**Speak Up-Kōrerotia**

**Raising children as upstanders**

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**Plains FM**

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Coming up next, conversations on human rights with Speak Up – Kōrerotia, here on Plains FM

**Sally**

E ngā mana,

E ngā reo,

E ngā hau e whā

Tēnā koutou katoa

Nau mai ki tēnei hōtaka, Speak Up-Kōrerotia.

Tune in as our guests ‘speak up’, sharing their unique and powerful experiences and opinions and may you also be inspired to speak up when the moment is right.

This is Speak Up-Kōrerotia, and today we are talking about raising tamariki as upstanders. How do we raise our children to be upstanders rather than bystanders? This is perfect timing to be airing this show because we're coming up to Pink Shirt Day, which runs every year, and it's an opportunity for us to all think about what it is that makes us kind, supportive human beings and wear pink T-shirts to show that visibly in schools, in our workplaces and around the community as well.

Our guests today are all experts in not just anti-bullying, but also how do we look at the positive side as well, how do we raise people to be great, decent, contributing human beings? And it would be really wonderful to hear from you all about what it is that you do and your organisations, and how you came to be in this space. Mark, seeing as it’s soon Pink Shirt Day, how about we start with you?

**Mark**

Kia ora. My name is Mark. I'm from the Mental Health Foundation, and since 2009, we've been running the Pink Shirt Day campaign here in Aotearoa New Zealand. And I do a lot of that comms and media around Pink Shirt Day and every year it just fills my cup. I guess we hear a lot about bad stuff from the ills of the world but the good thing about it is it's about celebrating kindness and all the good, positive things about humanity. So it's a celebration. So that's my key thing about making Pink Shirt Day a celebration, because we know for some people, bullying is an awful, complicated, regular thing but hopefully by those people seeing Pink Shirt Day happening and some of the learnings we can all take from that, it will make New Zealand a better place to live.

**Sally**

Yeah. Nice. That's what we’d all like to have.

**Mark**

We do.

**Sally**

And Mace, I see you next on my screen.

**Mace**

Kira ora I’m Mace and my pronouns with them. I am the Waitaha Canterbury Schools Coordinator for InsideOUT Kōaro, and we work towards making sure that rainbow young people feel safe in their schools and community, helping schools to create a sense of belonging and inclusion for rainbow young people, and working alongside community organisations to also provide those opportunities in community as well.

**Sally**

And Mace, could you tell us a wee bit about InsideOUT?

**Mace**

So InsideOUT has school coordinators like myself all over the country. So in each area of New Zealand, we have a school coordinator and they’re able to support any school in that area around rainbow inclusion belonging and safety. They liaise with community organisations and we also have workplace services within our team. So we deliver professional development to workplaces all around the country around rainbow inclusion, gender, diversity, safety, belonging, all of those good things.

**Sally**

Awesome stuff. And finally, we've got Meg Craig, who is from the Elephant Trust.

**Meg**

Brilliant. Thank you. Yeah, I'm Meg, I'm the director of operations for the Elephant Trust, which is a relatively newly, formed charitable organisation here in New Zealand and we hold the license for the KiVa Bullying Prevention program to be delivered at New Zealand schools. We currently have about 70 schools across the country that are benefiting from the program, and I hope obviously to have more and more get involved. The program has been running in New Zealand since 2014, it used to sit with Victoria University and then end of 2022 the license was transferred to us. I've been involved with the program since about 2020. I trained first as a staff trainer to go into schools and train the staff in the program, and since then have become more and more involved. The program is whole-school approach program that really looks to change the thinking around, around accepting and allowing bullying behaviours to continue. So rather than just being strategies for how to support a victim of bullying and how to, you know, deter the behaviours and those that are exhibiting those behaviours, and actually looks at what's everyone else doing. How can we actually change group thinking to squash those behaviours, get ahead of it and support, you know, communities to do that. Thank you for having me.

**Sally**

Thank you for coming on the show. And KiVa was Finnish, I believe?

**Meg**

So the program was developed in Finland, so first rolled out there about 2009. Since then, it has sort of spread around the world. It's now operating in about 25 countries and really showing, you know, success sort of everywhere that it's been implemented. So it's quite a powerful program and doing good things here, and we just hope to see it grow.

**Sally**

Great. Thank you so much for all of your introductions, you bring such a wealth of experience and expertise. It's going to be great to hear from you today. Just as we kick off our kōrero, it would be really good to think about what exactly is it when we're talking about bullying? Because bullying can come in all kinds of different forms.

**Mark**

Well, I have a go. We've got a handy set of four-point list of what bullying is, because often sometimes people think if somebody says something mean to them, which is completely unacceptable, but it's not bullying. And it can get a bit complicated in the workplace or school environment sometimes. But anyway, we describe bullying as being deliberate and intentional, involves the misuse of power, and it's repeated, and it's behaviour that can cause harm.

**Meg**

Yeah, absolutely. I agree with all of that. We talk about all of those things as needing to be present for something to be considered bullying. And I think right off the bat, it's a really useful thing for communities to get their head around because as you said, Mark, that word gets thrown around a lot. And often every little conflict, every little negative interaction, that word gets thrown out and it actually confuses situations and confuses things. So getting everyone really clear on that definition is really helpful and knowing then how to respond.

**Mace**

I agree with all of your definitions, With rainbow young people, we see a lot that there's a lot of this normalisation of things that we would class as bullying. So some of those comments that are really normalised in school that wouldn't be seen as bullying – it's kind of the opposite to when we get young people say, oh, that's bullying when it's that little insensitive comment that's not repetitive – this is having a lot of comments being made over and over again. Repetitive, intentional, harmful and is that abuse of power that a lot of people overlook because it's just seen as normal to talk about a lot of those things to do with the rainbow community. So it's an interesting kind of complexity.

**Sally**

You raise a really interesting point there, Mace, which kind of was my next question, which was around do we see particular groups who tend to be bullied – and the rainbow community would be one that's right up there, I'm sure.

**Mace**

Yeah, definitely. There's lots of high statistics around bullying in the rainbow community. The Youth-19 survey that was done around a whole lot of different communities provides us with some really good statistics around bullying for a lot of different communities, but particularly around the rainbow community. They found that one in five trans students, so one in five transgender students – 23% – found that they were bullied at least once a week at school over the past year. That's compared to 5% of cisgender students. And then for our same- or multiple-sex attracted students, that's 7%. So nearly one in 15 were bullied once a week over the past year, compared to 5% of different-sex attracted students. So you can see that those statistics are quite especially for our trans young people.

**Sally**

Do we have an idea of who tend to be the perpetrators? The bullies? Like we've gathered statistics for who are victims of bullying, do we have the opposite?

**Mark**

I think somewhat ironically, it's people who tend to be bullied themselves or have been bullied is a very common denominator in bullying behaviour.

**Meg**

Yeah, I think there's definitely a lot of things that feed into, you know why does a bully, bully. I mean, a lot of the information that came out of the research that informed KiVa was that quite often it was about, it was more about the outcomes rather than sort of who that person was. So it was that they were looking for something. So looking for, you know, a rise in their social status in the playground or a clap or a laugh or doing that to impress your friends. So there's sort of that aspect of it. And that just feeds in, again, to that idea that if the group allows it, it will grow. So if those behaviours are shut down early, then that individual may not continue to develop even wanting to take part in those behaviours. But we definitely know – and especially when I'm talking to schools – so often there are contributing factors as to why a student exhibiting bullying behaviours has ended up doing that. And it might be that there are difficulties at home or other vulnerabilities that need to be considered, you know. It's always going to be complex.

**Mark**

Yeah. And oftentimes people don't realise that their behaviour is bullying behaviour and they just do it. It's not acceptable, but they still do that sort of thing. And then there's that whole thing about being different. A lot of people will pounce on people that are perceived to be not the normal. That's a very common stream, with the type of person that is bullying.

**Meg**

That's right. Yeah. Those vulnerable people, for whatever reason. And I mean, that's another thing, you know sort of who gets bullied. Well there definitely are vulnerable groups and individuals but also there can be sometimes the most inane reasons that people will be bullied. I heard a story just the other day about someone who was bullied at school because they were into horse riding, that became the thing that others hooked into and used as a target.

**Mark**

Yeah. On a personal experience, I was at school 40-something years ago, so like back in the dark ages, and it was an all boys’ school and the people that were most likely to be bullied by the academic achievers, and they were absolutely slammed for being brainy. So it could be as simple as that.

**Mace**

Anything that it's not being seen as being a part of that in-group, hey. Anything that can be joked about in a way that becomes bullying because the joke's only a joke if both parties find it funny, right? Whereas we say these repetitive jokes that young people are making where they're getting a laugh out of their mates and they think it's funny, but they don't realise the harm that they're doing to the other individual.

**Meg**

Yeah, and I think that's a really key point. Like, we talk about bullying as intentional behaviour – and it absolutely is – but especially when we're talking about young kids, for them to have any idea of just how much harm that's causing, and that something that they could be doing in the playground at age ten, could still be affecting a person 20 years, 30 years, later – it's too big a concept for them to sort of realise on their own. Like, these things have to be pointed out, that it's not just harmful in the moment, it's harmful long term. It's a big thing to get their heads around.

**Sally**

You mentioned harm. And I mean, this can presumably range from not continuing with your horse riding or not wanting to show that you're really brainy or whatever it may be, whatever this sort of cause of the bullying is, but what other kinds of harm are we seeing short term or long time that's resulting from bullying?

**Mark**

Well, from our perspective, we see it that continual bullying has a massive impact on your mental health and it can lead to significant elevation and, you know, depressive illnesses or conditions. And then it can mean that you're going to skip class or that's happening in school. Or if you're in a workplace, you're going to go stuff this, I don't need to put up with this, and you're going to leave, so staff turnover is going to be high. Or absenteeism is going to be more prevalent. So it has a big impact. And so those people are going to end up with a potential for serious mental distress.

**Meg**

Yeah, absolutely. Thinking about schools, that lack of attendance is a huge one and something that is talked about a lot at the moment for government, but also that loss of sense of self and sense of belonging within a school environment. You know, we ask kids to go to school for six hours a day, five days a week; it's a big amount of their lives that they're in this environment. And if they don't feel safe and they don't feel that they belong, how could we ever expect that they'll be able to learn and actually make the most of their educational opportunities, let alone the social ones? That’s sort of thinking about those immediate outcomes in terms of disrupting school. And then the long-term ones, yeah, as Mark said, we certainly see that in our mental health stats, our suicide rates in New Zealand. So many of those things as well can be tied back to bullying experiences in school.

**Mace**

Yeah, I agree with what you're saying, Meg, around, like, how can our young people feel safe, have trust in the environment that they're asked to spend so much time in, when they do feel unsafe walking in those doors or are worried about students where the teachers don't see all the bullying that's happening, all the comments that are being made to them, and nothing can be done to be addressed about it so that they feel. And then they’re being asked to sit down in front of a book and try and read and learn and listen when there’s so many other things going on for them.

And then on top of that, obviously we will all be very aware of the dire straits the nation is in around suicide statistics, especially with our young people, which are even further increased for our rainbow family. I think ultimately when we're talking about bullying – even though we've got some of these other very serious outcomes that can happen, like absenteeism and all of those sort of things – we're kind of talking about the dire long-term definite outcomes that are happening for a lot of our young people, which is suicide. So it's a really important thing that we need to all work to address.

**Sally**

Thank you all for setting the scene so very well, and I'm sure we could we could go on about that for a really long time. But what I'd like to do now is have our first waiata, and then we'll flip the conversation a wee bit and think about what is it that we can be doing to support upstandership? Is that the noun?

**Mace**

Yeah, we could just make it a noun. Yeah.

**Meg**

So it sounds like good like that.

**Sally**

Mark, we've got a song that you've selected for us, which is the Pink Shirt Day anthem, I suppose.

**Mark**

Yes. In 2022, so two years ago, Pere Wīhonga, a great Māori performer and songwriter, we commissioned him to write the song Iarere Aio, which was all about positive vibrations. So it's really nice messages of building on te whare tapawhā as a really good, solid foundation for your wellbeing and about being true to yourself, true to who you are and be proud of your identity, whatever that identity may be, and just stand up. So it speaks to Pink Shirt Day so well and it's catchy as and it had a bit of a wee moment on the whole TikTok, two years ago. So you can bust out some moves if you wish.

**Sally**

It sounds great.

**MUSIC – Pere Wīhonga, ‘Iarere Aio’**

**Sally**

Ko Speak Up-Kōrerotia tēnei, and we're talking about how do we raise our tamariki to be upstanders. To get us going here, what is actually an upstander? What is being an upstander? What do we mean by that?

**Mark**

I guess that's a person who uses words or actions to help someone who's being bullied – but rather than being a bystander and just, oh God, that's happening, that's awful, actually get in there and stop it, because we know that over half of bullying incidents are stopped when somebody intervenes. So simple as that, really. I know it's hard to do sometimes, but you can do that many ways as well, so you don't have to step in at that moment. You can support that person. You can be standing next to the person being bullied to give them that sense of safety, I guess. And then then you can decide after, well, what's the best way? Then go to a teacher or somebody you trust at work or, you know, some other trusted person that you can say, well, this is happening. This continues to happen. Here's what happened to him. Boom you've got yourself all the good ways of dealing with somebody being bullied by being an upstander. It’s supporting somebody, really.

**Meg**

Yeah, I totally agree with all of it. And this is one of my favourite things to talk about, actually, like what does an upstander actually look like? Because I think sometimes kids think that it means that they have to be louder than the bullying student, or put themselves in harm's way and get in the thick of things. But actually the message is, just as Mark said, any action or any effort to act in support of the victim is being an upstander, we use the term ‘defender’ in KiVa. Yeah, it could be that you're the one that goes to get help, goes and talks to an adult, or just shows support to the person down the track. Even anything that counteracts that harmful behaviour that the victim's feeling from bullying behaviour is acting as an upstander.

And the message is that it can be a little thing, but they do make a huge difference. We know through the research that informed Kiva that victims of bullying talking about their experiences later in life said that although obviously the actions of the bully were very harmful and that has stayed with them, what stays with them the most, what they remember the most, is the inaction of others, not actually the actions of the bully.

**Mark**

Wow, that's powerful, that.

**Meg**

Yeah, yeah, really powerful. When you share that with a group of kids and make them realise that their little action, some little thing that they could do, can actually change the course of this potential harm that might be coming for that person, and it can actually derail it. That's great.

**Mace**

I think you're right around saying that any little action is so important, and that inaction is usually noticed more. It can be really hard to stand up in bullying situations and to speak back against that or whatever it looks like to keep yourself safe in that moment, especially when we're talking about communities where the bullying might be against the whole group rather than just an individual. When you were giving the example before about a young person being bullied about horse riding, you know, that's really targeted on that, unless you had a group of horse riders. When we've got to walk around school saying, “That’s so gay” or using slurs that can impact a whole group of young people who are sitting together or in groups or whatever that looks like, so in those situations, we often say that once they are in their pride group space and that safe space with a safe teacher, we're having those conversations about, oh, this incident happened this week, or this student has been targeting multiple of our students that are in the group, and that's where they're having those conversations around support. And that still being an upstander in those situations, when they're all coming together and saying, actually, we're not going to stand for this, we need to find a safe teacher and all talk about our experiences as a collective so that we can see some change in this. It's really hard to do that as an individual, when it's so targeted towards a whole identity. So I think it's really good for people to hear on shows like this were just out in schools when we might go on to schools, that actually that doesn't have to look like in the moment, being able to stop bullies or being able to stop the harm that's happening. It can just look like supporting your friends and being like, actually, it's really scary to go talk to a teacher about this, let's go together. And that's as simple as it needs to be.

**Mark**

And that's a really good point, because it can be really scary as an adult in a workplace. If that's your boss bullying you, where do you turn? You might not have an HR team, but generally when you're being bullied, others are going to be there observing that and being part of that. So collectively, if you can get the support of others in the workplace, maybe you can make a change. But it's not an easy thing to do. But that's why I love pride groups within schools. It's the collective voice saying, hey, this is what's happening. You've got a lot of evidence to show that it's happening across the community.

And in a workplace it can be happening – invariably, a bully is going to be picking on more than one person – so, you know, we say to people, you know, note the evidence of that, you know, the date and the time it happened, you might need to bring in a union representative or go to Community Law. Or maybe it's communicating with executive leadership somehow. You know, it really would help having the backing of other people in the workplace as well. Because we shouldn't have to endure this at all but certainly not alone, you know? So I think it's trying to find that collective support.

**Meg**

And just knowing what to do. I think that's half the battle. The majority of students, when asked whether they think bullying’s okay, will say no. We know that it's not actually accepted as okay, but so often it's allowed to continue. Students will know what's happening, but don't do anything because they don't know what to do. So it's just having strategies and processes in place within a school or a workplace or a sports organisation or whatever it might be. You know, if you say this and you're uncomfortable with it, that's just what you do. And having already talked about their strategies and ideas before it becomes actually relevant, so kids are prepped and know how they can respond.

**Mark**

Love it. That sounds good. And I've got a ten-year-old and a 15-year-old and the ten-year-old often talks about, “If this happens, this is what I've done” and it's validating their behaviour over time. While you could also do x, y, z, you know, we all have a role and that's, you know, it's not just the teacher, it's the, you know, household. And sometimes kids need to work out themselves how to develop the resilience and the strength to respond to certain circumstances, absolutely. They need to understand when it's getting out of control and bad, and that's where the school environment really makes a big difference as well.

**Meg**

Yeah. And students need to have trust that if they will speak up, they'll be listened to and something will be actioned. So it's another thing that, you know, we hear a lot. “I told someone about it last year and they didn't do anything” or “Nothing's changed”. Yeah, I think that's really key: that if students are going to be brave enough to share what's happening with them, that it gets actioned and seen through to a resolution.

**Mark**

Yeah. The important thing about this is you as a parent or a caregiver, you need to know what is the school policy. So when this happens it shouldn't be dismissed. You know, like in my instance, my daughter had a thing happen, but it was when a relief teacher was there rather than her normal class teacher. So did didn't know what to do when an incident happens and it's not minimised. And every single accusation is dealt with in the same way so there's a sense of fairness and equity. And then it just becomes the norm and the school environment. So you're going to see that bullying reduced anyway. If you're doing all of this all the time, it's just going to naturally fall away because everyone learns and knows that this is not acceptable.

**Meg**

Well, that's right. That's the ultimate aim. The behaviours have to be repeated to call it bullying, but there's always going to be a first instance. So if every time it happens for the first time, it's shut down, ultimately, we don't end up with these insidious bullying behaviours happening across school communities.

**Mace**

Yeah, this is why that policy is really, really key. And there's so many school groups that we'll go into that will be like, “Well, we have bullying policy, we know about it, but if we report an incident like this, they follow the policy through but the next day that young person's still back in that class and certain things are happening”. So there's not a lot of trust in those systems a lot of the time, which is, I think one of those places that while schools are doing the best in that a lot of the time, they can kind of upskill and develop that more to create that trust with the student body, to know that when an incident reported, it's going to be followed through in a way that keeps it safe in the future and stops that behaviour where it is. Particularly around rainbow bullying and other specific communities that are bullied, because often teachers might not have the confidence or the language to actually address and educate around those bullying statements and why they're harmful which makes it really tricky for them to put a stop to that around, things like slurs or racism or saying, that's okay. We hear that from a lot of teachers that they're kind of like, well, we know it's bad, and we tell them it's bad, but we don't know how to stop it because they just don't listen to us. We don't have the confidence and capability to discuss that through. Which is part of what InsideOUT does in schools; our main thing is upskilling teachers.

**Sally**

And in that kind of situation, what do you suggest teachers do?

**Mace**

I guess the main thing that we suggest is that they are able to have conversations with individual students that are saying harmful things or engaging in those behaviours, to educate them around the rainbow community. That requires teachers having an understanding and having had professional development for themselves from agencies like InsideOUT or other places to be confident and knowing how to talk around the rainbow community. That doesn't have to be super in-depth; we can know what to do and how to talk about rainbow bullying and how to stop bullying without knowing every LGBTQ+ identity under the sun. But there's a lot of times the teacher’s like, I know about stuff, but I don't want to say the wrong thing, so I don't talk about it.

So our real focus in sessions that we do with teachers is to provide that confidence and knowing how to address statements like “That’s so gay” by talking about what actually is gay and what do we mean when we say that and why are we actually calling that thing ‘gay’ when we mean lame or silly or whatever, and trying to provide young people with more language that's actually about what they're saying about that’s not going to be harmful to our community. And it's going to take a lot of time because there's a lot of, you know, that's entrenched in our school culture situation, our societal culture of how we talk about marginalised communities and the conversations that we have around them. So schools, I guess, like what you're saying earlier, Meg, is that if you catch that and you're doing that continually, continually, continually, it's going to decrease because students will understand that there's a culture within that school of well actually we don't say stuff like that. This is why it's not okay. This is the things that we can say to express the feelings that we are having or what we want to say in that moment that's not going to hurt someone.

**Meg**

Yeah that's great. And it's just taking all of those incidents and actually turning them into learning opportunities as well, you know, rather than just a consequence-driven strategy which doesn't get us anywhere, right. The key, the program, our intervention steps are all about actually asking the students who have been involved with bullying behaviours to come up with ways that they can make things better. So they're actually asked to be part of the solution to fixing what's happening across the school. And it's quite a powerful process because I think quite often students aren't asked that and are asked to actually contribute to making things better. So the behaviour gets called out. Absolutely. It's not acceptable. It's going to stop. But also how can you contribute to actually moving everyone forward positively?

**Sally**

Yeah, great. We'll have our second song now – Mace, you've chosen one for us this time – and then we're going to get back and talk about more about the strategies that we can work on altogether. Mace, you suggested ‘Live more and Love more’ by Cat Burns.

**Mace**

Yeah. Cat Burns is an amazing artist who's from the queer community and has a lot of empowering, inclusive songs, but ‘Live more and Love more’ really speaks to, like, everyone just engaging in all those things that makes them happy and building other people up. And I just think, it's such a cool thing. If we can address things like bullying and then like focus on what people are actually wanting to get out of their life and how they can be happy in those spaces and do everything they want and without it impacting on other people or impacting on other people positively, then we're going to be in a much better place than society's.

**MUSIC – Cat Burns, ‘Live more and Love more’**

**Sally**

This is Speak Up-Kōrerotia and we've got Mace Malcolm, Mark Wilson and Meg Craig talking about raising our tamariki as upstanders. We're going to think in a final segment now about exactly how do we raise tamariki to be upstanders beside people, to stand up against bullying. We've spoken a wee bit about school, and we've touched on the role of parents and the wider whānau and the wider community, but I'm sure there are lots of other strategies you guys can think about that are really helpful, really practical suggestions.

**Meg**

I just think it's never too early to teach kindness. Essentially, that's the foundation of all of this: kindness raising and encouraging empathy in our children. And, you know, the hope for every child is that those things are taught really, really early, right? The earlier that they learn those things, the less likely they are to treat someone badly down the line. I know that's very general, but I do think that that's kind of where it starts.

**Sally**

Meg, on that, I totally agree, you can't start talking about kindness too early, but how about the age at which schools and parents and community could or should start to address some of the other issues? So the idea that your words can cause harm, and then the idea that this harm is potentially long term, the more serious elements to it – I guess that might come a bit more with age and maturity?

**Meg**

Yeah, absolutely. And the lessons need to be repeated time and time again. And though they will grow with maturity as students do. Our program runs from Year One in school right up to Year Ten and sort of follows the same the same pattern. It starts very much with identifying emotions. A lot of it is about, you know, how do I feel about something, how do I think my friends feel about it, and recognising those kinds of things in each other, and then it spends a lot of time talking about groups. So how do you join a group? How do you feel comfortable in a group? Things like that. And then eventually the program will move on to actually what I believe in behaviours, you know, what are we looking at when we recognise them. So there's a lot of sort of foundational work that that happens first, which is all about those socio-emotional lessons. So I think that, again, is the foundation. But very quickly, even with the youngest kids at school, you can be talking about that definition, like what bullying behaviour is and what we do when we say it.

**Mace**

I think you're so right. If it's reinforced young and developed in a mentally and age appropriate way, you can kind of start anywhere you want with bullying. We see parents that will correct young children playing with other children, and saying, “Don't say that to that young person, that's not kind” and then talking to them about why it's unkind and things like that, even at three or four or five. So there's no reason why we can't be, you know, doing those building blocks and making sure that from very young age, young people understand what harmful comments are, what bullying is, all of those sort of things in ways that is in language that they understand.

And then that also leads into a lot of the ideas around identity, what's right and wrong, what's the norm. All of those were things like that; they’re all learned behaviours, they’re all learned understandings. And so they come from somewhere. So as adults in young people's lives – like teachers, social workers, parents, whoever might be around in a young person's life – we have to take a really critical look at ourselves and what conversations we have around young people, what thoughts, ideas, biases we are putting onto them. Because at the end of the day, they're just a sponge, like they're going to take on what people around them believe and that's what they usually carry into school environments around friends and things like that.

So if we see young people who have anti-rainbow ideas and think things are really wrong and things like that, we’re organising this process of re-educating them around what that actually means, because they've been given that from adults and that's been passed on. So that happens with a whole lot of other things as well around what is right and wrong, what are okay things to be, what the norms and everything as well. So that's kind of a critical lens we can put on, not just talking to young people about bullying, but also in reflecting of where it actually stems from, where they pick it up from.

**Meg**

Yeah. That role modelling, that's key, right? Yeah.

**Mark**

I haven't got much more to share because it's been so well traversed here. I mean, Mental Health Foundation developed, you know, Sparklers and Pause Breathe Smile, which everyone's said here is about embedding this into. It's not like you just have a standalone lesson that's in every action that we all do, and, you know, recognising diversity within our community, you know, it's enriching to learn about other people and what makes other people tick and what makes them different from you is just part of humanity. So those are really big existential things, but kids are generally up for that kind of yarn as well. You know, they want to learn about what happens when you're like this or you eat that food from that culture. You know that as a result, we all learn. Some people are threatened by new things or change and in a fast-changing society like Aotearoa, you worry certain communities about how things are going in a way that they perceive to be different to what they were used to.

**Meg**

Yeah, I think just promoting that sense of an inclusive and diverse community is a rich one is just such a such an awesome message, and kids are generally pretty happy to get on board with that.

**Sally**

How about talking with children about human rights and legal rights particularly? You know, some of this stuff, particularly if we're talking about rainbow communities or different ethnic groups, that’s actually breaching some of our law. What kind of age do you start to think about those sorts of things?

**Mace**

I guess I could talk a little bit about this. So we have some children in school that we work with them and their whānau or the school where they might be transitioning, they might be wanting to change the name, use different pronouns at school, things like that. There's some laws that sit around that, like the privacy laws of a child is to come out at school and say that they want to use a different name, then that child has a right to privacy under the Act. If they ask for the parents not to be told, then legally they are to be kept safe at school and that information has to be held with the school. So there's a lot that sits around that that we support schools with. We have to ensure that that child has privacy. That is also about young people understanding their rights. So I have children as young as ten that I've worked with that want to know about that kind of thing. There is a way to talk about all of those conversations in a child-appropriate way, in a developmentally appropriate way, to talk about what they have a right to within their schooling, that they have a right to be safe, that their right to be included in that actually sits within that Educational Act as well. So I think just like everything, just like with bullying conversations, all of those conversations around rights, anything that sits under that legal framework can all be talked about with any sort of age, child and developmentally appropriate way, because they have a right to know, and often we don't give them that information.

**Meg**

The only thing I would add there is just in terms of, again, thinking about the school environment. Board of trustees and schools are responsible for ensuring a safe environment for their students. And again, coming back to that idea, you know, they're there for so much of their time as young people, it is a right that that environment is provided in a safe way for them. Initial administration guidelines say that board of trustees are responsible to do that.

**Sally**

At some point you touched on the idea of role models, and I think this is something that is worth maybe pursuing a wee bit more, because role models exist in our whānau, but they also exist in a school, but they also exist in the wider community. And I'm thinking of sport coaches, for example, and the role that older children and adults can play in modelling this kind of behaviour that we'd like to see. Any comments you've got on that would be great.

**Mark**

That's the classic place where I've observed that in my kids sports, seeing other teams, how they treat their own teammates, let alone the opposition team, and what parents think is appropriate. I'm constantly amazed, actually. And a lot of the sporting codes again, you know, they can go to the office and pull out their “This is our anti-bullying thing”, but it's like, how do we actually embed those into everything they do? Should it be up to me as a parent on the sideline to be observing horrible behaviour from the other team? No, they shouldn't be doing that sort of behaviour, period.

**Mace**

I think if you can find the right environment outside of school that is supportive and has some, you know, good procedures in place around bullying and things like that, and you're getting young people together not getting to experience diversity and what that looks like outside the school environment, it can be really beneficial. Because we hope that schools are really on top of bullying and are really inclusive and are really safe place for people to be but we know that some schools aren't there yet, and they might be there for some of the kids, but not all of them, because everyone's so individual. So if we have young people who are in schools that aren’t fully working for them, were these things that need to be changed so that they become safer for them, finding a community outside of school where they do experience all those things can be a really good support in the meantime, where they do get all of the awhi, they get all of the support that they need where they're not being bullied, all of those sorts of things.

And experiencing diversity from other students, because we get these schools to sort of like their own wee community, that can be a bit closed off and only have one type of student that's kind of like there, one demographic, depending on the area. So pulling young people over into other spaces where they can experience a whole lot of other things, and that might be a whole lot of joy knowing that they can be in a space without bad or harmful things happening to them, or they can engage with other people that are similar to people at the school but those things don't happen. It can be a really powerful experience for young people.

**Meg**

The idea of a collective responsibility. You know, I think anyone who is dealing with young people – sports coaches or, you know, scout groups or whatever it might be – you would hope that anyone who is working with young people is wanting to reinforce those messages that, you know, bullying behaviour is not okay, and you don't want kids getting conflicting messages, obviously, from different areas of their life. So yeah, you would you would hope that all of those influences and young people's lives, reinforcing those same good messages.

**Sally**

And this brings me to, I think, a really important point, which is how much of everything we've been talking about comes back to the individual's sense of self and kind of being strong in yourself. Whatever your identity is, whatever it is you're into, how much of all this relies on the individual being strong in themselves, and being able to stand up in the knowledge that they themselves are their own person.

**Mace**

I feel like during those formative years, there's so many experiences that can happen where you might be engaging and trying to understand your sense of self and like what that looks like, and then there might be an incident or a comment or things that happened around that, that kind of squashed that. And you don't explore that further, whether that's around any part of your identity, whatever that looks like for young people, whether it’s something to do with sport or academics or a rainbow identity. Those incidences can mean that it is really hard to develop a positive sense of self, or that those parts of your identity might get sort of shut off or pushed down. So while it's really great for us to talk about how do we build that up, we also probably have to recognise that try as they might, some young people might have all of the things going for them to try and build that positive sense of self in a way that any others might, and they might be a bullying situation that happens that actually sort of disrupts it and puts it completely off track. So I think both things sit really parallel, is that there has to be factors to address things that are going on that are going to impact that positive sense of self and then we can also teach rangatahi how to understand that all parts of them are okay and should be celebrated at the same time.

**Sally**

Awesome, Mace, that was very beautifully put. Okay, so as we wrap up then, what would you like to say finally, how do we raise our tamariki and rangatahi to be upstanders? What are your kind of final words of wisdom?

**Meg**

I would say that we need to talk about issues around bullying. Just put it all out there. The flip side of the word bullying being used all the time to mean sort of lots of things, that it's also not; the other side of that is that so often bullying goes unnoticed because it is hidden. People are too scared to speak up and say what's happened, or people are being bystanders rather than upstanders. And I think the way is just to bring it all sort of to the forefront and, and talk about it, talk about it, and make sure that people have strategies and ways that they know that they can respond.

**Mark**

I think we need far more pou or anchors or places where people could know that it's safe and they've got the safe people in their life that they can talk to about this sort of stuff. The sadness is for people bullying becomes just a thing and they don't want to share with anyone or can't, you know, it’s exhausting. The consequences could be quite huge. So I would hope that there'd be environments where we're all able to go, hey, wait a minute, that's not acceptable and they’re believed and heard and change happens. And that's ultimately what a day like Pink Shirt Day does is highlight that on that particular day that it's not okay. But we begin the process of embedding all those good values into everything we do, from when we go to the dairy and say thank you and have a chat with the person who works there. You know, little actions will help improve the community in which we live, you know?

**Mace**

I think if people can take anything from this chat around being an upstander, whether that's if you're an adult or a young person who's listening to this, is that being an upstander doesn't mean only doing something immediately in the moment. And I think that's where we get a lot of bystanders from, because people feel like, oh, it's past. I can't do anything now, the situation's happened, we'll just move on. And actually knowing that talking to that person afterwards, reassuring them, being here to support them, helping them gain support, which might be really hard for them to do on their own, is actually going to have a really huge impact. You don't have to worry that the moment’s passed, like, get in there and give whatever support you can and just be there for your family or your friend or whoever.

**Sally**

I think those are exactly the two points that I've taken from this kōrero is: the little things matter, and it doesn't have to be at the time. Yeah. So thank you for that. You've just done a beautiful summary of what I was thinking. Would be good to say any final words as we wrap up.

**Mark**

My final word is a bit of a plug for the Pink Shirt website. It has heaps of advice and help on strategy what to do – everything that everyone's said here so eloquently, it's kind of in written form of that's your vibe. So do that. And it's not just one day, it's every day. It's an everyday action that all of us have to take, and they will have a kinder world. Yeah.

**Sally**

Sounds nice, doesn't it?

**Mark**

It does actually, doesn't it?

**Sally**

Tēnā koutou, thank you so much for all your thoughts today. It's been really wonderful hearing from you all.

**Meg**

Thank you.

**Mark**

I've learned so much from everyone, you know. Who knew you could talk about bullying for a whole hour.

**Sally**

And if we have time, we're going to play a final song, which is ‘Fly My Pretties’ which, Meg, was your choice.

**Meg**

Yeah. Just, a lovely song by Fly my pretties, called ‘Family Tree’. And it's just all about knowing your roots and giving it a strong sense of belonging, which I thought was quite apt.

**Sally**

Thank you so much.

**MUSIC – Fly my pretties, ‘Family tree’**