Empowering young men to speak up and seek help from those around them if they feel they are experiencing mental health issues was the key message from State of Origin Maroon contenders, Darius Boyd and Jack Reed when they visited Emmaus College last week.

Entitled “Battling the Blues”, Broncos stars, Boyd and Reed spoke candidly about some of their own experiences and recounted struggles they had faced mentally throughout their careers, lives in general, and emotions and situations that were common to all young men.

The pair donated their time as part of the NRL State of Mind program which aims to encourage players, and members of clubs and communities to take action if they are experiencing any form of difficulty or difference in their mood.

Emmaus senior school boys from Years 10, 11 and 12 attended the session and also heard from Broncos’ Player Welfare and Education Officer, Jason Fiddes and College Counsellor Bruce Lloyd.

Promoting mental health issues with students was a key focus for the college according to Sports Development Officer, Justen Parle.

“The presentation was very well targeted and delivered good strategies for the students to take away with them, with clear pathways for students to seek help,” Mr Parle said.

He said students learnt the signs and symptoms of mental health problems, where and how to get help, what sort of help, how to develop strategies to prevent absenteeism and increase productivity, and explored tools to use for early identification and management.

“The real-life experiences from Jack Reed and Darius Boyd were extremely well received and the question and answer session provided a great stimulus for discussion,” he said.

He said the State of Mind program was a great vehicle to promote awareness, information and education about the importance of good mental health specifically to teenage boys and young male adults who are all too often a group that avoid talking about feelings and emotions.