



START Taranaki

Supporting Today's At Risk Teenagers

INFORMATION PACK



S.T.A.R.T. (Supporting Today's At Risk Teenagers) Taranaki

Supervision with Activity

Youth don't usually change because of programs they change because of people. Adult leaders who provide direct service need to be people who are concerned with and care about those with whom they engage. They need to be able to provide and promote new opportunities for young people. They need to be skilled communicators who are consistent, predictable, and able to provide feedback or handle confrontation in a manner that promotes trust and concern. Young people need to believe that the adults are in it for the long haul, and that these adults listen to them, care about them, and are not just seeking conformity and compliance...

Youth programs that successfully prevent and address problem behaviours attempt to influence change by focusing on factors that move beyond leverage (rewards and punishments) and into persuasion (assisting youth in seeing how it is in their interest to make better choices). They operate from a strength-based perspective, developing realistic goals guided by an unflagging belief in the capacity of human beings to change. Adults assume a respectful leadership role while involving participants in important program aspects. Finally, youth are inspired with beliefs and practices compatible with fulfilling their basic needs. In this kind of environment, youth come to realize that they can:

- *Connect with others*
- *Be successful*
- *Solve problems that affect them*
- *Control themselves*
- *Influence others without intimidation*
- *Be of benefit to others.¹*

¹Mendler, A.N. and Bickweat, M. (1998) Keeping at-risk youth from becoming delinquent. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, Vol.7 No.2, pp.91-94

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

START Taranaki is a community-based Supervision with Activity (SwA) provider. START was incorporated as a charitable trust in late 2003 and is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board brings a wide range of experience and all are committed to achieving good outcomes for youth.

The basis of START Taranaki's programme places emphasis on building meaningful relationships between staff and participants. It is the attachment between young people and positive role models which allows START's young people to feel safe, cared for and able to make positive changes.

The START Taranaki programme runs through three phases over 20 weeks. Each young person has an individualised plan which is tailored to their needs.

Phase One - an intensive four week 'Isolation' where young people are removed from their familiar environment. Kept on the move in a native bush setting strong bonds and trust is built between staff and participants. At the same time young people learn to live, work, constructively interact and be part of a team.

'Isolation' consists of tramping and a range of other activities. The penultimate activity being 'Solo', where after receiving instruction in bush craft and survival skills, each young person is placed into a solo situation with limited human contact for three nights and three days. 'Solo' is a time to put in place all the skills they have learned, reflect on their past and contemplate their future. This solo experience is frequently the turning point that ignites genuine motivation for change in these young men.

'Isolation' is an effective tool for uncovering hidden strengths and talents. The harsh conditions of the bush and the challenges entailed is a large part of what develops the strong trust and attachment between young people and staff. At the end of the Isolation component self-belief is evident and whilst the young people have been pushed to their limits they have experienced what it feels like to succeed.

As a transitional phase from 'the bush' back into a residential setting, youth spend 4 days at Te Potaka Marae. START Taranaki collaborates with tangata whenua to promote the awareness of Maori culture. During this time at the Marae, START Taranaki holds a 'Whanau Day', where young people and whanau spend quality time together. Meetings take place with the young people and whanau to discuss progress made and begin to develop plans for the future.

Phase Two – the residential period of six weeks to seven weeks which is called 'Ora Toa'. The focus is on maintaining motivation, goal setting and installing routines that will set them up for life back in the community. We aim to bring about awareness of how they can contribute positively to society through community based projects and weekly counselling. The young people are also placed in work experience to help develop their work ethics and further strengthen their community attachment.

Phase Three - is called 'Transition'. This component sees each young person placed back in the community either with family, approved caregivers or independent living situations. The

young person has the opportunity to regain ownership over their place in society and be responsible for keeping themselves on track without the 24 hour support they have had at START. Support structures are put in place to ensure the young person still feels they are cared for, are able follow their transition plan and engage in their day to day activities such as attending education, training or employment. START Taranaki staff continue their work with the young people maintaining regular telephone and face to face contact.

START Taranaki is committed to achieving positive outcomes for youth. To ensure our service continues to improve and deliver quality results we monitor our organisation using Results Based Accountability (RBA).

START Taranaki has been identified as an effective intervention for recidivist youth offenders. Judge Andrew Becroft stated in an article in the Taranaki Daily News on 30 April 2008 “We are in desperate need for youth programmes that don’t provide a door and a key. High risk youth need programmes like START Taranaki”.



Participant Feedback

"They help us, and they turn the bad boys into good boys."

"It has changed my life so it works."

"I like START. It's teaching me lots of other things."

"START has helped me heaps."

"There's a better outlook shown to me with the support of this programme."

"I think START is the best programme in New Zealand."

"Give START a chance, because START deserves it."

"I know I'm not going to reoffend."

"The fun thing for me is that I don't smoke any weed anymore."

"My life's way better. Life's easy. It helps being here."

"Participating, enjoying, doing it, and living life."

"It's made me feel appreciated in life and more positive."

"It makes you think of how well you've done and how proud your family are of you."

"It built up my mental and physical strength and has shown who's the important person, and it's myself."

"Made me reflect on my offending and how it affects my family and me."

"Changes our behaviour towards others."

"Made me respect more things."

"To get along with others."

Stakeholder Feedback

“START Taranaki deal with 'top end' youth offenders from all over NZ. They have earned a reputation for positively changing the lives of a number of potential career criminals.”

“[START Taranaki] has come a long way from a grass roots programme run by passionate people to be highly regarded, professional and very effective. The ability to engage young people who are a challenge to other providers remains a strength.”

“A committed group working with some of the most challenging young people. Unusual in the compassion and professionalism that it demonstrates.”

“Well run, reflective, open in developing and refining their programme.”

“START Taranaki have produced some really successful outcomes with our youth, and the continued support they provide them is outstanding.”

“I like it and have seen a number of my rangatahi complete the programme. It has lifted their motivation and instilled self-belief in them which in turn has meant they are more open to engaging with other services with more specific goals for their future.”

“Unique organisation that cares beyond outcomes for the youth.”

“Overall START Taranaki offers a unique and innovative service to at-risk youth.”

“The values and approach underpinning START Taranaki are important to provide a positive and alternative model in the youth justice area.”

“Despite positive gains by the Youth Justice sector in reducing offending, there remains a core group of complex persistent offenders who require the intensive support provided by START Taranaki.”

“We should have concerns about the current use of Youth Justice Residential Facilities and look to support community based residential alternatives that are proven effective.”

“The balance of real life environment, focus on real world skills and elements of effective intervention set it apart and underpin its success.”

“The START [Taranaki] programme has understood that unconditional relationships with young people are fundamental to making change in their lives.”

“START Taranaki is a proven 'supervision with activity' provider.”

Referral Process

INTAKE DATES

Please check website for intake dates: <http://www.starttaranaki.co.nz/referrals/>

Criteria

We take young males aged between 15 and 17 years old.

They must be on either a Supervision with Activity Order or a Supervision Order **following** a Supervision with Residence Order.

We do not take young people with a history of Sexual Offending.

The START Taranaki Program is aimed at young people who **want** to make change and are ready to start building skills and working toward becoming independent. Part of the START Taranaki Programme involves attending work experience in the community. We look for young men with the motivation and maturity to succeed in these placements and in all we have to offer.

Referral Process

We like to be involved with referrals as early as possible, so if there is an FGC for the young person we would be happy to come along and talk about the programme.

From there we require a completed referral form which you can download from the following link: <http://www.starttaranaki.co.nz/referrals/> (information packs for young people can be downloaded for the same link).

We also require any other reports that you have on the young person. After reading through this information we will arrange a time to interview the young person. For those we can interview face to face, we will, otherwise a video interview can be arranged.

We put a lot of thought into choosing young people we think are best suited to the programme and putting a team of people together who will positively interact. We reserve the right to decline any referrals that we don't feel fit our criteria.

Application for the START programme requires completion of our referral template which generally comes from the young person's CYF Social Worker.

Please feel free to contact the START Taranaki Team for further information.

START Taranaki

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