




DIGITAL PODCAST SERIES PILOT

SUMMARY OVERVIEW



COERCE THE SYSTEM, NOT EACH OTHER

**REFORMING HOW WE RESPOND TO HARM
EXPERIENCED BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEW ZEALAND**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



J R McKenzie Trust

LOBBY for **GOOD**

**New Zealand's Call for Survivor-Led Change.
A Youth Voices Action Research Paper.**



Why this kōrero matters

This kaupapa began with one of our Youth Panel members, Ara Robinson.

Ara grew up in Rotorua watching her mum work within the system - many of them survivors of abuse - and trying to help them heal in a world that often didn't. From a young age, Ara saw how the very systems meant to protect young people could also retraumatise them. Courtrooms built for adults. Questions that shame children. Sentences that break trust instead of building safety.

Those experiences lit a fire in her. Ara joined our Youth Panel because she wanted to be part of changing the system itself, not just reacting to its harm. That drive led her to study law to understand the machinery of justice from the inside, so she could help rewrite it.

Coerce the System, Not Each Other grew from Ara's vision, and from the voices of many young people who share that same determination. It's more than a podcast, it's a research and storytelling platform built by rangatahi who have seen how deep this trauma runs and who are daring to imagine something better.



*Because stories move people, and people
have the ability to move systems.*

1. What's broken:

The system that retraumatise

When justice hurts more than it heals

Children still face cross-examinations that would crush most adults. They're accused of lying. They're asked impossible questions. Many wait years for their cases to be heard, years in limbo, while offenders walk free.

In Tauranga, the case of Jayden Meyer exposed how leniency and poor supervision let harm repeat. His victims were left asking what their pain was worth. The protests that followed, led by local youth, weren't just about one person. They were about a system that had stopped listening.

Support that comes too late

More than 65% of sexual violence complainants in Aotearoa New Zealand are under 18. Yet, until 2025, there was no dedicated national court support for them. Most advisors manage hundreds of cases. The new Court Support Service for Tamariki is a start, but only if it's resourced properly and guided by survivors themselves.

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2. Seeing the unseen: Coercive control

Not all abuse leaves bruises. Coercive control is the pattern of isolation, intimidation, and domination that strips people of freedom. It's still not a standalone crime here, even though the evidence is clear and the harm is real.

Wāhine Māori have called it a modern form of entrapment. A violation of mana and autonomy. Recognising this is not about punishment; it's about prevention, understanding, and systems that see the whole person.

3. What's changing and what's not

Reforms like the **Sexual Violence Legislation Act 2021** and the **Victims of Sexual Violence Bill 2025** are important wins. They're survivor-led, and they show what happens when lived experience shapes law.

But training, resources, and consistency still lag. Too often, good policy stays on paper. And without explicit recognition of coercive control, or genuine equity for Māori, the most marginalised remain unheard.

4. Youth-Led Innovations and Survivor Advocacy

Young people aren't waiting for others to fix broken systems, they're leading change through storytelling, technology, and community action.

- **Digital advocacy:** Youth Voices Action trains rangatahi as digital advocates, hosting live kōrero that put decision-makers face-to-face with youth questions.
- **Survivor-led education:** Advocates like Rachel Taane use storytelling to teach consent and courage.
- **Tech innovation:** Across NZ, young creators are designing tools that detect grooming and block AI-generated sexual abuse, because safety online is part of justice offline. Organisations like TIKA, Aotearoa's centre for digital integrity, are helping lead this charge. Journalist Alison Mau, who works alongside TIKA, brings her investigative lens to explore how technology can both harm and heal and why digital accountability must sit at the heart of justice reform.

Together, these voices remind us that prevention and protection must exist wherever harm can occur, from courtrooms to comment sections.

5. Learning from the world

Aotearoa isn't alone in this fight.

Other countries are already trialling solutions that centre survivors, not systems:

- **Barnahus model (Nordic countries):** Children share their story once, in a safe space, with trained professionals.
- **Fast-track courts (UK & Australia):** Trials are heard faster, reducing trauma and delay.
- **Targeted disclosure (UK):** "Sarah's Law" lets parents ask, without feeding public hysteria.
- **Trauma-informed training:** Mandatory education for judges, police, and lawyers.

We can and must adapt what works to our own context, our own tikanga, our own people.

6. The call to action

Our podcast and movement are built on a simple truth: systems don't change because of data alone. They change when stories make injustice undeniable.

Through Coerce the System, Not Each Other, we're:

1. Exposing systemic harm through survivor stories.
2. Amplifying youth and Māori voices leading reform.
3. Holding leaders accountable through public kōrero.
4. Sharing global best practice and local innovation.
5. Mobilising communities to act - together.

This is how we coerce the system: not through anger alone, but through story, solidarity, and sustained pressure.

Our philosophy

We believe in survivors.

We believe tamariki and rangatahi deserve safety, healing, and agency.

We believe storytelling is one of the most powerful tools we have to shift culture and co-design better systems.

We don't tell stories about survivors - we tell stories with them.

Because when people hear the truth in someone's voice, change stops being theoretical. It becomes personal.

This mahi isn't about charity or sympathy. It's about collective accountability - doing what's needed to build a justice system that actually delivers justice.

Closing kōrero

The time for quiet outrage is over.

It's time to turn pain into policy. Story into action.

Let's coerce the system, together so no child ever has to fight for dignity inside a courtroom again.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



JR McKenzie Trust

LOBBY for GOOD



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