

Boys Doing Better – Thanks to B-Cool



True stories from B-Cool's files show how the program can help troubled youngsters. (Note that names have been changed to protect privacy.)

Jaydon's Story

Jaydon was the 'alpha male' of his school, a strong boy who was always taking on other boys to prove his supremacy. After attending the B-Cool program, he was able to stop fighting completely.

Jaydon had family troubles resulting from the split-up of his parents. He lived most of the time with his mum but she was over-worked and underpaid and so was often very tired. His elder sister was raising a baby at home too, and so the grownups were very busy with work and childcare, with little time to spare for an adolescent boy.

Jaydon was angry and un-cooperative and lazy around the house, which only increased the tension with the women in his life. He really loved his Dad, who was great at supporting him when he played rugby, but couldn't be there for his son all the time. Jaydon felt dislocated and struggled to

find a sense of who he was and how he should act in the world. So he acted out at school, asserted himself, played the tough guy, got into trouble, didn't learn.

Talking with Jon Winder and the boys in his B-Cool group gradually helped him manage his emotions and recognize the importance of family. He began trying to help his mum and his sister. He already really loved his nephew, and so realizing his role as a responsible uncle helped to ground him as well.

A Winder Foundation coach also met with his mother to help her establish boundaries with Jaydon and put more structure into his life. He began to learn, his school work improved and his urge to fight fell away.

But his reputation still went before him. When, at 13, he moved on to secondary school, other kids knew his name. He had to put up with goading from boys who wanted him to use his fists the way he'd always done before.

'Go on, fight!' they yelled. But now he had the strength to refuse. 'No,' he told them. 'I'm not going to. I don't need to do that anymore.'

Says Jon Winder: 'To walk away was a major moral breakthrough for Jaydon. It was a valuable lesson to the other boys that you don't have to fight to make a point.'

Donald's Story

Donald, age 11, had immigrated to New Zealand from China with his family, bringing with him a terrible memory. At the age of five he'd seen someone shot dead in front of him and couldn't get the horror of it out of his head. Though quite short for his age, he had a fierce spirit that came out in combativeness.

By the time he reached Year Seven (Grade 6) his feisty attitude was making him a trial for teachers. He was always in trouble, seen as a mischief maker and constant fighter and, sometimes, taken to task for things he hadn't done, which only increased his sense of anger and injustice. Donald was often stood down for being over-reactive and didn't know how to cope or to calm down.

Slowly, as the boys in Donald's B-Cool group talked through his difficulties – some of which they were struggling with too – he began to stabilize. His family members were churchgoers and he began to think about the importance of that part of his life and what it meant to be connected to a higher presence. By now he also knew what girlfriend problems were and learnt to manage his emotional relationships better.

Over time, the boy who'd once had a hair-trigger attitude became a mentor to other angry boys. 'His *mana** grew to the point where they would listen quietly to his words and be affected by him,' says Jon Winder.

Richard's Story

Richard, age 12, badly needed more confidence. His only sibling was much older, and in many respects, he was a solo child. His parents were busy achievers. Richard's dad, a dominant man with a booming voice, was pushing his business to great heights, and his mother was a nurse.

Richard was almost invisible in any crowd of children. Recalls Jon Winder: 'He said nothing and would sit quite close to me in our B-Cool circles, which is often a sign of wanting support'. When he was encouraged to talk, Richard would speak of his biking skills, but mostly it was 'just talk' in an effort to gain some *mana*.

In a short time, he swung from mouse-like to over-exuberant, exhibiting too much confidence and talking inappropriately. At that point, the Winder Foundation engaged the whole family in the task of helping Richard move to a more centered state, where confidence and self-esteem could come from a base of calm. His parents were supportive and once they were using new tools and strategies at home, Richard was on his way.

He went on to represent his country in his sport, going overseas without his parents to compete, an adventure he would earlier have shrunk from. As a prize winner, he learned new pride and self-confidence that spread to his general attitude. His parents were thrilled with the support.

'B-Cool helped our son use the feeling of success as a sportsman and translate that into success with goals that could give him good, all round outcomes as he started his journey to manhood.'

* Maori terms used in Winder Foundation Programs

While our programs run in English, Maori is an official language in New Zealand. Conversation in our circles is scattered with many Maori terms and concepts, such as:

iwi – tribe, race, people, nation

karakia – prayer or blessing, invocation or chant, expressed to bind peace

kia kaha – be strong, stay strong, keep going

kia ora – hello, cheers, good luck, best wishes, thank you, may you have health

mana – power, integrity, authenticity, authority: a person who has mana is held in high esteem

taonga – treasure, property, possession, something prized

turangawaewae – home-place, place where you have right of residence, 'this is where I stand'

wairua – spirit, soul or quintessence of a person

whakapapa – genealogy, cultural identity, family tree, lineage or descent

whanau – family group, extended family



Contact us for more information about how The B-Cool Program can help boys in your school.

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'The B-Cool Program is an inspiring program for groups of boys who have behavioral difficulties. Boys learn to raise their awareness and understanding of the reasons behind their problems. Using unique methods, B-Cool motivates boys to want to change and enables them to develop skills to live better lives. All schools have boys who could benefit from this life-changing program. I strongly recommend The B-Cool Program.'

– Yvonne Duncan QSM, Founder, Cool Schools Mediation Program

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