







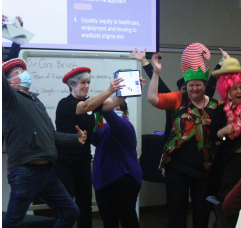
WE EMPOWER US

A YOUTH WELLBEING COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROJECT

weempowerus.co

Proudly supported by
**Hibiscus and Bays
Local Board**
Auckland Council

The Plan

Youth Voice Focus Groups	Community Networks & Stakeholders	We Empower Us Summit	Generate Future We Want to See	Collaborate for Cohesive Action
				

A Pro-Social Approach



Kristi Shaw, Project Director

Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi

With your basket and my basket the people will live

A Youth Wellbeing Community Activation Project in the East Coast Bays

YOUTH WELLBEING & YOUTH VOICE ARE THE HEART OF THE PROJECT

with Rangitoto College & Murrays Bay Intermediate Youth Focus Groups

Youth Focus Groups have workshopped and prepared presentations and polls to gain the collective voice of their peers at school to identify the top collective priority(s) for youth wellbeing. With responses from close to 700 students, here is their top collective priority:

Whiria te Tangata - Weaving the People Together

for a shared sense of place and belonging for all.

This is the focus of the We Empower Us Community Activation Summit on 20th August, a one day event where many key and diverse stakeholders will come together to bring this wellbeing priority to life through collaboration for cohesive action.

YOUTH WELLBEING = EVERYONE'S WELLBEING

When a community comes together to generate positive designs for their wellbeing through this Appreciative Inquiry approach, it is building an inspired and connected collective that has the capacity to create sustainable influence and change. The **We Empower Us Summit** is a one-day collective approach event that is strategic, strengths-based, future-focused, and inspired for action.

Meaningfully Connected Communities

Isolation and loneliness are the key contributors to mental illness, low quality of life, and higher mortality rates. When people experience trauma or sustained stress, without meaningful social support, they are 75% more likely to develop anxiety and depression. Internationally, moderate to severe anxiety disorders are one of the most common health problems. In NZ, one in four people will experience this in their lifetime, or 14% of people will experience this a year. It can be estimated that more than 700,000 households in NZ have someone experiencing anxiety, and when we include the family members who are caring for them, this is a big deal.

Why Now? Why Focus on Youth?

"In NZ, between 2007 and 2016, "the total number of annual antidepressant prescriptions dispensed to children and young people increased by 68%...and the rate of prescribing increased by 44%" (Bowden et al., 2019, p. 55)."

There is a biopsychosocial approach to mental illness in NZ, of which we mainly concentrate on the individualised approaches of bio (medication) and psyche (talk therapy). They have efficacy rates of 33% and 58% respectively. Although they work for some, when we combine it with an under-resourced mental health system - there is more that we can do. There is more that we have the power to do together.

What we seem to be missing is the valuable social approach.

We Empower Us is a project that intends to generate that missing link.

Community Connected - We Empower Us

- **Term 1 & 2: Recruitment of Schools & Youth Focus Groups** - Workshops with Principals and Youth Focus Groups + Gaining Youth Voice: presentations & peer polls at school. The polls are anonymous and screened by the Principal before going to students.
- **Term 2 & 3: Youth Priority for Wellbeing Defined + Community Stakeholders On Board** - Development of Core Planning Group + We Empower Us Promotion (School, Community, Local Government & Business). *This is where community comes in (see below)!*
- **Term 3: We Empower Us Community Activation Summit on 20th August** - a multi-stakeholder collective to generate collaboration for cohesive action that will bring the priority for youth wellbeing to life in the East Coast Bays.
- **Term 4: Community Calls to Action** - together we activate our designs to generate youth wellbeing - which just so happens, that just by being involved, it generates our wellbeing too!

Community Support for Your Child at School: show your support by sharing the Youth Focus Group We Empower Us updates with your children and in the local community (Local Community Facebook Groups, at work, dinner table, with friends, etc). You can also like and follow the [We Empower Us](#) project on Facebook.

Community Support for the We Empower Us Summit:

- Are you a parent who is keen to help make things better?
- Do you want an organisation or business you work for/with to be part of the Summit?
- Do you know someone who you think needs to be at the Summit?
- Do you want to support this youth wellbeing community activation project in another way (you may have skills and resources to offer)

Get in touch! Email Kristi Shaw, Director of [We Empower Us](#): kristi@weempowerus.co



Our Amazing Place Event - Upper Harbour Youth Caucus Community Collaboration



I am Kristi Shaw, the Director of We Empower Us. I am a community development specialist, an appreciative inquiry facilitator, and a narrative therapist. Most of my career has been about engaging and empowering youth, and co-creating youth for youth projects. I am dedicated to building community collectives that work together to grow the wellbeing of our youth. By collaborating and creating cohesive action, we empower not only the next generation – but all of us – for a brighter, connected, and more sustainable future.

We Empower Us was born out of my passion to make things better. When my kids were teenagers they were experiencing moderate to severe anxiety and it was the most challenging experience. I wanted to make things better for our family and for other families, so I did my [Masters research](#) on a social approach to anxiety. It received great reviews, was published, and I won a Bold Innovators Scholarship.

We Empower Us came from my research and my desire to make things better.

It Takes a Village to Raise a Child

Making Connection

Kristi Shaw
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A Youth Wellbeing Community Activation Project

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