

Supporting Otago Families

Jade Speaks Up! A New Zealand pilot programme funded by ACC for students in Year 5 to Year 8 is delivered in five low-decile Dunedin schools.

Social Workers in Schools (SWiS) is a dedicated community social work service supporting children who are experiencing issues that are affecting their performance in school and home behaviour. These include grief and loss, transitions and change, anxiety, recognising their feelings and relationships with their peers.

SWiS is based on a well-researched strength-based model that aims to harness the strengths that already exist in whanau/families. Over the last year 433 children have benefited from 29 programmes delivered by our SWiS team.

There are many ways our social workers in schools deliver support, and when Claire and Katie learned about "Jade Speaks Up", a personal safety programme that focuses on a primary prevention and early intervention approach, they decided to find out more about it.

Jade Speaks Up is a pilot well-being programme created by a team in the North Island, including Elaine Dyer and Andrea O'Hagan. It is delivered

by teachers over 10 weeks and focuses on:

- Strategies for responding to family violence and bullying
- Practical and relational strategies for keeping safe
- Developing emotional literacy, trust and self-agency
- And features a seven-minute key resource video "Jade Speaks Up".



Andrea O'Hagan and Elaine Dyer with Claire and Katie

Convinced that this programme would enhance the work already being delivered in schools, Katie and Claire persuaded its creators to extend the pilot to Dunedin.

Jade Speaks Up was launched last year in term three and Katie and Claire played a key role in coordinating the training required for teachers. The schools then ran with the programme and the Jade team offered Skype supervision to the teachers.

One teacher who completed the programme commented, "I believe they all took away messages that will help them to speak up if they were the victim of bullying or violence."

As the programme is designed as a prevention tool, tailored to all children, it helps them to develop better social awareness, and to build relationships and trust. "We saw immediate value

in it", said Katie. "Some children who weren't exposed to the same challenges as their peers expressed that while they were grateful [bad stuff] wasn't happening to them in their own households, they have developed empathy and a raised level of awareness, and more kids are looking out for each other".

Claire noticed that the programme gave children skills and a language to use to help them keep safe. For some children who were in unsafe situations, it empowered them to talk about what was going on and to get help.

This is another example of how Anglican Family Care social workers advocate to find resources that support children and their families in Otago.

People interested in the Jade Speaks Up programme can make contact at: jadespeaksup@violencefreecommunities.org

