phase 2 involved a literature review and series of client interviews which investigated evidence for and against the key assumptions identified in phase 1. It was found that most key assumptions made by MYND's Theory of Change were supported by the extant literature as well as by the opinions of MYND clients. Nonetheless there were areas relating to each that required additional thought by MYND. Notable examples include findings that a) life skills helped clients learn some specific ways of coping with difficult situations but others were forgotten over time, b) the community is a valuable resource for learning and applying life skills but established relationships within the community were sometimes fragile and c) many goals were shared by both MYND clients and staff, but clients generally focussed on tangible short-term outcomes rather than psychological and self-actualising ones.

A number of suggestions for the future of MYND include continuing use of the Theory of Change as a working document, intensifying whānau involvement in the programme, reducing the number of life skills and integrating them with cognitive-behavioural theory, and monitoring and boosting client motivation through motivational interviewing strategies and identification of primary human goods. A particular strength of MYND were the relationships that clients reported having with their youth workers, who

would benefit from further support given the importance and stress associated with their role.

Beyond the specific outcomes of the evaluation, this study with MYND also intersects and contributes to several larger bodies of research, particularly the fields of Positive Youth Development, Risk, Need and Responsivity, and the Good Lives Model, providing novel insights. It demonstrates that a balance can be struck between the traditionally separate fields of youth justice (i.e., Risk, Need, Responsivity) and youth development (i.e., Positive Youth Development). There seem to be some differences in how these approaches operate, for example their most common learning environments (secure indoor facilities versus the community) and their lesson content (offending-focused cognitive-behavioural therapy versus an eclectic range of physical, social and intellectual activities). Despite these differences, both approaches support teaching and practicing life skills, engaging support systems, and both rest on strong, trusting relationships with programme staff. MYND also reveals that the goals of these distinct approaches are far from mutually exclusive; both ultimately aim to enable youth to make positive contributions to the systems around them. This brings into question the assumption that we need to “compromise” between the Risk, Needs, Responsivity goal of reducing offending and the Positive Youth Development goal of human flourishing.

Given the compatibility of the above outcomes, perhaps a more important question is “what makes YWHO more motivated to engage with programmes?” As discovered in the current research, motivation can range from engaging as a means of avoiding something bad happening (e.g., being confined in a youth justice facility) to engaging to pursue personally meaningful goals. Programmes that focus solely on avoiding reoffending run the risk of eliciting a similarly narrow focus in their clients; avoiding prison. This avoidance mindset could negatively impact client engagement, which is inconsistent with long-term reductions in offending *and* human flourishing. In contrast, strengths-based approaches such as the Good Lives Model aim to inspire in clients a desire to learn and change. As one MYND client aptly put it, “you can't really change a person... but you can lead them the way that they *can* go”. Strengths-based approaches do this by painting a picture, creating a shared vision of what client's lives could look like and how they can attain this. After all, YWHO envision futures that are not simply subsumed by “not offending”; like most others they need meaning, purpose and the fulfilment of fundamental human needs.

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Appendix A

MYND Management and Youth Worker Workshop Schedule

9.30am – 10.00am. Introductions

- Introductions and attendee roles
- Past experience in workshops, any knowledge of Theory of Change or logic modelling
- Explain Theory of Change
- Justify Theory of Change:
 - o Why not just measure offending alone? (complexity of programme)
 - o Theory of Change focuses on finding and measuring the specific mechanisms that drive change
 - o Assumptions = any element not supported by evidence
 - o Theory of Change focuses on finding what needs to be measured and what does not
 - o All stakeholders on the same page
- I also want you to make a note throughout the workshop of moderating factors.
 - o These are things that MYND does not have as much control over which may also influence outcomes. For example, when you say “that depends on _____”. These can be things that enable better outcomes, as well as be barriers to achieving what MYND wants to achieve.

10.00am – 10.15am. Confidentiality and Consent.

- Participant Information sheet read-through
- Consent forms, time to read and sign

10.15am – 10.45am. Antecedent condition.

- What issues is MYND trying to address?
- Group issues into categories, e.g., (if required)
 - o Problematic young people
 - o Gap in service provision
- What has led to each of the above issues?

- NOTES: Use cards, so that they can be split up/rearranged?

10.45am – 11am. Morning tea/break.

11.00am – 11.45am. Goals.

Long-term goals.

- What is MYND's ultimate goal for its participants?
- Hope for participants' long-term future?
- What are the desired characteristics of a young person 2+ years after completing MYND?

Short-term goals.

- What are some of the smaller, more specific goals that MYND tries to achieve as clients go through the programme? (tangible, realistic)
- NOTES: Coloured cards that can be arranged to create a ToC in front of them by moving the cards around

11.45am – 12.30pm. Key elements.

- Anything that makes up an important part of the MYND programme, that MYND could not do without
- What are the important elements of the MYND programme?
 - o Elements = activities, rules, interaction styles, daily habits/structures, anything
- What are the goals of each of these elements?
- Which of these elements are the most important to attaining the desired characteristics of ...
- NOTES: Split into pairs for this task, encourage specificity of what elements look like

12.30pm – 1.00pm. Lunch.

1.00pm – 1.45pm. Building a rational theory using assumptions.

- Assumption: A hypothesised link between a key element of MYND and a short term goal, or between a short term goal and a long term goal.

- Desired characteristics of MYND graduates
- Long-term goals
- Does each link seem plausible? If not, what else needs to be added?
- Pairs exercise
 - Each come up with their own theory, and then come back together to explain using the paper in front of others

1.45pm – 2.00pm. Overview/Reflection

- What are you thinking now?
- What do you think it's doing well/not well?
- Should it be changed
- How could we measure/test this theory of change?

Appendix B
MYND Client Interview Schedule

Introduction

- Introduction of self
- Why I'm interviewing you
 - o What is working for MYND and what isn't – honesty!
 - o I'm not here to judge you or what you've done – honesty!
 - o It's not a test, no right or wrong answers
 - *For some questions, you might know the answer that MYND staff want to hear but the truth might be a bit different. Please be brutally honest as it helps MYND and it won't affect you as you'll already be out of the programme.*
 - o Confidentiality/consent

Phase 1 Questions

- **Antecedent condition questions**
 1. When did you start getting into trouble?
 2. Why did you choose MYND?
- **Key element questions**
 3. If this was your last day and you were getting discharged later, what 3 things would you remember most about MYND?
 4. If you were your youth worker, what are the 3 things you would teach your boys?
 5. If you were your youth worker, what would you change about MYND?
 - *Remember, you want to keep your job and help your boys stop offending*
- **Goals questions**
 6. What are some of your personal goals over the next 6 months?
 - *Remember honesty! They don't have to be the ones you think I want to hear.*
 7. Do you think your goals are the same as your youth worker's goals for you?

8. How old are you? What do you want your life to look like in 5 years when you're 20, 21, 22, 23?
9. Opportunity to give anonymous feedback to MYND staff – youth workers and management

Phase 2 Questions

- Life skills

10. What are your key life skills from your pathway plan?
11. Tell me the 3 most important things you've learnt from life skills lessons.
12. Give me an example of the last time you used a life skill in real life. When? How often?
13. What were you like before MYND compared to how you're like now? Have you changed as a person? How?
14. Can you think of any new things you've learnt how to do in MYND that make you more independent? Grown-up things you've started doing by yourself?
15. What can you do confidently now that you were too shy to do before?
16. What do you do differently when you're stressed out or pissed off?
17. When you used to have arguments, what did you say or do? Do you still do the same thing?
18. What do you do when your mates try to pressure you into doing something you don't really want to do? Has this changed since starting MYND?
19. Do you always "go live" on Facebook? Have you ever posted anything on Facebook/Snapchat/Instagram to make others think you're a 'real crim'?

- Community environment / transitions

20. What do you think about learning in the public?
21. Have you ever not shown up to MYND/skipped it? Why?
22. Did this happen more or less often than school? Why?
23. What do you have planned after MYND? How confident are you in sticking to this plan?
24. What do you think your barriers will be after the programme?
25. How would you deal with them?

26. It's normal for people to feel worried or nervous about stopping MYND and starting something else... what are some of the things you are worried about?
27. Has MYND helped with any of these worries?

- **Youth worker**

28. What's the best thing your youth worker has done for you? (modelling)
29. We all have someone that we respect and try to be like in some way – is there anything about your youth worker that you've picked up for yourself or hope to pick up?
30. *Things they do*
31. *Things they say*
32. *Ways they think*
33. Do you know what a reference is when you are trying to get a job? If your youth worker was going to apply for another job and you had to write a reference for them, what would you say?
34. What do you think they could improve on?
35. Do you have enough one-on-one time with your youth worker?

- **Routines**

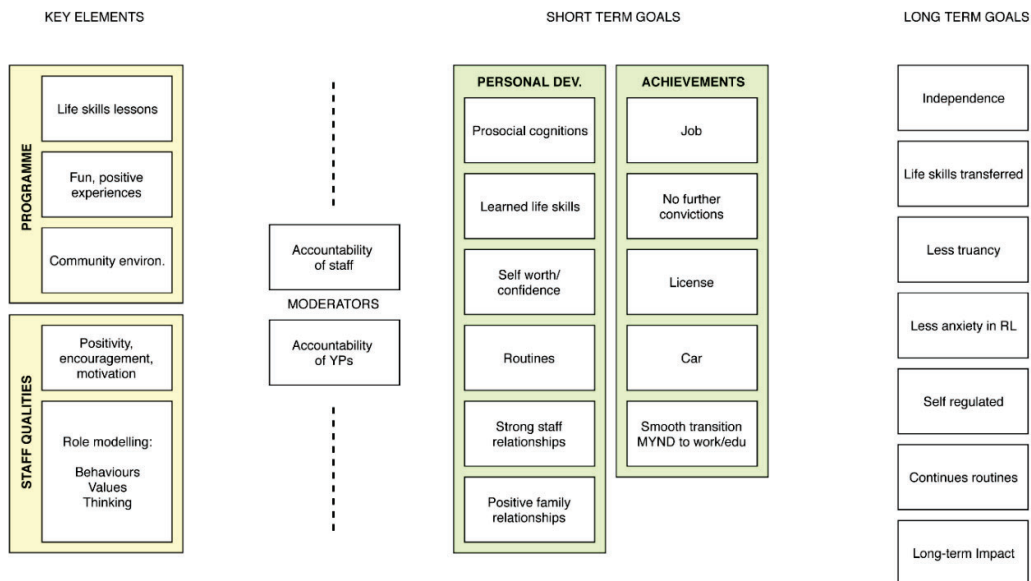
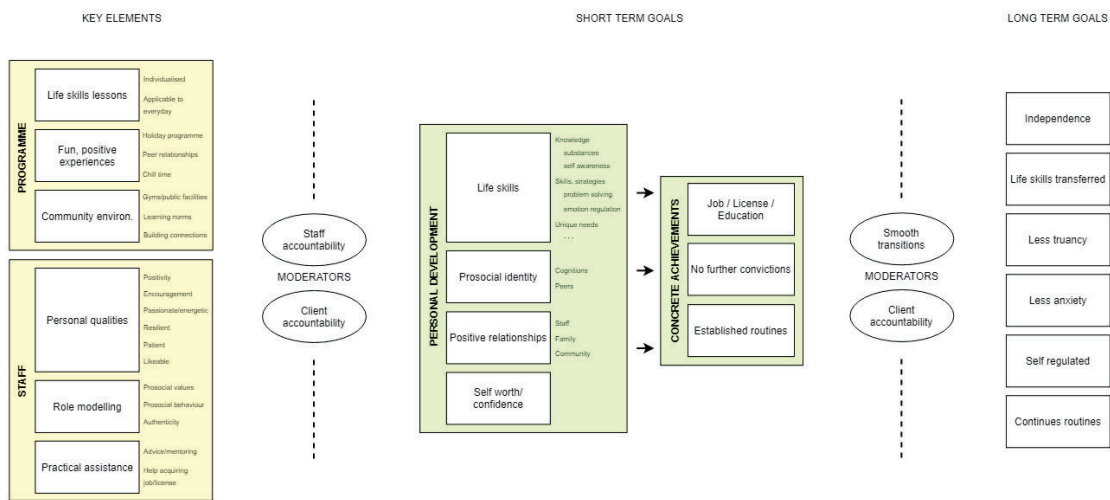
36. What kinds of routines do you have at home? What were your routines like before?
37. Do you think your routines will change after MYND?

- **Prosocial cognitions**

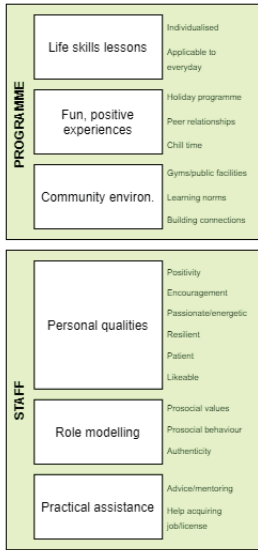
38. What sort of mindset do you have now?
39. What was it before MYND?
40. What sort of things did you used to talk about/think about?
41. What parts of MYND helped you change this?
42. Scenario: When you really need some money to buy some gear you wanted for ages, how did you get money before? How do you get money now?

Appendix C Additional Theory of Change Refinements

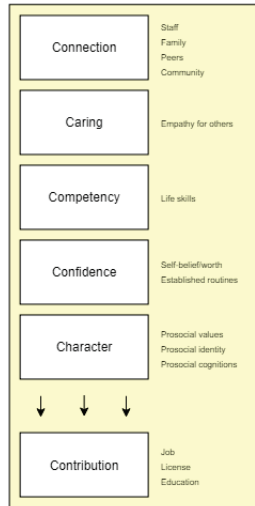
Below are three additional refinements of the Theory of Change that were rejected at different points in the process of creating the final diagram. Each were discussed via email or in-person with Julie Moore and Stephen Boxer, and were rejected for a number of reasons including being too complex or confusing, misrepresenting MYND’s dual-focus on both concrete achievements and personal development goals, or not having a unifying concept or structure (such as Positive Youth Development’s five Cs).



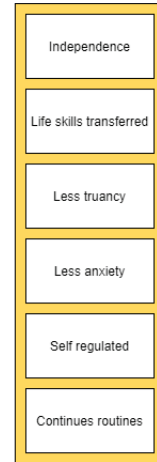
KEY ELEMENTS



SHORT TERM GOALS



LONG TERM GOALS



Appendix D

Measure of Life Priorities (Understanding Primary Human Goods)

Building on previous studies by Good Lives Model researchers, Loney and Harkins' (2018) Measure of Life Priorities names 11 specific queries that are thought to help clients gain a deeper understanding of their Primary Human Goods:

1. Have you ever used any of these strategies to achieve [the PHG]? (select from list of 5-15 common strategies)
2. Were any of these strategies effective? (yes, no)
3. How important do you think [the PHG] is to you personally? (4-point Likert scale)
4. Has the importance of [the PHG] changed over time? (4-point Likert scale)
5. How well do you think you have achieved [the PHG] in your own life? (4-point Likert scale)
6. Would you like to have more of this good in your life? (yes, no)
7. Has anything ever prevented you from achieving [the PHG], or from moving towards it? (yes, no)
8. Picture your life 5 years from now. Where would you like to be with respect to [the PHG]? (similar, more of a priority, less of a priority)
9. Picture your life at a time when things were not going well for you (e.g., struggling in school/work, having relationship problems, involved in antisocial behaviour/ crime). Did trying to seek [the PHG] play a role in your life at that time? (open response)
10. Rank each PHG in order of importance
11. Rank each PHG in order of current subjective achievement

Appendix E

Herman's Framework for Reflective Supervisory Practice

Herman's "Framework for Reflective Supervisory Practice" (2012) could be an appropriate model for potential supervisors of MYND youth workers to learn, as it was designed specifically for the field of youth work. It encourages supervisors to have little direct contact with clients; a role separation that is seen as a strength. This is because it allows supervisor and supervisee to both contribute unique forms of knowledge to the relationship; the supervisee brings a detailed first-hand perspective based on their own observations, experiences and opinions, while the supervisor's more naïve perspective can reveal new insights, identify broad themes observed across many supervisory relationships and also utilise personnel management skills. Herman's framework has five distinct targets:

1. *Analyse youth worker practice outside of the organisation* by reading field research, seeking practitioner stories and connecting with a peer network.
2. *Conduct data collection* through observing staff over a course of time and interviewing staff to enhance openness and understanding of their dilemmas, tensions and stresses.
3. *Identify themes and reflect upon issues* that emerge from the above data collection and analysis.
4. *Incorporate themes and issues into staff interactions* such as staff meetings, one-on-one meetings or staff development.
5. *Coach and mentor staff individually* discussing and strategising based on themes, dilemmas and issues that emerge.

Herman's framework may be especially useful for MYND as it may take advantage of the resources associated with being connected to the Graeme Dingle Foundation. For example, a Graeme Dingle Foundation supervisor will have a diversity of data to draw on from other youth programmes managed by the organisation such as Kiwi Can, STARS, Career Navigator and Project K.

Appendix F

Possible Measures to Include in Questionnaire

The following are a number of measures that relate to outcomes of the current evaluation and the MYND Theory of Change. Many have been previously developed for use with youth and/or offending populations, and may be of use in the design of this questionnaire:

- Motivation to change (e.g., the CVTRQ or URICA; Casey et al., 2007; Polaschek et al., 2010)
- Primary human goods (e.g., the Measure of Life Priorities; Loney & Harkins, 2018)
- Prosocial cognitions, thought to reflect a prosocial identity (e.g., the How I Think questionnaire, which MYND has used successfully in the past)
- Connectedness with community (e.g., the Sense of Community Index; Zeldin, 2002)
- Competence in life skills (e.g., the Life-Skills Development Scale; Kadish et al., 2001)
- Specific cultural needs (e.g., the Māori Culture Related Needs measure; Maynard, Coebergh, Anstiss, Bakker & Huriwai, 1999)
- Positive Youth Development key outcomes (e.g., PYD Five Cs measure; Conway, Heary & Hogan, 2015)
- Anxiety, depression and stress (e.g., the Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale 21-item measure; Antony, Bieling, Cox, Enns & Swinson, 1998; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1996)

It is important to recognise that the above are a non-exhaustive list; there are an abundance of pre-existing measures for many of the short and long-term goals in the MYND Theory of Change. For constructs with no suitable existing measure, asking participants to respond to statements on a 5-point Likert scale may be sufficient, although caution should be exercised in the interpretation of such data given the lack of empirical construct validity.

Appendix G Thematic Analyses

Thematic analysis was a key qualitative component of both the generation of the MYND Theory of Change and of gathering evidence for or against key assumptions of the theory. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as “... a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). Braun and Clarke also highlight the flexibility of thematic analysis; it is compatible with a variety of research paradigms, and it does not necessarily need to be tied to a particular methodology or end goal, making it ideal for the two types of analyses mentioned above. Braun and Clarke argue that the most important point in qualitative research (and I would argue *any* research) is that “the theoretical framework and methods match what the researcher wants to know, and that they acknowledge these decisions, and recognise them *as* decisions” (p. 80). In this spirit, I attempted to follow their widely used guidelines for conducting thematic analysis on interview data, highlighting areas in which my method differed, and why.

Braun and Clarke categorise thematic analysis as either *inductive* or *theoretical*. Inductive thematic analysis is often used to find broad themes in long, unstructured transcripts, and can be argued to be a less subjective representation of the data themselves because themes do not necessarily “fit” the researcher’s questions. In contrast, theoretical thematic analysis is described as deductive or “top-down” because it is driven by researcher’s questions, and data is analysed so that it “fits” into frameworks imposed by the researcher. Since thematic analysis is used to generate groups of concepts that fit within a predetermined structure (that which categorises key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals), the current evaluation used the latter, theoretical method.

I applied an *essentialist* or *realist* method to interpreting verbal information, which meant thematically analysing responses literally with minimal interpretation of sub-text or underlying narrative. While I acknowledge that this limited the depth of information somewhat, I chose this method both because it was more time efficient (leaving me more time to spend on other, equally important areas of the evaluation) but also because it was consistent with the essentialist or realist “lens” that was used for the workshops. A more interpretative analysis of particular quotes made by MYND clients can be found in the discussion.

I applied theoretical thematic analysis with an essentialist method to transcripts of structured interviews which asked 42 questions to MYND clients. I then separately analysed responses to each question. Using responses to the first nine questions of these interviews, I used this method to categorise themes of key elements, short-term goals and long-term goals. I also applied the same thematic analysis to the remaining 33 questions (with some minor differences, outlined below), which would help interpret evidence for or against key assumptions of the MYND Theory of Change.