

**Facilitator, Principal and Student
Review of Skylight's Travellers™
Programme**

Final Report – February 2010

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Contents

Contents	2
Acknowledgements	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction.....	9
Recommended Changes to Travellers™	11
Programme Content Session 1 Activities	11
Programme Content Session 2 Language	11
Programme Content Session 2 Visuals.....	12
Programme Content Session 3 Language	12
Programme Content Session 4 Language	13
Programme Content Session 4 Visuals.....	13
Programme Content Session 6 Activities	13
Programme Content Session 6 Language	15
Six-month Follow-up Session – Student Evaluation.....	15
Six-month Follow-up Session – Student Get-together	16
Support from skylight.....	16
Suggestions for Optional Programme Modification	18
Programme Content Session 1 Visuals.....	18
Programme Content Session 2 Activities	18
Programme Content Session 3 Visuals.....	18
Programme Content Session 5 Visuals.....	19
Programme Content Session 8 Language	19
Programme Content Session 8 Visuals.....	20
Session Set-up – Number.....	21
Aspects of Travellers™ Recommended to Remain Unchanged.....	22
Global Data	22
Liaison with skylight	22
Manual	22
Programme Content Session 1 Language	23
Programme Content Session 3 Activities	24
Programme Content Session 4 Activities	24
Programme Content Session 5 Activities	25
Programme Content Session 5 Language	25
Programme Content Session 6 Visuals.....	25
Programme Content Session 7 Activities	25
Programme Content Session 7 Language	26
Programme Content Session 7 Visuals.....	26
Programme Content Session 8 Activities	26
Session Set-up – Length	27
Six-month Follow-up Session – Facilitators.....	27
Survey	28
Training – Content and Set-up	28
Training – Timing	28
The Impact of Diversity on Programme Application.....	30
Year of Training	30
Decile.....	31

Number of Facilitators Trained.....	32
School Location.....	33
Type of School.....	33
Ethno-cultural Considerations.....	34
Rural/Urban Environmental Considerations.....	35
Deciding to Not Run the Programme	36
Stories from the Front.....	38

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Executive Summary

Skylight's Travellers™ programme has been running in New Zealand secondary schools since 2000. The programme aims to enhance protective factors for young people experiencing change, loss and transition events and who are in the early stages of emotional distress. This report presents the results of a research study that examined the views of facilitators, principals and students after involvement with the Travellers™ programme.

The study involved qualitative interviews with 22 programme facilitators and 10 school principals, and focus groups with 32 students who had been on the programme. The interviews and focus groups explored the views of those involved with the programme as to its content and overall appeal, reasons for using it, factors important in choosing whether to continue with it or not and the characteristics of those who participate. Students were also asked about the helpfulness and impact of the programme.

Schools supported the need for a programme such as Travellers™ to address the needs of some of their students. Schools continued use of the Travellers™ programme was based on facilitators' and school principals' perception that the programme was effective in bringing about positive change in the behaviour and attitudes of those students who participate. In schools where principals devolve major decision-making at the departmental level to section heads, reliance on the competence of facilitators to accurately recommend ongoing programme involvement is common.

For participating students, many reported their initial motivation was the provision of food at the programme. However the motivation to continue subsequently shifted to forming relationships with facilitators and other students, and satisfaction from participation in the programmes learning and activities.

Interviewees were asked to comment on the programme and to detail any aspects of the programme that they felt could be improved. The general view of the programme was remarkably positive, but there were clearly some elements

that would benefit from attention and these are listed below (further detail is given in the body of the report).

Changes to the programme -

- Add resources to Session 1 Activity 4 – exploring the journey.
- Session 2 language – could be simplified for some students.
- Session 2 resources – add take home cards to practice range of emotional adjectives.
- Session 2 visuals –resources added to participant created ones.
- Session 3 language – include less adult and more youth language. More alternatives for how to introduce feelings.
- Session 3 – more on the spiritual dimension for Maori and pacific students.
- Session 4 language – change the ‘Express yourself!’ slogan.
- Session 4 visuals – improve drawing of faces so emotion is easier to identify.
- Session 6 activities – simplify time scheduling exercise to focus on a day rather than a week.
- Session 6 language – improve the way the relaxation exercise is run, e.g. by giving facilitators guidelines to prepare students, remove obstacles.
- Session 6 language – improve the language used for some concepts.
- Conduct student follow up evaluation at 6 months.
- A six month follow up student get together be considered.
- Skylight to reconsider the support needs of schools and consider visits to schools. Consideration also is given to facilitating communication between Travellers™ practitioners.
- Audio visuals materials (e.g. CDs, DVDs) are developed to support the programme.

Modifications to the programme -

- Session 1 visuals - students are helped to make use of the stickers.
- Session 2 activities – consideration is given to students being able to work on life maps and diary between sessions.
- Session 3 visuals – use a picture to illustrate the key concept slogan and the link between self-esteem and self-worth.
- Session 5 visuals – slight improvements could be made to session visuals.
- Session 8 language – reconsider some of the slogans and the phrasing for less literate students.
- Session 8 visuals – change the colour on the posters to increase the contrast. Consider a pan-ethnic waka to symbolise travel and make more use of the Passport during the session.

- Number of sessions – the possibility of optionally running the programme over 10 weeks is considered.

Aspects recommended remaining unchanged -

- Continued use of global data and feedback to schools and facilitators.
- Skylight continues to liaise with schools and facilitators.
- Support for the facilitators manual, although more options for presenting some material was supported.
- Many elements of the sessions were felt to be very effective. For example the life is a journey was supported as the programmes primary metaphor and Life Maps were seen as very effective and enjoyed by students.
- Some suggestions were made by facilitators and students for minor improvements in the look of programme materials and the language used.
- Length of sessions seemed right for most facilitators, although accommodating the programme depended somewhat on length of school lesson periods.
- Facilitator training was positively regarded. There was also wide support for the 6 month training follow up for facilitators.
- Most facilitators supported having training in Term 3.
- The online delivery of the survey was seen as most effective.

It needs to be noted that the above practical suggestions were often provided with the insistence that such changes should not serve to replace a system that seemed to work well, but rather augment and strengthen the core ideas and the presentation thereof.

This study illustrates that notwithstanding the incredible diversity that exists in New Zealand schools, Travellers™ has widespread appeal amongst staff and students alike and crosses racial, cultural, gender, decile, and learning ability boundaries. Selecting the aspects of the programme which are best suited to given groups of students, facilitators are managing to adapt the programme in a flexible manner so that it can reach, touch and affect the attitudes and behaviour of many of their charges.

These results would suggest that the Travellers™ programme is a well-liked and received model that requires some cosmetic surgery rather than a major facelift. While some schools will be willing and have the ability to pay for the costs associated with running the programme without concern, for some this decision must be given serious consideration. In particular, smaller middle-

decile state schools tend not to have the parental financial support of higher decile schools, or the significant additional government funding of larger low decile schools, and yet all of these schools have students confronting the challenges associated with transitions that Travellers™ seeks to address.

In running the programme choices occur at different levels (e.g. whether or not to run the programme and what aspects of the programme should be modified to meet contextual needs more effectively) and under different constraints. This study has identified many of these choices, needs and constraints, but has also raised questions for further research. In particular it would be beneficial to have systematic research on programme outcomes, in order to support the positive anecdotal reports in this evaluation.

Introduction

Skylight's Travellers™ programme has been running in New Zealand secondary schools since 2000. The programme aims to enhance protective factors for young people experiencing change, loss and transition events and who are in the early stages of emotional distress. The programme was developed by skylight in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and is focused on year 9 students. An initial pilot of the programme was carried out in 2000 in two schools in Auckland and Northland and reviewed by the Injury Prevention Research Centre, School of Population Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Auckland (Dickinson, Coggan and Bennett, 2003). The Ministry agreed to fund skylight for the extension of the programme to a further eight schools in Auckland /Northland in 2001. The Department of Social and Community Health, University of Auckland published an evaluation of the extended programme (Dickenson, 2004).

As a result of that evaluation, a further 43 schools came on board from 2005-7 in the Auckland/Northland region. In 2008 it was announced that the Travellers™ programme would be extended to cover all of New Zealand. In order to effect this, skylight appointed a National Manager for Travellers™ in December 2007 and the national roll out of Travellers™ began in 2008. Skylight is now contracted by the Ministry of Health to deliver the programme throughout New Zealand and is funded under the Ministry of Health's All Age Suicide Prevention Strategy. To date there are 78 secondary schools covering the range of school type and decile rating from Northland to Southland trained in using the Travellers™ programme.

This report is structured in three main parts. The first of these presents a triple-tier approach and addresses those aspects of the programme that the balance of the research indicates would benefit from change, those that may benefit from some modification and those that should stay the same. The second part addresses some of the important considerations that are recommended relative to issues around subset diversity associated with decile, language and learning ability, gender, culture etc. The final part presents some outcomes information gleaned from the reports of staff and students relative to personal experiences directly resulting from programme effects.

The main body of the report presents the results of the qualitative interviews and addresses the subject matter in the manner outlined above. The responses from the different kinds of respondents will be amalgamated and in most cases not separated for individual attention except where there is a clear discrepancy between one kind of respondent from another. The final section is a general discussion of the results and a consideration of areas for future research.

Recommended Changes to Travellers™

Programme Content Session 1 Activities

While most of the activities in this session seem to work well and are generally enjoyed by the students, it has been noted that Activity 4 lacks any accompanying resources. Both facilitators and students are of the opinion that for some groups, the idea of exploring the journey metaphor could be conveyed better by incorporating a role play, audio-visual resource or situational model which would serve to hook less engaged students in at this early stage and more effectively construct the metaphor in a memorable and interesting way. As a result, this would be a more valuable precursor to introducing the life maps.

Programme Content Session 2 Language

Generally speaking, while facilitators in higher decile schools tended to suggest that the language used was ‘perfect for here’ and that ‘there’s nothing that really phased them [the students] in any way’, other groups presented some concerns that required phrasing ideas in other ways or having things talked about a little differently. Different examples were given to different groups and it was noted that for some of the games, some students could not even read the cards as they had not encountered the words before or could not identify what they were. This was particularly true for participants struggling with English. However, some facilitators recognised this as a good chance to teach emotional literacy. It was not uncommon in these situations for one facilitator to say the language was too complex, but another to say that they had made a before and after chart to see how emotional vocabulary had improved and it was startlingly evident that it had over the period of the eight sessions.

It was generally felt that increased emotional articulation allowed participants to engage with those emotions they previously had not. It became very clear that in situations of low English literacy, the double facilitator model was much more important than when communication was less of an issue. The reason that this is raised here, even though Session 2 does not contain much directed discourse as it revolves around the participant self-construction life map activity, is that the recommendation has emerged that it may be a good time to give students take home cards (like the skylight stone cards) so they can prepare and become familiar with a

range of emotional adjectives which will be useful throughout the remainder of the programme. These could even be offered in small packs like playing cards with which participants could play fish, memory or such like.

Programme Content Session 2 Visuals

All of the visuals for Session 2 are created by the facilitator and the participants. This is a very creative process, but it is recommended that to ensure participants consider the full range of experiences they may have encountered in their lives, some visuals be generated to accompany this session with a range of possible experiences as the facilitator's exemplary life map is likely to include a certain set peculiar to that individual and while some of these will be reasonably universal, others will be unique or culturally embedded and therefore, a range of diverse possibilities could be modelled as initiatory prompts. These would take the form of visual aids such as cards, cartoon charts or mock photo albums which may include images from well-known TV or movie scenarios.

Programme Content Session 3 Language

A number of informants suggested that the language used in this session highlighted the reality that it comes from a cultural perspective which is formal and adult. The use of 'slang and words which the kids are more used to' and 'cultural slang' has been recommended as a more common inclusion in the programme. Various facilitators said that the quotes 'are written in Pauline's adult language'; 'It's very adult'; and 'I feel uncomfortable with using the language which is outside the kids experience'. The vocabulary needs to be 'relevant, updated and in 13 year old language'. It has been reported that facilitators 'tweak it to suit our audience'.

Some facilitators noted that it is hard to stop teachers creating new and adapted language to suit the environment in which they present. The level of adaptation needs to be high in order to keep it culturally relevant. Core therapeutic concepts should be noted and other things should be modifiable. There should be some explanation as to why certain aspects must remain in tact while others can be changed. This is not to say that emotional literacy should not be encouraged, but it is a case of how much and when. The current language is seen to be white middle-class. It is recommended that there be three or four alternatives for introducing feelings rather than having a set method. In this way, the language would not need to be changed, but alternative

options for introducing concepts which cater to diverse groups could be added. This would allow the flexibility to develop emotional literacy alongside a more participant-familiar presentation style. For example, it has been noted that for predominantly Maori and Polynesian groups, the spiritual dimension is an important factor relative to what goes on in their lives, what their day trips involve, how they perceive worthiness and the impact this has on self-esteem.

Interviewees commented on how for Maori, the spiritual dimension was pervasive while for Samoans it is very much attached to church. This is important in particular when referring to grief, loss or change relative to death, but it is also a significant consideration for these groups when discussing sources of self-worth, feelings of identity and emotional support mechanisms.

Programme Content Session 4 Language

A number of respondents felt that the Session 4 slogan needs to be changed. It was suggested that 'Express yourself!' was a bit 'arty farty' and that the session would be better headlined with something like 'Say how you feel' or 'Tell'em like it is'. The key concepts and other language associated with the session was not found to be problematic and seemed to work according to staff and students.

Programme Content Session 4 Visuals

Relative to the visuals used in association with Session 4, there was reasonably common agreement that the black and white faces should be drawn better. It was noted by respondents that it was not always clear what emotion the face was trying to illustrate and when the words were added, the emotion did not seem to always match the facial expression. Some also recommended that the faces be coloured as they are on the stickers and that these colours should match the mood they are attempting to convey, i.e. red for angry, yellow for happy, blue for sad, black and white for bored, the whole lot for confused etc. The other Session 4 visuals were found to be acceptable with the colours and style of lettering for the key concept posters favoured.

Programme Content Session 6 Activities

The time scheduling exercise (Activity 1) was really hard for most students. It is recommended that this be simplified by focussing on a day instead of a week. This means that the activity would ask 'what did you do yesterday', for example, instead of

looking at a whole week. That way, participants do not need to do any math which many of the students have complained about. Facilitators have noted that some students cannot even multiply by five to translate the daily activities into a weekly amount of time spent. This results in facilitators having to do the maths for students and at the end of the activity, the significance still seems to be lost on many students.

Some facilitators reported that 'the relaxation exercise [Activity 2] was dreadful'. There seemed to be recognition that it did not work in particular settings and that it was affected by the way it was done. For example, one facilitator said; 'We did it for one group in a tiny wee noisy room with nowhere to sit and it didn't work'. There was a general consensus that if the setting was 'more relaxed and casual with bean bags and loungers' it would have made a difference. It appears necessary to demonstrate what relaxing is by the presenter tensing their body and relaxing their muscles so participants can see the contrast before commencing the activity proper.

Being pushed for time seems to be another detractor from the success of this exercise. The effectiveness of the activity can be determined by the group or individuals within it as well. For example, it has been noted that 'if you have a hyperactive student who sabotages it or someone too immature' it becomes difficult to establish the right atmosphere. Having said this, many feel that relaxation exercises are really good for participants. It became clear throughout the interview process that, with reference to facilitators, nobody sits in the middle relative to this particular activity. Either they say; 'It doesn't work so I don't do it' or 'that is absolutely brilliant'. I had no students who said that they did not like it. In fact, they rave about it. Facilitators who recognised this suggested that they 'rave about it because teenagers don't know how to relax'. They suggest that this is not something they have ever been taught and that is why it is so foreign, odd, unusual and difficult for some initially, but a neat experience once properly introduced.

The environment is, therefore, important. A number of students recorded favourable comments like; 'I fell asleep' and others said; 'that was so good I wanted to do it again and again'. Ideally, if they can be lying on the ground, it seems to work best. It is crucially important to have the necessary time and not to be rushed. The attitude of the facilitator towards the activity is vital as the participants tend to respond to the enthusiasm and confidence of the presenter, especially in this situation. Facilitator's noted that; 'If you've had it done to you and you're converted to it, it will probably work for you'. The incredible level of polarisation around this activity was

quite extraordinary. The polarisation existed between facilitators at the same schools, between facilitators at different schools and between staff and students. Some claimed to have tried it once and the students were too immature for it – ‘they laughed and giggled’.

It seems to be important to remove distractions like food and to watch for girls and boys giving each other the eye and boys being able to see up girl’s skirts. However, it is clearly enjoyed and remembered positively by student participants. Therefore, it is recommended that this activity be maintained as an integral part of Session 6 with the addition of a substantial preparatory section for facilitators which deals with all of the considerations, concerns and failings mentioned above so as to minimise these detractors and maximise the benefits of the activity. There is no Activity 3 listed in the manual. It skips from Activity 2 to 4 and it is recommended that this be rectified.

Programme Content Session 6 Language

The general feeling is that the language associated with Session 6 could be more suitable than it currently is. A number of respondents suggested that the session slogan ‘Be your own best friend!’ made them feel like ‘losers’. They had the idea that if you have to be your own best friend, it must be because no-one else wants to be. It is recommended that this be changed to something like ‘Take care of yourself’ or ‘Treat yourself well.’ The key concepts ‘Fun and laughter help reduce stress’ and ‘Relaxation re-energises’ were accepted by most while ‘Travelling well on day trips and journeys deserves rewards’ was thought to be too obscure and it is recommended that this be replaced with something like ‘Treat yourself for doing good work’ or ‘Effort deserves a reward’.

Six-month Follow-up Session – Student Evaluation

It has become reasonably clear that in order to get the full value out of student self-evaluation of the programme, it needs to occur some time after the programme has been conducted rather than directly at the end thereof. It was not uncommon for facilitators to report not having done this as they ‘didn’t know about it’. Those who conducted the student evaluation at the end of the programme reported very limited responses to it. On the other hand, those who waited some months (six seemed to be ideal), found that students contributed a great deal more information. Being able to do

this electronically rather than on paper seemed to also make a difference to student willingness to contribute meaningful reports. It is therefore recommended that the student programme evaluation be conducted approximately six months after programme completion and online.

Six-month Follow-up Session – Student Get-together

There was a general consensus among students that a six-month get-together session at a location other than school was a good idea. Beaches seemed to be the most popular destination and a number of schools already do this with very positive reports from both staff and students. The recommendation is to combine the evaluation with this activity which would allow the participants to reflect on their Travellers™ experience in written form first at school and then discuss it with each other in the relaxed environment of a beach, lake, river or other picnic or recreational destination. This also gives the participants a literal travel/day trip experience in association with the programme on which to build the fundamental metaphor.

Support from skylight

Discussions with key informants around support from skylight evoked mixed responses. Many felt that the support was good and that they need only call and assistance with computer issues, advice or resource provision was readily available. On the other hand, some felt that support was not sufficiently and consistently ongoing. More seriously perhaps, there was the suggestion that on occasion there appeared to be a discrepancy between what the National Manager promised to schools and what skylight's higher level management were prepared to accept and approve relative to what was required in order to qualify for the programme, particularly in rural areas where there is more resource sharing, and this should potentially be addressed and clarified moving forward.

Some schools also felt that it would be helpful if skylight representatives were to visit and even sit-in on sessions of the programme with constructive feedback provided afterwards to ensure both programme credibility and in-service skill promotion. The general feeling was that this should not be seen as a policing tool, but a form of customer support and something that schools could refuse if it was not desirable for them.

It has also been suggested that audio-visual aids such as CDs and DVDs come as part of the annual kit. This could include updated lists of current music and video samplings from online sites like YouTube that relate to programme concepts. Another form of support that many thought would be helpful involved skylight hosting and facilitating an online forum of ideas where Travellers™ practitioners from around the now national web could be linked to one another in a facebook-style chatshop. In this way, a community of facilitators would be able to ask questions and provide and find answers, generate and learn new ideas and find interesting ways of dealing with a plethora of potential issues.

It should be noted here that some schools which find support limited may not be responding to requests from skylight to provide current contact details and information relative to running the programme in their school. However, it is recommended that skylight continue to attempt to offer ongoing remote and field support to Travellers™ schools including the hosting of an online forum for facilitators, that the opportunity for programme and facilitator sharing be an option in rural areas with smaller schools and that update kits with optional easily accessible link resources be available on an annual basis.

Suggestions for Optional Programme Modification

Programme Content Session 1 Visuals

The messages, particularly from the students, were quite mixed around the Session 1 visuals. While most students state that the Session 1 'visuals are fine', they also feel that the 'stickers are no use'. This is not to say that they universally do not like the stickers, but just that without a clearer use for them, they remain in their suitcases and are largely not employed for any meaningful purpose. It is suggested that if the stickers are to be retained, they be incorporated in a more strategic fashion so as to ensure that the students use them as a support and ready reminder of the principles and concepts they are designed to convey and that they should in fact serve this purpose or they are largely redundant.

Programme Content Session 2 Activities

Activity 1 in this session (Life Maps) is very well received, indeed, in at least one school, this idea has been promoted as an option for all Year 9 students, regardless of Travellers™ affiliation. Part of Activity 2, however, requires participants to hand in their life maps and Travellers™ diaries during the wrap up. While this makes sense for ensuring that these valuable aspects of the programme do not get lost or left at home, it does limit the ongoing input and impact the diaries could have as a reflector of the student's journeys.

A number of facilitators and students have commented on not having enough time to complete these tasks (life map and diary) during the session and that more value could be added to the diaries if there was some way of having them accessible in between sessions so that students could add to them as they reflect on the past and new events unfold on a daily basis. Various ideas for this were floated from two copies of either the life map and/or the diary to an online option which students and facilitators could access.

Programme Content Session 3 Visuals

The visuals associated with Session 3 were appreciated by staff and students while the programme participants were particularly excited about the stickers associated with this session. The only suggestion that recurred related to the possibility of

introducing a picture at the back of the key concept slogan to illustrate the link between self-esteem and self-worth. There was some difference of opinion as to whether this should be a double-sided resource with the picture on the other side or whether the slogan should either be backed with the picture or it should accompany the wording outside of the text.

Programme Content Session 5 Visuals

While the visuals were largely praised by respondents, requests were made for more pictures like the one featuring the girl afraid of the dog covering different scenarios illustrating how imagination affects response and the cartoon style was found not to be considered out-of-date. Snakes and Ladders was found to be visually appealing while the 'Thinking Positively about Myself' chart could have more colour. The 'Catch it, Challenge it, Change it' chart received the thumbs-up, but the face stickers once again were seen as not as well-drawn as they could be and more effective if colour-coded to match the mood they are portraying.

Programme Content Session 8 Language

Most facilitators felt there was a huge buy-in in the way this language was constructed. It was found to be exciting and it generated enthusiasm. Comments such as; 'You're not over-scripted so you flavour it' and 'you treat it with a degree of flexibility, but there's nothing in particular that is problematic with any of the sayings or phrases or the explanations in the manual' relative to Session 8 were common. In terms of the printed resources such as 'Life is do-able', it was suggested that 'while this slogan is a little bit geeky, there's some really good stuff in it'. Given this feel of 'geekiness', maybe the slogans could be looked at and rephrased or reworded. The slogans and key concepts could be on stickers and in a form that the messages stay in the participants mind as a 'touchstone to send the brain off' in the right direction. Some commented that due to changes in language, they have to be really on the mark. Maybe that is something that needs updating, not because the messages are not good, but they just might need to be slightly rephrased. It has also been noted, however, that they should not sound like the facilitator is trying to sound like them as youth 'hate that'. By and large, then, key informants think they work.

When questioned as to how they might improve Session 8 language, informants agree that this would be difficult because they actually do the job. They are slogans

and concepts and as such they are memory hooks. Facilitators present them to youth as things to say when they are stressed out to help them think in positive ways. Respondents agree that ‘those concepts and slogans are really brilliant and the stickers are really great’ and starting and ending the programme with them and the fact that ‘each session starts with them means that you’re kind of building on them sequentially and you’re reminding them’ that they are important to remember and apply each day.

Facilitators report using concepts such as ‘Challenges in life can help us grow’ when seeing previous participants individually at later times and reminding them that this is one of those challenges. Once again, while some have stressed that the language can be difficult for lower literacy participants, facilitators feel that they ‘are wanting to build repertoires’. ‘Giving them some language so they have a way of talking about the stuff that’s going on inside their heads’ is seen as a good reason to maintain some of the linguistic sophistication. This broadens their feelings repertoire.

It was noted that ‘a lot of kids at 14 don’t have a feeling vocabulary’ so ‘expanding and relanguaging becomes a way of extending their experience’. One suggestion for dealing with the tension between making the language understandable and relevant, but a useful tool for growing emotional resourcefulness is to have double-sided concept and slogan sheets with a funky common-speak version on one side and a more advanced sophisticated version on the other. In this way, facilitators can adapt and apply that which works best at given times and in varying contexts.

Programme Content Session 8 Visuals

The font and style of the key concept posters are liked by respondents, but it was suggested that the two-tone blue does not provide enough of a contrast to make them outstanding. No major concerns were raised about the Travellers™ Passport which received solid approval, but a couple of suggestions did emerge as possible considerations if the materials were to be revamped. One of these relates to whether a bus is the best way to convey the association with a passport. This is normally associated with international travel and consequently air or sea transport in the New Zealand context.

In the multi-cultural paradigm from which many groups operate, a pan-ethnic waka has been mooted as a more appealing medium. The acrostic aspect of the resource is resoundingly appealing, but it has been suggested that in order to make the

passport a more integrated part of the programme, it could be introduced earlier, look more like a real passport and have stamps entered at the end of each completed session just like clearing customs. It could be used in this way for clearance to and from classes, too. This would build on a well-supported visual resource and make it more user-interactive and kinaesthetically memorable.

Session Set-up – Number

A number of staff and students felt that a programme length of 8 sessions was appropriate. However, some suggested that using the whole 10 weeks of term would be better. Indeed, in schools with hour-long periods where 60 minute sessions were the norm, this was seen as a way of covering all of the material. Therefore, if the number of sessions is to be changed, it appears that the preferred option would be shortening the sessions to 60 minutes but covering the programme over 10 weeks with the material largely remaining unchanged, but perhaps splitting Sessions 4 and 5 into four sessions.

Aspects of Travellers™ Recommended to Remain Unchanged

Global Data

For those who have had access to the global data, it is considered both helpful and useful. It is seen as valuable from both comparative and evaluative perspectives. It is therefore recommended that it retain its current format. However, there were some key informants who either did not seem to have access to or use the data. It is therefore suggested that at least the non-confidential data be made available directly to all of those involved in facilitating the programme and to those who make the decision to fund the running of it in the school, such as principals. The current practice of providing this for head facilitators only has resulted in much of this data not being passed on to important stakeholders and a consequence of this has been diminished buy-in from some of these stakeholders.

Liaison with skylight

Facilitators largely reported having an open and responsive liaison with skylight. Programme presenters were on first name terms with the Travellers™ National Manager and generally said that any communication they had with him was either immediate or responded to promptly and satisfactorily. It was commonly agreed that this liaison was both personal and helpful and it is recommended that this should remain a direct feature of the school's relationship with skylight. Once again, however, there were some key informants, particularly principals, who suggested that some direct liaison with skylight at that level would be appropriate and welcome. Most secondary facilitators were happy for the liaison with skylight to be a feature of the relationship with the primary facilitator and that it was not necessary for them.

Manual

As a rule, the Facilitators' Manual for Travellers™ was reported to be appropriate, beneficial and comprehensive throughout the review. Facilitators found the size to be about right and the set-up to be helpful with the sidebar resource lists associated with certain activities or presentations being a convenient method for ensuring they had everything they needed before beginning a session or section thereof. The background

information in the front was considered necessary preparation for those who were new to facilitating the programme.

While the time allocations associated with each activity were often modified, it was still felt that these provided an important guide for planning purposes. The amount of explanation and verbatim dictum present was found to be about right with more experienced facilitators rephrasing much of this as they became more comfortable with presenting the programme. The inclusion of pictures of the resources at the end of each session was wholly supported as a good, quick visual reference guide for busy facilitators when hurrying to gather necessities together before a session. It was considered easy to read and refer to and while there were individual requests for modification from some facilitators, there were only two recurring suggestions for possible change.

The first of these relates to the number of activities suggested for each session. It has been recommended that there be a greater range of optional physical and less kinaesthetic activities to cater to the range of groups undertaking Travellers™. While it is appreciated that there would not be enough time to cover all of these, most facilitators would like to see a broader spectrum of ideas for conveying some of the concepts through activity-based learning.

The other request is closely related to the first. It is that there is a more diverse approach to the programme presentation so that facilitators can choose from internal parallel programming methods, which way of presenting the material is likely to be most effective with the particular group they are running. For example, in some cases the verbatim language used for the facilitators to share with the students is either too basic for advanced high decile students or too complex for some second-language English speakers and/or students with learning difficulties.

There was clear agreement that no one manual will ever be able to be all things to all people, but some recognition and inclusion of diverse approaches would be appreciated by facilitators who find themselves in above or below-average learning environments or who present the programme in contexts in which the group is not representative of New Zealand's dominant cultural norm.

Programme Content Session 1 Language

There was overwhelming support for the slogan 'Life's a journey!' and the concept 'Sometimes the path can be more challenging than at other times'. The

metaphor of life being a journey was easily understood by students and the idea that life is like a roller coaster or a skipping rope with ups and downs that make it sometimes more challenging and sometimes easier was reported to be readily transferable from facilitators to students and by students as being totally relevant. It was deemed to fit well with the overall travelling notion and set the stage effectively for the later discussions around balance and expectations.

Programme Content Session 3 Activities

The activities associated with Session 3 were largely supported and endorsed. It should be noted that, particularly in lower decile schools, it was difficult to get all of the participants to bring photos to the session and indeed some students claimed that they had no photograph of themselves as a child. However, the life map time continued to be a big hit with students really enjoying working on these. While some facilitators claimed to struggle with conveying the message of the day trip, those who managed to do this found that the micro-analogy within the broader travel metaphor was both sensible and effective.

The perception activity was resoundingly well received and both staff and students felt that this made a memorable and well-noted point. The central activity in this session around internal and external determinants of self-esteem was considered important and quite critical to helping the participants engage with the factors that do and should control self-perception. There were some suggestions that the 'Perfect' song and/or the IALAC video were either not used due to inaccessibility or that they should be updated so the genre became less of a focus for the participants rather than the message. Notwithstanding this, these were minor considerations amongst a significant amount of support for the activity set-up in this session.

Programme Content Session 4 Activities

All of the activities in this session were roundly endorsed by staff and students. While some participants found it difficult to find words for some of the faces in Activity 1, facilitators saw the value in increasing the emotional literacy of their students. This was also true of Activity 2. The participants found Activities 3-5 very therapeutic, fun and challenging and requested that they not be changed.

Programme Content Session 5 Activities

All of the activities in this session were roundly endorsed by staff and students. Activity 1 positioned around the canine fear graphic was overwhelmingly embraced by all of the focus groups and Snakes and Ladders (Activity 2) was almost always said to be the favourite activity of the programme, although some of the scenarios may need to be rethought and the scenario and thought repositioned on the cards. Activities 3-6 which focus on challenging unhelpful thoughts were seen as valuable and meaningful by all informants. The thought spotters exercise (Activity 7) in association with 'There's a Hole in my Sidewalk' was enjoyed and remembered with many students referring to it as being 'very good'.

Programme Content Session 5 Language

Overall, the language used in Session 5 was described by the focus groups as being 'real good'. The Whatif Poem was well-liked and while there was the odd suggestion to reword the Shakespearean-style session slogan from 'I think therefore I am!' to 'My thoughts make me who I am', this was not considered important. There was also an issue with some participants not being able to read the scenario cards in Snakes and Ladders, however, it is not recommended that this be changed as they are important in the context of the activity and facilitators may simply need to offer additional assistance in these situations.

Programme Content Session 6 Visuals

The visuals associated with Session 6 were said to be 'great' with the colours, font and style of the concept posters favoured and the general colours and graphics on the 'Time spent' chart receiving approval, although it was felt that the layout may be better in portrait rather than landscape.

Programme Content Session 7 Activities

All of the activities in this session were roundly endorsed by staff and students even though some did not always use 'Woolly connections' (Activity 1). Activity 2 (Supporting ourselves) was considered a valuable eye-opening exercise. The same can be said for Activities 3&4. Activity 5, which focuses on continuing bonds and meaning-making, is felt to be important, although interpreted and perceived by facilitators quite differently. Some feel that because it does not adequately deal with

God-based spirituality in enough depth, they leave it out, while others feel that it is too religious for inclusion. Clearly this is a tricky area to negotiate because any reference to spirituality connotes religiosity and this can be a sensitive and intensely personal area for facilitators and students who may have quite firmly held beliefs relative to this dimension of existence. However, most seemed capable of negotiating this and even those who were mildly critical of the activity, would rather it remained than see it disappear.

Programme Content Session 7 Language

While some of the terms used in the session slogan and key concepts (such as ‘mobilise’ and ‘practical’) are complex for students with poorer English literacy, facilitators tended to ‘believe in using the language even though it is difficult and thereby increase emotional literacy’. With reference to the facilitator quotes used throughout the session, presenters would judge the English literacy level of the group and if necessary ‘use the programme language as a guide and modify it to ensure understanding’. It was generally felt that using this method worked well and allowed for adaptation to suit contextual needs and that it was easier to simplify than to make it more sophisticated for more advanced groups and therefore should largely remain unchanged. The added advantage of this approach being that it encouraged a stretching of thinking rather than a dilution of important concepts and ideas.

Programme Content Session 7 Visuals

The key concept posters were said to be ‘pretty cool’ for Session 7 and the ‘Your Support Team’ chart was referred to as ‘fun’. All in all, support for the appearance of the Session 7 resources was very positive.

Programme Content Session 8 Activities

There were no major complaints here and support for the session content was common. It would be fair to say that this was the session that respondents got least excited about. However, many facilitators said that they ‘beefed’ the session up by covering some aspects of the programme they had not had time for previously.

Session Set-up – Length

The sessions are designed to last between 60-90 minutes except for Session 5 which is designed to last at least 90 minutes. Ninety minutes seemed to be the most popular length of time to run sessions and this reportedly works best in terms of covering material and maintaining interest. In addition, it was common for facilitators to spend '20-30 minutes before the lesson getting geared up and having everything ready'. It was said that 'an hour and a half sessions were fine'. Sometimes a session might not be finished in this time and it got rolled into the next session.

In practice, the presentation of the sessions tended not to be quite as discrete as in the manual. Most schools adapted it in some way or another. Facilitators who tried to follow the manual too closely found they got themselves 'a bit locked trying to get through material and in the end decided that pacing was a bit of an issue so they paced it slightly differently for subsequent groups which was a factor that made them better'. Experience made presenters 'a little wiser as they decided on not having to get through all of the material'. Some only did an hour and some two hours and this generally related to the period length of the given school.

Those who only ran one hour sessions found them too short while those who ran two hour sessions found that it was difficult to maintain the focus of Year 9 students throughout this period. This meant that schools with 45 or 50 minute periods seemed to have no problem with accommodating session length as they would simply use two periods. However, for schools with one hour periods, this was an issue. In order to deal with this, some of these schools used Form time, assembly time or break times attached to a single period to construct the 90 minute slot which informants agree works best.

Six-month Follow-up Session – Facilitators

There was a lot of support for the six-month follow-up session for facilitators. Almost all facilitators felt that this was important as a means of refreshing their memories and checking their implementation style. Moreover, the ability to talk to other facilitators to discuss methods of application and delivery was considered a good way to brainstorm and share effective ideas. Those who have never had a follow-up facilitator's session, wish they had.

Survey

Apparently 'the online survey is the bomb'. Those schools who have made the transition to using the online survey all felt that it was the most effective and efficient way of doing the survey. It was reported to be much easier to deal with than either the paper method or the pre-online computer method which a number of schools complained about having technical difficulties with which often meant delays in assessment and even relationship turmoil with technical staff at the school. The online method should therefore be continued and its use encouraged.

Training – Content and Set-up

Some facilitators went so far as to say that they 'had no criticisms at all' of the training process. These tended to be those facilitators who had done it before 2005. They talked of the appropriateness of the group situation and the value of being part of a process in which it was just 'like running the programme'. They found that talking to teachers from other schools introduced them to 'some interesting perspectives'. Those who had done it more recently were also very commendatory, but it was noted that there was some inequality between the training provided on the North Shore as compared to South Auckland with reference to facilities and food. The cost was seen as high and the two-day set-up considered unnecessary by some who already had a strong background in cognitive and behavioural therapy. However, overall, the current system of facilitator training was seen as valuable and predominantly received positive feedback.

Training – Timing

Those who did the training at the end of Term 3 in order to run their first Travellers™ group the following term spoke most positively about the timing of the training. They felt that this worked best for them when taking all other considerations into account. However, they felt that how this was managed was really important as it was during school time. It was reported to be important to do the training 'close to the time you start facilitating' because 'it builds your enthusiasm and momentum' when the teaching and practice occur in quick succession.

Others who did the training at the start of the year or at the end still felt that that was acceptable, but it seemed to be accompanied with a range of concerns that the Term 3 option did not. For example, the beginning of the year is very busy and there

is much to organise and set-up relative to the annual calendar of activities and programmes. In addition, most schools tend not to run Travellers™ during Term 1 which means that there is a lag between training and implementation which, as discussed earlier, is less than ideal. As for those who did it at the end of the year, their concerns were similar with the end of year wind-up being a busy time and the summer break meaning that there is an even longer gap between being introduced to the programme and being able to facilitate it with the first group not likely to start until Term 2 the following year. Given these considerations, it seems advisable to retain the current Term 3 training where this is happening and look at whether this should be universalised.

The Impact of Diversity on Programme Application

A range of schools were selected for the face-to-face interview process in order to ensure a representative sample was secured. This took into consideration the following factors:

- Year of training
- Decile
- Number of facilitators trained
- Location
- Gender mix
- Major ethnic group
- Rural/Urban catchment
- Current running status

Each of these will be addressed with reference to programme provision considerations. Table 1 shows the representation included in the interview sample.

Table 1: Mix of representation included in the interview sample

YOT	Decile	NOFT	Location	Type	MEG	R/U	Run
2001	2	10	N	C	M	R	Y
2001	7	5	A	C	P	U	Y
2001	10	3	A	B	P	U	Y
2001	10	3	A	G	P	U	Y
2005	4	2	A	C	I	U	Y
2005	7	2	A	C	P	U	N
2005	7	5	A	C	P	U	Y
2007	1	2	A	C	S	U	Y
2008	1	2	We	C	S	U	Y
2008	7	2	Wa	C	P	R	Y
2008	10	2	We	C	P	U	Y

Key: YOT=Year of training; NOFT=Number of facilitators trained; MEG=Major ethnic group; R/U=Rural or urban school; Run.=Whether they currently run the programme; N=Northland; A=Auckland; We=Wellington; Wa=Waikato; C=Coed; B=Boys; G=Girls; M=Maori; P=Pakeha; I=Indian; S=Samoan; R=Rural; U=Urban and Y=Yes.

Year of Training

The year in which facilitators were trained, except in extraordinary situations, relates closely to when the programme was introduced. This is therefore a good indication of how long the programme is likely to have been running in a school. The

sample included four schools from 2001, three from 2005, one from 2007 and three from 2008. As would be expected, the longer a school has run the programme, the more committed the facilitators and principals seem to be to continuing this. The programme over time becomes embedded into the counselling psyche and the concepts and scheduling thereof become very much a part of the operation of that aspect of the school.

One of the obvious corollaries to the year of training is the degree of comfort with which facilitators come to present the programme and the level of support it receives from the wider school from other teaching staff through to the principal and senior management team. This results in greater support and consideration towards participants in the programme and more confident facilitators who are able to more expertly adapt and present the programme to meet the needs of the students they encounter. Consequently, students in these schools seemed most engaged with the programme. It would appear therefore, that staff level of experience with the programme relates positively to student enjoyment thereof.

Decile

A school's decile indicates the extent to which it draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students. The decile-impact relative to Travellers™ seems to have the greatest effect with reference to literacy and intellectual sophistication. The cultural capital measure relates very closely with the income dimension from which the decile system draws its base. This capital which relates to non-financial assets that involve educational, social and intellectual knowledge is provided to children who grow up in highly educated and intellectually sophisticated families. Because there tends to be a deficit of these in low decile schools and a preponderance of them in high decile schools, this has a very real impact on the make-up of the Travellers™ groups in these respective schools.

The sample included two Decile 1, one Decile 2, one Decile 4, four Decile 7 and three Decile 10 schools. The majority of concerns around the level and sophistication of the language in the programme emerged from sub-Decile 5 schools with both staff and students finding this a challenge in some cases. It was reported that some students could not read the scenario cards in activities like Snakes and Ladders or even the

words that relate to the facial emotion stickers. It was made clear that a word like 'enthusiastic' was well outside of the reach of the current literary capacity of some students in Decile 1 environments where some Year 9 students had not even been taught to tell the time. This also related to understanding the slogans, concepts and facilitator quotes. Words like 'relaxation' and 'practical' were even said to be outside the linguistic experience of some students. When some of these words were put together in a sentence, these students struggled to understand what the meaning of the session was. In most of these cases, facilitators reworded or rephrased ideas to ensure understanding and make the message digestible where literary deficits were evident. Without the resources specifically catering to these, it was harder work for facilitators in those schools.

Ironically, at the other end of the decile scale, students in the highest decile schools claimed that the language could be more sophisticated so that they felt less patronised. It is clear that the programme works best between Deciles 2-9 while at the extremes, it is stretched to comfortably meet the needs of literary and intellectual impoverishment on the one hand and linguistic and educational super-competence on the other. However, all of these schools, regardless of decile found that the programme was hugely beneficial and helpful notwithstanding these challenges. This was true of both staff and student reports in these contexts where it was recognised that students were struggling to deal with a range of transitional stresses and traumas irrespective of socio-economic status. In this sense, the 'teenage condition' was no respecter of decile.

Number of Facilitators Trained

The sample included six schools with two facilitators trained, two with three, two with five and one with ten. There were found to be a couple of real advantages to having a greater number of facilitators trained. The first was that it meant a school could run more groups, in some cases this included all Year 9 students. This meant that students were less likely to feel 'special' in a negative sense and the benefits of the programme could be enjoyed by a greater number of youth. The other advantage was that the programme became more secure because in cases where there were less than three facilitators, staff secondment to teaching roles or other responsibilities, sickness or resignation and movement into other positions and/or schools presented a serious threat to programme continuity and security. A number of schools who were

either interviewed face-to-face or by telephone and no longer run the programme reported this to be the reason. In these cases, indefinite or temporary suspension of Travellers™ emerged as a result of insufficient facilitator numbers meaning that even a small destabilising event in the team structure resulted in an inability to continue with the programme.

It should be noted that there were also a couple of disadvantages noted to having more facilitators. The first relates to the cost associated with the training which was a concern for some principals and departmental heads who were trying to balance very tight budgets. The other is that when more facilitators are trained, some will tend not to be counsellors, but general teaching staff. It was felt by some that these facilitators did not have the training and ability to deal with some of the more serious needs that periodically emerge through presenting the programme. It was seen to be important, therefore, to ensure that at least one of the two facilitators be a trained counsellor to whom students could go should they need additional assistance, guidance and counselling in order to overcome this potential issue.

School Location

The sample included seven schools in Auckland, one in Northland, one in Waikato and two in Wellington. There was not an obvious difference in factors affecting the programme on this dimension except that the schools south of Auckland had less experience with running the programme and therefore were still experimenting with working out what worked best and ironing out teething problems. Some of these problems included principals who were not yet really converted to the idea, high turnover of student participants requiring 'ring-ins' to bolster numbers during the course of the programme and staff movement to other schools. In at least one case, this affected the attitude of students towards the programme and the others could potentially impact on the ability of those schools to continue to run the programme.

Type of School

This refers to whether a school was single-sex or co-educational. The sample included nine co-educational schools, one boys school and one girls school. Ten of the schools were state secondary schools while one was an area school. The single-sex schools obviously ran single-sex groups and they were found to work well. The co-ed

schools tended to run a mixture of boys, girls and mixed groups. It was suggested that separating by gender at this age was generally preferable as boys and girls approached the resources in different ways in many cases and responded differently to discussing the concepts. When discussing this with students, male youth stated that they were more likely to be honest and open without girls present, although there were exceptions to this general rule.

On the other hand, girls did not seem to be as concerned about sharing their group with boys. Sometimes single-sexing groups came about purely through pragmatics as there were too many of one gender in a co-ed environment who qualified for the programme and in that situation one group might be mixed while the other was single-sex. There seemed to be benefits to tailoring group work to suit a particular gender, but there were not concerns raised about separating by gender. It would therefore seem to be well worth considering this as an option in co-ed schools for facilitators who wish to experiment with how effective this could be in their particular context.

Ethno-cultural Considerations

The sample included one school that was predominantly Indian, one Maori, seven Pakeha and two Samoan. This particular dimension certainly appears to have impacted on the way the programme was delivered and has implications for the way the programme operates. In the context of Indian, Samoan and other migrant groups, English is often not a first language. It may not even be a second language for some. Some facilitators have suggested that for these students, a linguistically modified programme is required that would specifically cater to ESOL students.

At the moment, schools do not appear to separate groups on this basis, but it would make sense to do this if language is a particular issue. In the Indian context, it was noted that while many of these students had faced major transitions, they had strong family support systems that meant their distress levels were often low, particularly where moving to New Zealand meant a much safer and more peaceful lifestyle. It was noted that for Samoan students and a number of other Pasifika groups, strict familial ties and boundaries meant that the programme materials needed to be modified so that they were relevant in that context. For example, rewards for 'travelling well' could not often be going to the movies or out with friends as this was not permitted so other alternatives that fit within the cultural framework such as

spending time with nieces or nephews or going to a fun church youth activity became substitutes.

It was also noted that for many Maori, in particular, because trauma is so common, both proximately and intergenerationally, the survey fails to identify their true level of distress because they do not consider major transitional events extraordinarily concerning. This psychological desensitiveness is normalised through similar community experience and peer commonality in such a way as to render the students unaware of personal trauma and unresponsive to what would normally be considered grief-inducing events. There is almost certainly a place for programme considerations that deal with some of the historical and contemporary issues that are faced by many Maori youth with such consistency and repetition that they present with an all but unique set of group characteristics forming a peculiar collective experience. Some facilitators who work with predominantly Maori groups tend to replace the bus with a waka and introduce concepts like aroha, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and other Maori vocabulary to convey familiar ideas through more indigenous language.

In addition, there was almost universal agreement that for non-Pakeha students, in particular, more action, hands-on, kinesthetic, physical, practical activities were required to maintain focus and ensure engagement with the material. This resulted in at least two schools modifying the programme in significant ways for predominantly Pasifika male groups. At the milder end of the scale, this meant acting out aspects of the programme that would otherwise be written about or drawn. At the more extreme end, one group used the key concepts as foundational ideas and introduced completely new activities as ways to get the boys out of the classroom and see a physical metaphor for the principles that were being taught. Such activities involved mountain-climbing, obstacle courses and cemetery visits.

The programme does seem to work in its pure form most comfortably with Pakeha and this probably reflects its origins. However, there is both a need and a justification for parallel programming to cater to diverse cultural and ethno-linguistic groups or at the very least, some optional additional material for facilitators in these environments that would serve as a support when facilitating predominantly non-European groups.

Rural/Urban Environmental Considerations

The sample included nine urban schools and two rural. The main difference between these two school experiences with Travellers™ was that the rural schools put

all Year 9 students through the programme while the urban schools were selective. This meant that the rural groups tended to be much more a mix of high and low-needs students while the urban groups only consisted of high-needs youth. As a result, the rural facilitators tended to have greater flexibility in organising groups so that they were constructed in the most positive ways by either choosing to balance needs out or focus them to be dealt with together. The response from these schools was that all participants seemed to benefit from participating in the programme despite their survey score.

Deciding to Not Run the Programme

Only one of the schools interviewed face-to-face were currently not running the programme while others in this category were spoken to by telephone. There were four main reasons advanced for schools having trained facilitators and then not running the programme. The first of these related to staff unavailability. As mentioned earlier, for schools with less than three facilitators, when one of these is unable to assist with running the programme, it does not happen. This has occurred in a number of schools through sickness, death, secondment, new responsibilities or changing employment.

The second relates to the first coupled with an unwillingness or inability to fund the training of new facilitators. In this sense, cost was seen as prohibitive for some schools and when trained staff left and went to a new school, that school did not compensate them for acquiring a trained facilitator that they had funded training for much to the chagrin of losing principals. The third factor related to an inability to find space in the timetable to accommodate running the programme. This was an issue in schools with an unusually narrow academic focus and parents that were likely to see time out of class as unsupportable.

The final factor noted was that it was no longer supported by principals and other stakeholders in the senior management team. This tended to occur as a result of them not seeing concrete results that they could draw on in justifying continuing with the programme. In line with this, before and after assessments (in the form of reports, surveys, attendance records etc) which school heads could have access to on an aggregate basis for participants would be likely to have a very positive effect in creating the kind of credibility that they are looking for. None of the schools in the study sample had decided not to run the programme because the facilitators felt it was

of no use, but it was a concern of some principals who felt they were left out of the information loop or claimed not to see behavioural improvements from participants. However, this was rare.

Stories from the Front

This review was not designed as an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Travellers™ programme and should therefore not be seen as such. Its purpose has been to assess the suitability of the programme materials and the current operation of the programme. However, in the course of collecting this information, there have been many stories shared and almost all of these anecdotes were positive in nature. It seems appropriate to share at least some of these as a concluding note.

- 1) One facilitator shared a story of how one of their early students who had now left school had bumped into them in town and a conversation ensued in which the student who had registered quite highly on the distress scale when selected for Travellers™ and struggled to some extent throughout high school, was now doing psychology at university and linked this to their time in Travellers™.
- 2) Another noted that one student who was extremely quiet throughout the presentation of the programme sessions approached the facilitator at the conclusion of the programme and asked how he could become a Travellers™ facilitator as they had found the programme so valuable and helpful. The facilitator noted that they could have been knocked over by a feather given the apparent lack of interest this student had shown throughout the course.
- 3) One student and another facilitator shared similar stories from different schools where participants said that they were going to teach the programme to their parents because ‘they really need this stuff’.
- 4) Other facilitators shared stories of how in one case a student changed a 20% attendance rate to an 80% rate after completing the programme.
- 5) In another situation, a dean stated that because of the increased confidence and linguistic ability one participant had developed through the programme, they were able to avoid being suspended and the relationship of trust that emerged as a result of this dean facilitating the programme meant that the level of understanding necessary to make this work became a critical factor.
- 6) Many facilitators shared stories of students identifying themselves to them as their ‘travellers’ and maintaining an ongoing counselling relationship with

them that they believe in many cases would not have ever emerged without their involvement in Travellers™.

- 7) One facilitator said that a teacher approached them and questioned them as to whether a particular student was attending Travellers™ and fearing the worst, knowing that this was a particularly troublesome student, tentatively said ‘yes, but they’ve only done a couple of sessions so far’ at which point the other teacher said that they were suddenly a completely different student and that it was obviously working.

These are just a few of the many stories and positive reports that have emerged from over 50 hours worth of interviews. However, this does not substitute for a robust evaluation of the outcomes in the lives of participants and it is recommended that as the programme moves into its second decade of operation that such an undertaking is long overdue.