

DMs In Summary

Project DMs* sought to understand the experiences and needs of Māori and Pasifika young people transitioning out of school amidst the global complexity of COVID-19.

*DMs is a reference to Direct Messaging and Deep and Meaningful conversations.

Strategic Intent

01

Create experiences and content that help young people build their 'kete of resilience'. Encouraging the sharing of realities, reflections, and coping strategies; supporting them to navigate challenges to their wellbeing.

02

Build a deep foundational knowledge about Māori and Pasifika young people which can be used to inform future efforts to support their mental health and wellbeing.

The Process



Insights and opportunities

This project was all about learning.

The interviews, workshops, production and campaign all helped us to form a clear sense of how the wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika young people can best be supported.

Young people shared their stories with us. Here's what we heard:



COVID-19 has disrupted young people's plans and hopes for the future.

"My motivation died after COVID. I felt pretty lost and couldn't ground myself."



For some, lockdown let them 'be kids' for a bit - they felt less pressure to juggle responsibilities.

"I'm 16 and working four jobs just to help my family get by... it's like I became an adult too early.... lockdown actually gave me a break for a bit."



Digital spaces help young people decompress.

"I feel most free when I'm doing TikToks."



Young people want to see their own realities reflected; with ideas about wellbeing centering community and cultural wisdom.



It's important to acknowledge milestones for young people, and highlight accessible, meaningful, and unexpected pathways for learning, training and career development.

"It's unfair. Some people have dreams and they can't chase them."



Young people would like safe, fun, creative and connected spaces online and in person to share how they are feeling.

"I don't know how to talk about me. I've never been given the chance."

Recommendations

Our media activity and engagement with young people indicated future campaigns targeting young people should:



Put creativity at the centre



Play where - and how - young people play



Shine a spotlight on successes, opportunities & support

Creativity, gaming, and play offer relevant, desirable, and effective vehicles for wellbeing initiatives with young people. They help young people relieve the pressures of life, connect with others, express who they are, and talk about the challenges they are facing in their lives.

Prioritise in-app experiences over microsites; and provide a steady, dependable, easy-to-access online presence. Approaches centred around social media platforms like TikTok can quickly grow authentic communities of young people. Keep content short, mobile-friendly, and true to their realities.

Find ways to honour moments of significance in the lives of young people, reminding them they are growing, succeeding, and moving forward. To help restore a sense of agency, ambition, and purpose, showcase the learning, training, and career development pathways other young people are taking. Highlight existing wellbeing initiatives and mechanisms of support.