

Solution Focused Justice

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Justice Yehia || Canberra || March 2026

What are Solution Focused Courts?

- Seeking to address the underlying issues rather than simply focusing on the legal problem.
- Judicial case management and monitoring.
- A multidisciplinary court team.
- Collaborative approached with participants, service providers, community organisations, and government agencies.
- Respect and dignity.
- Cultural authority and cultural safety.
- Strength based narratives.



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- Solution focused Courts were introduced in Australia in the 1990s.
 - Up to 30 separate solution focused Courts across Australia.
 - They include: Drug Courts; Youth Koori Courts; Circle Sentencing; Walama; Galambany Court; Circle Sentencing in the ACT Supreme Court; Specialist Family Violence List; Domestic Violence List (Alice Springs); Indigenous Tenancy List NCAT; Mental Health Courts.

Common Principles and Objectives

- Recognising that justice systems must operate not only as instruments of accountability but as places to encourage and foster rehabilitation, reconciliation, and social cohesion.
- Affirming the inherent dignity of all persons, including complainants, victims, witnesses, accused persons, offenders, and community members.
- Acknowledging the unique role of First Nations, local, and culturally grounded practices in fostering restorative and therapeutic justice.
- Advancing legal frameworks and processes that heal harm and trauma, reduce reoffending, strengthen the social and emotional wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
- Confirming the importance of research and expert opinions which overwhelmingly supports the need for the criminal justice systems to identify and address the causes of crime on an individualised basis.

A Statement of Principle

- The Solution Focused Courts Symposium (February 2026) developed a Statement of Principles.
- 12 Articles which emphasise dignity and respect; participation and empowerment; accountability through rehabilitation; respect for culture; capacity building; connection.

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A Cross Jurisdictional Symposium

20 - 21 February 2026

Examples of Solution Focused Practices:



Walama



New Beginnings Court NZ



Drug Court

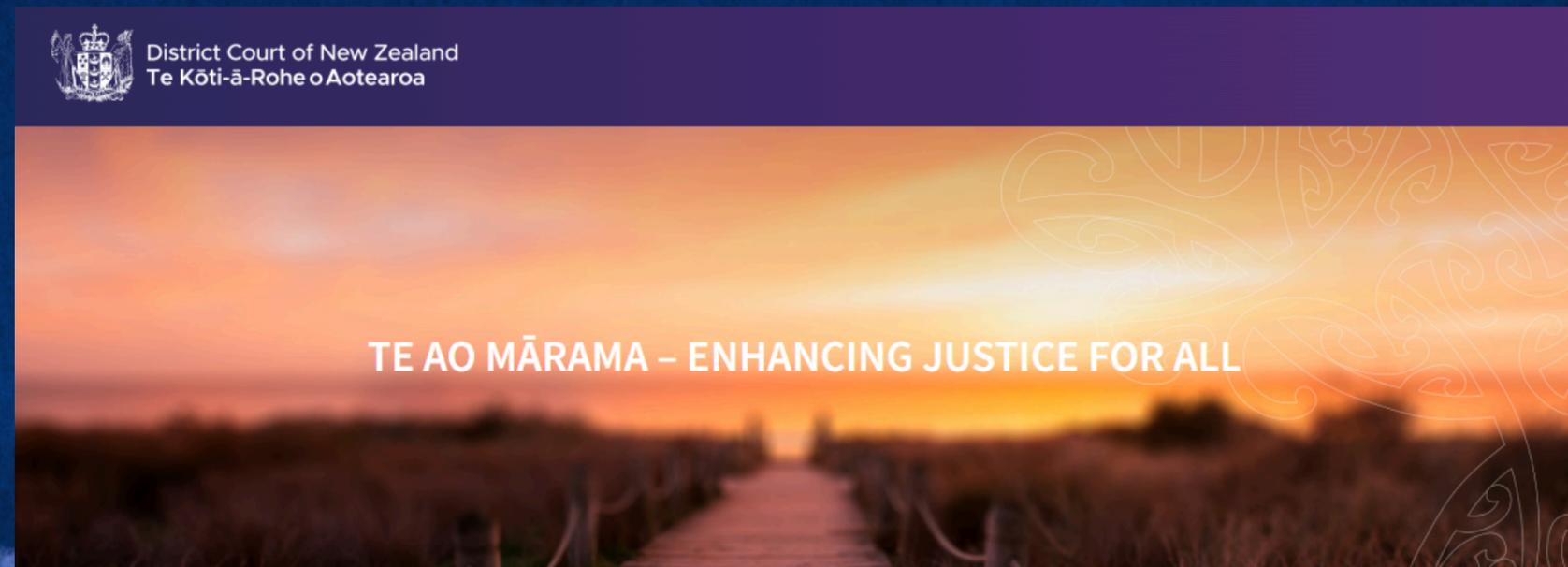
Applying Solution Focused Approaches in Mainstream Courts

HOW?

- Respect and dignity.
- Bringing the community into the Court.
- Judicial collaboration with community organisations and government agencies.
- Peer support and monitoring (Self Help Addiction Resource Centre (SHARC)).
- Using available resources (e.g. Bugmy Bar Book) to ensure informed decisions making both for the judiciary and practitioners.
- Education for the profession.

Te Ao Mārama - Enhancing Justice For All

- Enhance connection with local communities.
- Improve quality of information judicial officers receive.
- Improve processes for victims and complainants.
- Encourage people to feel heard in the courtroom.
- Establish alternative courtroom layouts.
- Use plain language.
- Tone down formalities.
- Adopt solution-focused judging approaches.



JUST JUSTICE

