

# Voyage Programme

## New Zealand

### Type of intervention



Group Work

### Target groups, levels of prevention and sub-groups:

#### Secondary prevention

Children and Young People (Victims)

Young Children (0-5 Years), (Children (6-11 Years), Young People (12-17 Years) | Male & Female | Group Work | English

#### Tertiary prevention

Children and Young People (Victims)

Young Children (0-5 Years), (Children (6-11 Years), Young People (12-17 Years) | Male & Female | Group Work | English

### Target population

Children aged 5 to 12 years old, living in the Manawatu region of New Zealand (and their parents/carers); where the children have experienced family and/or sexual violence.

### Delivery organisation

Abuse & Rape Crisis Support Manawatu Inc., New Zealand

### Mode and context of delivery

The program is run over nine weeks during school term and is offered as an after-school program for 1.5 hours each session. Caregivers of the children involved in Voyage also attend a caregivers group for four one-hour sessions during the term. The programme is facilitated by a counsellor and co-facilitated by a social worker.

## **Level/Nature of staff expertise required**

The facilitator and co-facilitator have relevant qualifications (i.e. counsellor and social work qualifications) and experience working with children. Staff undergo a police check.

## **Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)**

The programme consists of:

- 9 sessions with the children, each lasting 1.5 hours, once a week
- 4 x one hour sessions with the children's parents/carers held once every 2 weeks until the programme completed
- 1 assessment with the caregivers before the programme begins
- 1 assessment with the child before the programme begins
- 1 evaluation session with the child when the programme concludes

## **Description of intervention**

Voyage aims to break the cycle and secrecy of abuse by providing children with positive experiences on which to build their self-esteem.

The program explores different feelings that arise for the children by sharing their experiences within the group. Voyage builds on children's confidence and self-esteem while fostering trust to develop healthy relationships.

Each session has a focus on providing children with a positive experience. The program allows young people to explore and address fears, thoughts and feelings that they may hold because of hearing, witnessing or experiencing abuse. Children who have experienced abuse often need emotional support and guidance to enable them to re-integrate their lives.

The key aim of the program is to help children to grow and develop their inside strength (self-esteem). By giving their inside strength a voice, children who have experienced abuse can become aware of some of their qualities and strengths that have often been suppressed or not nurtured.

We talk about the abuse as an experience that has happened in their past and that it may affect them in the present but that it does not have to continue to affect them in the future.

Programme content:

- Session 1: Getting to know each other Introduction to group
- Session 2: What is abuse? Define abuse. Children create own Abuse is Not OK poster
- Session 3: Safety Plans. This session is to help the children identify safe places and people they can go to if they are concerned about their situation.
- Session 4: Good and bad touching
- Session 5: Feelings
- Session 6: Anger

- [Session 7: Personal Stories](#)
- [Session 8: Self-Esteem](#)
- [Session 9: Evaluation & Affirmation.](#) Each child is given a t-shirt. Textile paints are supplied and each child decorates their t-shirt. This t-shirt is a symbol of their journey, and the words that are put on them are words that describe that child, so the qualities can be seen inside and out. It is to be used as a permanent reminder of the qualities, strength and wisdom of the child. When the children put things on it, it links them into a circle of peers and friends. Children move around the room and add to each other's shirts, a message or symbol. This activity brings closure to the Voyage group and also allows the children to give each other a personal and special message.

## **Evaluation**

All participants (children and caregivers) are actively asked for feedback on the effectiveness of the Voyage program. This feedback includes written evaluation forms and interviews. In addition the Voyage facilitators, along with the ARCS Manawatu Manager, review the program at the conclusion of each group and amend the program as necessary to take into account participant feedback and staff observations. Child, Youth and Family conduct an annual audit of ARCS Manawatu and the VOYAGE program, whilst the Ministry of Justice conducts a bi-annual audit.

The following are just some of the many positive comments received from parents and children who participate on the VOYAGE program:

- “Voyage more than met my expectations. [My son] is now able to talk to me about how he is feeling, as well as speak up for himself without being cheeky or swearing.”
- “[My son] realized that he was not the only one that this happened to. He has returned to being comfortable with his body rather than ashamed.”
- “[My son] has started to be dry again overnight while on the program”
- “[My daughter] now knows she is not responsible for her dad’s bad behavior.”
- “[My daughter’s] behavior at home and school has changed for the better. She is now making friends at school. She is happier and more confident in herself.”

## **References**

Not applicable.

## **Contact details**

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