

Check & Connect – Introducing Check & Connect

Karaitiana (student): I would say when I was Year 9 I was doing good, like I was listening, I was doing my work, but that was only for half of the year. And then I started meeting new people, and then deciding to do bad stuff like fighting and running away.

Muru (student): I was not a scholar. I didn't like going to school. I just wanted to work. I wanted a job, I wanted money, I want a car. I wanted to find my dreams. I didn't really like the idea of school.

Karaitiana: I just didn't have any ears. Didn't care about anything. Didn't care about school. Didn't care about my future or family.

Dr Karen Dobric (Tumuaki Tuarua | Deputy Principal Papatoetoe High School): For most students, there's going to be a teacher or a senior student in their vertical form class, or someone on their sports team, sports coach, somebody that they naturally connect with. But for other young people who have got a range of challenges in their life already, that's not enough.

Tania Liuagamatagi (kaiārahi | supervisor): Our program is catered to working with students who are showing signs of disengagement. But then there's these other things that come in, maybe things going on at home, in their friendship group. And I think that's why it's really important to know what our role is, who we can go to within the wider context of the school, and bring those supports in for the young person and the mentor.

Osaiasi Kupu (kaiurungi | coordinator Tāmaki College): Bringing someone from the outside can change the dynamics and the relationship with the young person.

Tania: We are able to keep it real. We don't overlook the things that are not going so well, but we're able to shed some light in a different way.

Lauretta Weldschidt (Amo | Dean Papatoetoe High School): There's a genuine warmth that the students respond to. There's a strong sense of family values.

Tania: Some of our young people have had messages delivered to them in not the most positive way. But when we're able to come in and share it in a different way and have a different approach, sometimes it can register differently for them.

Leo (student): Honestly, I don't think I'd last this long in school. When I first started, I think I was a bit naughty and didn't really care and stuff. But being on the program has helped a lot.

Tania: We do see the potential in them, and it's reminding them of that every time that we see them because we have that limited time with them. And if we're going to spend an hour with

them just saying, “Oh, look, look at this, you did this wrong, this wasn't this, this wasn't this”, of course they're going to leave deflated or disheartened. So when we come in, it's kind of like, “Okay, this didn't go to plan, what can we do differently this week?”.