



# SHORE

## "Tell it like it is": Empowering Year 10 Boys to Share Their Stories Through Yarns

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Further Information  
This poster and further information is available at <http://www.theibsc.org/>

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### Introduction

Our action research was designed to empower boys to embrace their vulnerabilities and build mutual trust – to cultivate a belief that their peers would accept their thoughts, personal insights and stories as genuine and worthy.

### Research Context and Participants

SHORE is an independent, Anglican, day and boarding school for boys, located in North Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

Twenty Year 10 boys participated in our action research. They were chosen because they were high academic achievers who tended to develop competitive rather than community-focused mindsets in their senior studies.

### Data Collection and Analysis

- Pre-questionnaire
- Direct observation
- Teacher and student reflective writing
- Video recordings
- Interviews – structured, semi-structured, and unstructured
- Final review questionnaire

### ACTION PROCESS

Teacher shared a yarn with the boys which was personal, topical and revealed vulnerabilities

Boys reflected on the teacher's yarn via journals and discussion

Sitting in a circle, boys took turns to share their personal yarns

Boys engaged in shared personal reflections followed by individual verbal responses

"I think there's a different dynamic now in the class. People used to be kind of scared to voice their opinions and stuff, but now people are a lot more open and feel more free to discuss and give answers."

"Everyone's become a lot more supportive of each other and definitely more confident to share what they think."

"I guess it's about creating that bond, getting to know each other more, and putting ourselves in each other's shoes."

### Key Findings

- Boys were open to being vulnerable and sharing personal experiences
- The stories that were told were characterised by honesty and sincerity
- Boys were respectful in their responses to the stories shared by their peers

### Conclusions

We found that the boys' capacity to share yarns was indicative of their ability to be vulnerable, honest, and respectful. This led to an emergent culture of community in the Year 10 classroom. Sharing personal yarns proved to be a successful approach to giving the boys a voice and helping them feel like they belong and are worthy; one of the most crucial aspects of our jobs as teachers.

### Key Readings

- Reichert, M., Hawley, R., & Reichert, M. (2011). The primacy of relationships in teaching boys. *Thymos: Journal of Boyhood Studies*, 5(1), 36–51.
- Halse, C. (2018). *Interrogating belonging for young people in schools*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Cox, A. J. (2018). *Cracking the boy code: How to understand and talk with boys*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.



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