A Mana Tane
Echo of Hope:
dispelling the illusion of whānau violence –
Taitokerau Tāne Māori speak out

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The pain and burden of violence within whanau is primarily carried by Wāhine Māori and children. Wāhine Māori also disproportionately carry the burden of addressing this violence within our whanau and communities. Tāne Māori are necessary participants on our journey of liberation from all forms of violence and oppression. As our Amokura mahi developed it became clear that Wāhine Māori in Taitokerau had a 'shortlist' of trusted Tāne Māori they felt safe working with. Due to deep working and whakapapa connections, it was also known that most of these Tāne Māori had experienced, and in some cases, perpetrated significant violence earlier in their lives. Somewhere, somehow, something changed for them. In our research planning we wanted to explore what factors facilitated and sustained change processes for Tāne Māori like these. It is our hope that these stories of change will support other Tāne Māori seeking to make changes and contribute to more effective ways of working with Tāne Māori in order to increase the safety of Wāhine Māori and children.

Di Grennell, Amokura Executive Director

Too often, we Tāne Māori say all the right things about reducing domestic violence, too often we Tāne Māori rely on band-aid lip service strategies to deal with preventing domestic violence; too often we Tāne Māori just don’t do enough to make positive healthy real change happen for our whanau. The sharing and learning from this research challenges all Tāne Māori to actively participate in strengthening our family relationships, and supports the promotion of whanau wellbeing for all. The future impact of this research contribution may well be realised as we Tāne Māori in Taitokerau not only think about it, talk about it, research it and study it, but more importantly, work it, use it and live it in our daily activities within our own whanau, our own hapu, our own iwi and our own communities we are members of in Aotearoa New Zealand. To those Tāne and Wāhine Māori who contributed to this research journey, thanks for your shared collective stories of wisdom. Especially to Tāne Māori participants – your openness reverberates, an echo of real change that can touch the hearts, minds and behaviour of our fellow peers. In conclusion, this research displays clearly that we are the first port of call for such ‘change’ in establishing new mana-enhancing traditions and ways of engaging for ourselves and our whanau.

Dr Leland A Ruwhiu, LENIC Consultancy & Associates – Primary Researcher & Writer.

Nga Matekitenga – Future visions

Di Grennell, Amokura Executive Director
Tīhei māuri ora ki te whai ao ki te Ao mārama. Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa. Tena koutou nga whanau i roto i te wāhi nui o Taitokerau. Ko tenei te tangi me te mīhi aroha nui atu ki a koutou, nga kūia me nga kōroua, nga mātua, me nga taitamariki māori me o koutou whanau.

Whakarongo mai i tenei kaupapa taumaha. E waha nei tātou i runga o tātou pokohiwi. Ko tenei te wero ki a tātou, ki a koutou katoa. Me whakamutu atu nga mahi kino te kangakanga, te whawhai, te patu, te kōhuru i o tatou whānau ia naianei tonu. Kaua e tūkinotia o tatou whānau.

Ko tenei te wa ki a tūtangata ai tātou, nga kūia me nga kōroua, nga mātua, me te katoa. Haere mai tātou ki te whakamana, ki te whiti korerorero, ki te awhi, ki te titiro nga huarahi ki a tāea e tātou te whakamutunga atu nga mahi puku-riri me nga mahi kino me nga pakanga hara, i roto i o tatou kainga, i roto i te iwi whānui, i roto i te rōpu ā iwi.

Kia kaha tātou te kuhu i o tatou Mana Māori. Kia tū hei amorangi ki mua, hei pou ariki, hei tāonga aroha hūmārie, hei taonga whakawhiwhinga, kia tū pakari ai tātou whānau mo ake, ake, ake tonu.

Kaumatua Pirihi (Bill) Te Ohaki Ruwhiu, Advisor to Primary Researcher.
This Mana Tane research project is an important part of an overall Amokura oranga whanau research plan aiming to contribute to the body of knowledge for indigenous violence prevention and early intervention strategies.

The objectives of this project are:

1. To explore how Tāne Māori become and remain free of whanau violence
2. To document Māori men’s aspirations for whanau oranga.

From the objectives above, seven key learning outcomes were set for the Mana Tane project:

1. Violence-free: To explore how Tāne Māori become and remain free from violence within their homes and community;
2. Oranga Whanau: Explore Tāne Māori aspirations for oranga whanau;
3. Informed Tāne Māori voice: To provide an informed voice on family violence prevention from a Tāne Māori point of view;
4. Adding to the kete: Add to what appears a sparse amount of research on ‘the voices of Tāne Māori’;
5. Safe Tāne Māori: To explore the dynamics of what is meant by ‘Safe Tāne Māori’;
6. Methodology: To understand the processes of engagement with Tāne Māori;

The seven outcomes were further refined into four, then re-defined for the questionnaire as:

- Violence-free (Te Pou Tuatahi)
- Oranga Whanau (Te Pou Tuarua)
- Safe Tāne Māori (Te Pou Tuatoru)
- Tāne Māori Aspirations (Te Pou Tuawha).

From the data gathered, thirteen of the twenty participating Tāne Māori, and several of the Wāhine Māori provide candid kōrero on the kaupapa of family violence prevention that will benefit not only all other Tāne Māori in Taitokerau and Aotearoa, and for Tāne/men in general, but also their whanau, loved ones and the wider community/society we live in.
Structure

The report is structured into four parts with subsections in each as outlined.

PART ONE is a literature review which is separated into four sub-sections: Te Ao Hurihuri – The Changing World reviews international and local literature on violence prevention; Whiti Mai Te Ra – Awareness Rising gives an overview of whanau wellbeing; and healing specific to Maori Te; Rongonui o te Taniko – Patterns Speak analyses Maori frameworks for analysis; He Wananga – the Learning summarises the key learning from each of the sections.

PART TWO contains research methodology with two sub-sections: Te Whare Kokorangi – Reflections provides an overview of the choices made regarding research mode, direction, methodology, ethics and framing; Te Whare Tokararangi – Anchoring describes the project’s journey by the reference group and participants.

PART THREE presents and analyses the data collected and is divided into five sub-sections:

i) Violence Free
   a. Te Pakanga i te Kainga – the war in the home explores Tāne Māori life stories in relation to their exposure to or upbringing within a violent home and/or community environment;
   b. Te Ara Humarie – the humble pathway brings together Tāne Māori stories about significant changes that were critical to supporting their efforts in becoming advocates of violence-free homes and communities;
   c. The conclusion draws together the factors associated with violence and the facilitators of change to assist ongoing discussions about the relationship between ‘the war in the home’ and ‘the humble pathway’ themes.

ii) Oranga Whanau – Whanau Wellbeing critically evaluates thoughts and learning of participants gained through the journey in their own healing, the strengthening of their whanau and gaining of new skills, knowledge and purpose to achieve and maintain whanau health and wellbeing.

iii) Safe Tāne Māori examines commonalities and differences amongst respondents about the topic of ‘Safe Tāne Māori’ and what that means.

iv) Tāne Māori Aspirations maps out the positive directions participants sought for themselves and their whanau.

v) Nga Manu Tioriori scripts the korero of Wāhine Māori in the journey of their partners to become violence-free.

Nga Pou – Key Findings

The Literature – in Section One, Te Ao Hurihuri – The Changing World, understandings of key patterns, trends and international responses, specifically for tangata whenua, have been examined.

The second section, Whiti Mai te Ra – Awareness Rising, identifies the inter-related components of Maori wellbeing and provides some insight into Tāne Māori positioning within these issues in Aotearoa. The discussion re-emphasises the need for a paradigm shift around family violence prevention for Tāne Māori. This becomes possible through the reference to cultural thinking as inspiration for change.

The third section, Te Rongonui o te Taniko – Patterns Speak analyses five significant tangata whenua patterns of analysis: Mauri Ora, Te Whare Tapa Wha, Te Wheke, Nga Pou mana and Powhiri-Poutama. The exploration illustrates that Tāne Māori healing and support to remain violence-free, and promote family violence prevention, will ultimately come from mahi housed in Maori conceptual frameworks which advance health and wellbeing.

Eight key thematic learnings are presented:

i) Males are the major perpetrators of family violence and need to be involved in changing their behaviour, with the support of others;

ii) Males often use faulty reasoning and rely on irrational ideology to justify their actions to blame the victims of their abuse for the violence in their homes. Transformative behaviour can only occur if transformative educative action directed at Tāne Māori is grounded within an ideology that challenges gender power inequalities;
iii) A range of factors were identified that affect violent behaviour in the home, such as poverty and addictions (especially to alcohol and drugs). Part of ending family violence involves minimising the impact of these influences.

iv) Violent behaviour increases mental health concerns for all family members, including children who witness abuse and abusers. Changing this behaviour would improve mental health for all whanau.

v) Change strategies need to be culturally contextualised to emphasise the power of cultural paradigms in healing and proactive strategies to reinforce changing behaviour conducive to whanau wellbeing.

vi) For some, change involves healing from within, others need support groups in the journey to become violence-free.

vii) The history of colonisation in indigenous families means that healing also involves emancipation through a specific social construct of cultural significance.

The Korero – From the research information gathered in Part Three, 10 factors associated with violence were identified: these factors maintain and generate violence in the home. Also within this section, seven facilitators of change were identified which are strategic change factors for healing. The importance of processes that are principle-based and culturally explicit in creating violence-free communities was an important theme.

Te Pou Tuatahi: Violence-free recommendations

‘Violence-free recommendations from the research are:

• An international and indigenous literature search be conducted to examine more specific reasons that might prompt Tane/Men to consider and act on changing their violent behaviour.

• A comparative analysis between findings from the literature search and the results from this research should be carried out.

Te Pou Tuarua: Oranga whanau recommendations

This Pou identified what oranga whanau meant to the participants and lists 10 tangata whenua paradigms (values) and examples that may provide a framework which Maori Tane Māori and those working in the field may use to frame interventions. It is recommended that prevention and intervention work grounded in tangata whenua paradigms is adequately resourced, promoted and developed.

Te Pou Tuatoru: Safe Tāne Māori recommendations

Through the development of the methodology for this project and participants’ discussions the theme of Safe Tāne Māori has been evident. Core topics in this discussion include attitudes and behaviours associated with ‘being safe’, and the skills needed to support liberation from violence. Resultant ‘Safe Tāne Māori’ recommendations are that:

• Future research might focus on more in depth development of these areas.

• Continued work on developing a profile of Safe Tāne Māori could help build capacity for a positive role modelling/mentoring database.

• That a Tāne Māori role modelling information and training kit be developed.

• The skills set must include tangata whenua specific skills such as Te Reo Maori.
Te Pou Tuawha: Tāne Māori Aspirations recommendations

In this section the respondents’ information clearly identifies legacies as a goal which motivated change to occur. The recommendation from research on this pou is that:

The Legacy Measure is developed into an accessible tool for whanau to provide feedback to Tāne Māori in order to track their progress toward a legacy of growth and development.

In summary, Taitokerau Tāne Māori participants recognized this research as a step toward taking responsibility for, and showing leadership in, dispelling the illusion that family violence is normal and acceptable; to openly display to other Tāne Māori real demonstrations of how to strengthen whanau dynamics; to promote overall Mauri Ora; and to understand the power of liberatory education practices that use cultural roots to create change and develop healing theories and strategies.

The wero to all other Tāne Māori in Aotearoa is to help us ‘raise the bar’ for positive role models of non-violent male behaviour within our whanau, hapu, iwi, communities and society. The journey is fraught with challenges. Tāne Māori who speak out set the scene for healthy transformations to occur. The moemoea at the conclusion of this research journey is to reinforce a philosophy that Tāne and Wāhine Māori together enact ‘mauriora’ principles that include non-violence standards to strengthen and build healthy whanau resilience capacities.

A message for all who read this research is encapsulated within the title ‘A Mana Tane Echo of Hope: Dispelling the Illusion of Whānau violence – Taitokerau Tāne Māori Speak Out.’

It is also expressed in the following:

Whakataatarata mai
E tama ure
E whare tapu koe
Ruia te kakano ma
Ki te whare tapu e tamahine
Wahine ora
Whiti whiti ora
Ki te whai ao
Ki te ao marama
Relationships blossom
A male and female feat
The seed is sown
A role of womanhood
For wellness and for life.

A pathway to a bright future
(Ruwhiu P T, 2001, unpublished)
Amokura

Whanau/Family violence prevention in Aotearoa is a field of enquiry full of ideological, philosophical, ethical, cultural and behavioural complexities. Add the dimension of ‘Mana Tāne Māori’ into that critical equation and these multiply rapidly to include: masculine socialization and isolation; colonization and mainstream capturing of cultural practices; Wāhine Māori’s emancipation and changing gender power relationships; transference and counter-transference of pain, anguish, abuse, subjugation and whanau dynamics influenced by a contemporary and traditional cultural backdrop.

The Amokura project is an integrated community change initiative to address family violence in Taitokerau. The project is led by the Family Violence Prevention Consortium, made up of the chief executives of seven iwi authorities (Te Aupouri, Te Rarawa, Ngati Kahu, Whaingaroa, Ngapuhi, Ngati Whatua and Ngati Wai).

Amokura works with social service providers, iwi and Maori organisations, marae and communities to focus on violence prevention and early intervention.

1. The framework was developed by a group of Maori practitioners from across the country
Amokura has four main areas of work:

- Education and Promotion (community awareness and education);
- Research (innovative action research projects using kaupapa Maori methodology);
- Advocacy and Leadership;
- Provider Development and Training (capacity building).

Amokura has a commitment to be a recognized knowledge base for oranga whanau, violence prevention, and early intervention in Taitokerau.

Another objective has been to build whanau, hapu and iwi researcher capacity – to engage in the powerful experience of self-determination in practice.

Research Plan

An Amokura research plan was developed in consultation with the governance group. The plan included three inter-related oranga whanau projects focusing on Rangatahi, Kaumatua and Mana Tane. The ‘Mana Tane’ focus has been particularly innovative, as there was very little knowledge or evidence of Tāne Māori points of view, feelings, group support, role modelling, mentoring future leaders of whanau, hapu, iwi or evidence of changing behaviours in regard to violence.

This project used a proactive, four-pronged analysis framework alongside a tangata whenua research methodology created in collaboration with Amokura and Te Mata o Nga Tāne Māori o Taitokerau. The following four analysis pou were chosen to reflect this approach: violence-free, oranga whanau, Safe Tāne Māori and Tāne Māori aspirations. This research differs significantly from previous work that has focused on searching for reasons for abuse or prevalent types of abuse.

Methodology

An indigenous centred research methodological framework was used called ‘Whakawhanaungatanga Kaupapa Maori research’. A guiding tenet of this was that Tāne Māori decision-making throughout the entire research experience was paramount. Their involvement informed the methodology and the project’s research ethical framework. Another basic tenet for this project was that Wāhine Māori were consulted about whether or not Tāne Māori approached as participants were ‘Safe Tāne Māori’, before they could be included in the research journey. The results from this research were specific to the four analysis pou identified, and covered key analysis tools for Tāne Māori to use in order to advance whanau violence prevention and associated recommendations.

In the framework developed for this project there are three points that have guided the research journey. The first point is embedded in the whakatauki at the start of ‘He Mihi Whakatāmatanga,’ ‘Ko te kewai nahe e hoki muri ana – Only the fresh water crayfish swims backward’. This introduces a classic Ngapuhi oxymoron that challenges a limitation of options. The real message suggests that one should leave no stone unturned in addressing an issue, barrier, obstacle, challenge or concern. Kopa in Ruwhiu (2003) and Ruwhiu (2007) continue to unravel the meaning:

“Don’t stop doing something because obstacles are in the way. Regardless of the obstacles that are put in your pathway don’t be like the fresh water crayfish who only knows one way – to back away from obstacles. What this whakatauki is telling us is that there’s no such thing as ‘I can’t’ No obstacles are insurmountable, so while the fresh water crayfish retreats, a person should not be stumped but have the sense to look for other ways to achieve their goals.”
The purpose of unravelling and making transparent all aspects of whanau violence prevention in a proactive fashion has been pursued in this project in order to leave no stone unturned.

A second guiding principle was identified in comments from Tāne Māori who attended an initial public meeting, where Te Mata o Nga Tāne Māori o Taitokerau introduced the kaupapa of the research project and attempted to find participants. There were diverse reactions when people heard the intended nature of this investigation into family violence prevention, responses included:

“It’s not a journey that I’ll do alone. I want to discuss with whanau about my participation.”

“Just like the Monarch butterfly, when it comes to whanau violence prevention, we should just let whanau develop without helping them.”

“I can see huge responsibilities attached to gathering this information. ‘Words are cheap is false – we cheapen what we have to say’. So I’m concerned how this might be used by future generations so it’s a huge responsibility, a trust issue that what is shared here is done in a way that doesn’t trample over us and our loved ones.”

“I take from it the value of stories. I look for what is the key from that story, and then that becomes the technology of healing for me and my whanau. That key unlocks the mysteries out of living in fear from whanau violence prevention.”

Finally, this project is based on the third principle of the power of a ‘research ethic’. This research journey into Taitokerau Tāne Māori narratives is not isolated. Like a finely woven mat, the intricate designs are provided with a solid background. In this case the ethical approach involves an extensive literature review that takes into account the following: Tāne Māori are the centre of foci; a global critiquing of family violence; indigenous wisdom; indigenous and tangata whenua frameworks of health and wellbeing. The heart of the research, the centrepiece of the finely woven mat, encompasses Tāne Māori narratives/pukorero as supported by Wahine Māori.
Part One: Ko te Ako te Ara; Ko te Mohiotanganga te Rama – Literature Review

Introduction

Kahore i hangaia te kupenga, hei hopu ika anake; engari kia oioi i roto i te nekeneke i te tai.
For the net is fashioned not only to catch fish; but to flow smoothly with the current of the sea.
(Riley, 1990)

This whakatauki introduces the intent of this literature review. In this context it emphasizes the power, depth and width of diverse cultural wisdoms throughout the world about humanity, nature and the esoteric dimensions of social life. Like the net seeking specific knowledge, the key purpose of this review of literature is to gather in information about family violence prevention, particularly the role of Tāne Māori and their ability to affect changes in patterns in their own whānau. Alston and Bowles (2003) remind us that a literature review can provide an analysis of the depth of knowledge that surrounds any given arena of investigation, but more importantly, it “…enables you to conceptually frame your work…” (p64) and should essentially,”…indicate that you are up-to-date with current thinking in the area of study” (pp64-65). There are four key suppositions that ground this exploration of the literature and research on family violence prevention –

The first supposition places Tāne Māori at the centre of foci, or the pivotal centre of interest for this project. As discussed in Fanon’s (1992: 220) discovery of his cultural self, he states:

“I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain… and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects. Sealed into that crushing object-hood, I turned beseechingly to others… nothing happening… I burst apart. Now the fragments have been put together again by another self.”

This pivotal centre of interest involves stripping back, inspecting and reflecting on men, male masculinity, power-gender relationships, healing and emancipative actions within the healing equation of family violence prevention.

Supposition two acknowledges significant global critiquing of the many faces of family violence and associated prevention strategies.

Supposition three focuses on the experiences and learned wisdom around family violence prevention of other indigenous men of the world.

Supposition four uses critical analysis paradigms and discourses, developed by tangata whenua, also known as world views.
Sections in the Literature Review

With those suppositions in mind, the literature review has been divided into three key sections and a conclusion.

- **Section One**
  Te Ao Hurihuri – The Changing World provides a review of international and local literature and research on violence prevention, families and male masculinity.

- **Section Two**
  Whiti Mai te Ra – Awareness Rising gives an overview of whanau/family wellbeing and healing specific to Maori. Most importantly, it highlights the status of ‘Tāne Māori’ in the healing process in Aotearoa.

- **Section Three**
  Te Rongonui o te Taniko – Patterns Speak analyses significant tangata whenua/Maori constructed frameworks for a rigorous analysis, weaving world knowledge on family violence prevention, with reference to Te Ao Maori and kanga matauranga.

- **He Wananga – The Learning** summarises all the key learnings from each of the sections.
This section aims to gain global and local understanding of family violence prevention issues. It covers an international analysis of family violence prevention, a critique of family violence prevention as it involves indigenous men, and a critical analysis of Maori experiences and perspectives about family violence prevention in Aotearoa New Zealand culture.

The most poignant observation on family violence is that, while some argue that males are unfairly maligned as instigators (Arndt, 1993), overwhelming evidence shows that males are the major perpetrators of intense abuse to loved ones (Muffic & Bouffard, 2007; Duplantis, Romans & Bear, 2006; Rivett, 2006; Taylor & Pittman, 2005; McMurray, 2001). Weston, Temple and Marshall (2006: 568) wrote candidly and clearly placed the foci on men:

“Although Wāhine Māori and Tāne Māori may be equally likely to perpetuate violence, Wāhine Māori’s violence is by no means equal to men’s violence.”

Loseke and Kurz (2005) illustrated the pervasive nature of an irrational mythology that males hold on to in order to justify their abuse of spouses, children and siblings. Edleson (1984: 238) addresses this irrationality based on three key ideologies:

“One must have certain and perfect control over things… One has little control over emotions and cannot help feel certain things… human misery is forced on one by outside people and events.”

Kenneth, Dwyer, Goldenberg, Fein, Yoshida and Boutilier’s (2005) study continued this theme with a systematic deconstruction of examples of hidden and sanctioned violence that perpetuated a moral belief that violence was a necessary evil, even a natural right. Dekeseredly, Alvi and Schwartz (2006: 31) summarised a growing body of research on the influence of male peers in the transmission of an ideology that supports the abuse of whanau, specifically female members of whanau:

“Much of the time spent with peers involves drinking… talking about hard times or mourning for what has been lost… many of these men’s friends view wife beating, rape and other forms of abuse as legitimate and effective means of reclaiming patriarchal autonomy… not only do their peers explicitly state that Wāhine Māori abuse is a legitimate way of keeping Wāhine Māori in their place, they also serve as role models because many of them assault their own partners.”

Levitt and Ware (2006) examined the impact of religious leaders’ moral ideological positions (from Islam, Christianity and Jewish faiths) and found their promotion of dual notions of male leadership and female submission reinforced the justification of sanctioned family abuse. An impact report on injuries suffered by victims of family violence is provided by Snow, Sullivan, Swan, Tate & Klein, 2006. There are many different forms of family abuse such as sibling rivalry and child abuse; however, the best documented, recognised form of abuse in the international research and literature is domestic spousal abuse (Davis & Taylor, 2002).

However, Delsol, Margolin and Johns (2003: 649) argue that: “…[Family violence] is still a somewhat hidden, but deeply ingrained phenomenon in our society.” From a psychological perspective family violence was linked to increased physical and mental health concerns for all family members involved, either as victims, or abusers (Langinrichsen-Rohling, Huss & Ramsey, 2000). Campbell, Lindhorst Huang and Walters (2006: 1416) prioritise violence above other stimuli in advancing mental ill health, stating:

“Violence itself has been found to be more predictive of depression in battered Wāhine Māori than pre-existing mental disorders, demographic or developmental characteristics.”
Barrer (2004) studied the significance of the dual feelings of sadness and fear, experienced by those being abused by significant males in their homes. This invariably distorted their perceptions of what was meant to be a safe developmental and enhanced socialisation in the home environment.

Other research has focused on the range of psycho-dynamic personal abuser-related stimuli, such as drug and alcohol use, and changing interpersonal dynamics (Bell, Harford, Fuchs, McCarroll & Schwartz, 2006).

Schmidt, Kolodinsky, Carsten, Schmidt, Larson and MacLachlan (2007) in their scrutiny of the nature of change programmes for abusers, identified reasons for the maintenance of family violence. These include feelings of relationship insecurity, jealousy and the influence of addictive inhibitors and stimulators, such as alcohol and drugs (Duplantis, Rornans & Bear, 2006). McMurray (2001: 231) highlight some of those psycho-social factors and contend that such actions are irrationally justified by the abuser:

“Factors influencing their [men’s] violent behaviours were reported as finances, alcohol/drugs, fatigue/stress, and the system. …Nearly half the Tāne Māori believed their violence was justified, either unequivocally or sometimes.”

The most identifiable commonality, to understand the change in interpersonal dynamics as a trigger for family violence, has centred on inequitable and unequal power relationships between genders, and a pervading irrationality, which reinforces and justifies the right to abuse loved ones. Such inequality contributes to objectifying female family members and increases the propensity for rationalised abuse within the sanctity of the family circle (Schmidt et al, 2007). As Goodrum, Umberson and Anderson (2001: 231) have demonstrated, abusers often:

“…did not see the connection between their physical abuse and their partner’s emotional distress. One man indicated that his partner’s only memory of this violence was in her physical inquiry. When those physical wounds healed, he explained she would be okay.”

Notwithstanding the destructive nature of this phenomenon, strategies in the international field for dealing with family violence prevention revolve around a spectrum of theoretical and practising pathways. At one end of the spectrum, psychological approaches focus on problem causation, personal psychological inhibitors, and abnormalities. From this perspective healing violence in families is often viewed as an individual responsibility, built on self learning, self awareness, self medication, self exploration, and self analysis for both the abused and the abuser (Corvo, 2006; Payne, 1997; Siporin, 1985).

At the other end of the spectrum are programmes and strategies for healing male socialisation processes, and addressing the construction and pervasiveness of societal norms as significant influences in the construct of power relationships (Craig, Robyak, Lorosian & Humm, 2006) which lead to all forms of abuse within families (Walker, 2007).

From a ‘Foucauldian’ perspective, knowledge about family violence is viewed as a social construction, family violence is not mysteriously created or discovered. Therefore, many of the programmes and strategies within this sphere of healing advocate a deconstruction process (Bate & Rober, 2003; Foucault, 1980). Goodall (2004: 6) reinforced the necessity of establishing a social construction/deconstruction process in the case of Tāne Māori and violence:

“…violence is not a necessary result of being male. Indeed, many authors take great pains to distinguish between the biological determinism inherent in an expression like, ‘male violence’ and the social construction of, ‘men’s violence.’”
Adrine (2005: 176) provides a stocktake of integrated approaches that deal with protecting families, facilitating a change in societal values, weaving a community awareness and action collaborative strategy, and challenging the tendency to isolate such problems as ‘individual pathology’, arguing that:

“Specific strategies to end domestic violence have concentrated on responding to the immediate needs of battered Wāhine Māori and their children; raising public awareness about domestic violence as a crime; bolstering criminal sanctions against perpetrators; developing batterer’s intervention programs, and co-ordinating communities’ responses through the collaboration of advocacy programs, justice systems, and social services.”

Evidence shows that when provided with the appropriate training, health and social service, professionals use their initiative to discuss domestic violence with Wāhine Māori, minority peoples, liberal-minded patients or clients and others with experience of abusive violent behaviour. These discussions might provide an early indicator for abuse or promote further education as a preventative measure for future family violence (Frank, Elon, Saltzman, Houry, McMahon & Doyle, 2006).

There are an assortment of reported approaches to healing and preventative family violence programmes. These include: transactional analysis; behaviour modification; guided imagination; rational emotive therapy; systematic family therapy; holistic healing therapy; structural analysis therapy; transformative actions therapy; assertiveness training; relaxation training; massage and alternative health therapy; cognitive anger control and so forth (Faezell, Sanchez, Mayers & Deschner, 1984).

Several approaches combine a psychological approach with group work therapy. Wallace and Nosko (2003) examine the ways a social group work model uses social relatedness with attachment theory. This model could help abusive Tāne Māori discern linkages between shame and anger, emotions cited as the catalyst of family violence activities. All approaches are underpinned by particular theories that are concerned with changing people’s attitudes, thinking and actions about family violence. Many studies examined were focused on healing. Other approaches, however, concentrated on transformative education, especially directed at power-gender relationships (Goodall, 2004; Goodrum, Umberson & Anderson, 2001).

Family violence is not an exclusive ill of Western eurocentric societies. Indigenous peoples across the world, regardless of philosophical, socio-economic and spiritual status, experience the impact of intra-family abuse (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsbery, Heise & Watts, 2006; Larsen & Petersen, 2001; Kumaga & Straus, 1983).

Ball (2007) reinforced this claim with a rural and urban study on violence in the family unit, involving over 12,000 women from 10 countries, including those indigenous to Namibia, Brazil, Japan and Samoa. Almosaed (2004: 86) in studying violence against Arab women from Saudi society adds to the centrality of male role modelling of violence and abuse on the lives and upbringing of children, and recorded that:

“72 per cent of the men sampled and 58 per cent of the women sampled were physically abused as children and adolescents… by their fathers.”

This particular study showed the magnitude and negative impact of family violence on the wellbeing of indigenous victims and perpetrators alike.

Abrahams and Jewkes (2005) in their research on the effects of South African men witnessing the abuse of their mothers during childhood, found a strong correlation between exposure to violence as a child and the rise in potential male abusers in the next generation.

Akhter, Islam and Ward (2005: 1) in a conference paper explored attitudes held by Bangladeshi men who viewed domestic violence as being “a private matter that should be discussed within the household”. An important aspect of this research was the efforts by Bangladeshi women to expose family violence as a public not private issue.
Alignment of family violence with the colonisation of indigenous people has also been discussed. Davis and Taylor (2002: 66) argued:

“Indigenous family violence is situated in a context of a history and experience of colonisation and human rights abuses”.

Diversity of need and the centricity of cultural relevance are the two most common attributes that inform strategies and programmes established to respond, or act proactively to the needs of indigenous males and their families in relational conflict leading to family violence abuse (Doucette, 2004).

Brown (2004: 478) gives a critical assessment of a combination of elements identified by indigenous men and women as important in running an Aboriginal-based family violence intervention and prevention programme in Australia that has international relevance to indigenous programmes:

“Program components should be based on traditional teachings, should create awareness of personal and family dynamics and change, and should educate about family violence. There were needs for components for partners separately, partners and their children, partners together, and the whole family. These components coincided with Aboriginal traditional teachings.”

Davis and Taylor (2002) identified the macro-political variables of contextualising the history of indigenous family violence inside their examination of emancipation from colonisation and human rights abuses. The need for family violence prevention programmes to be built on indigenous theories of cultural development, and the deconstruction of hegemonic, oppressor mono-culturalism is inherent (Ruwhiu & Ruwhiu, 2005; Ruwhiu, 2003; Ruwhiu, 1999; Ruwhiu, 1995; Fanon, 1992; Sivanandan, 1990; Freire, 1972).

Research and literature about tangata whenua (Maori) perceptions of family/whanau violence prevention is sparse. There is plenty of historical and contemporary material on or about whanau. The primary goal of historical material, flavoured by anthropological tenets, is to increase knowledge about Maori traditions and lifestyles in pre, and early contact times. By contrast, much contemporary material focuses on the abuse, rather than the prevention of family violence.

Analysis of mythological narratives can be useful; for example, descriptions of the exploits of Maui Tikitiki a Taranga, the trickster hero of Maori folklore, suggests that posterity and female companions in traditional Maori society were highly valued and treasured. Maui’s life story reflects the importance of caring for, and looking after whanau members. Wāhine Māori were influential in the construct of traditional living within the significant roles in families (Jenkins, 1992). Wahine entities such as Muriranga Whenua, whose jaw bone fished up and discovered Te Ika a Maui (North Island) and subdued Te Ra in patu form; Mahuika, whose fingernails provided the gift of fire to humanity; Hinenuitepo, who reminded Maui and all humanity of mortality. Examples such as these all display the possibility of influential Wahine Maori.

A paradox in early narratives from ethnographers and missionaries is that, on one hand Maori were viewed as naturally aggressive human beings, as the ‘noble savage’ predisposed to violence (Logan, 2006), yet on the other hand, there is strong evidence that Maori were family centred and concerned about their community’s health and wellbeing.

This ambiguity is reinforced when comparing the notes of researchers exploring the health and wellbeing of traditional whanau Maori. Pere (1997; 1985; 1982) contends that abuse towards Wāhine Māori and children was not tolerated inside whanau and hapu configurations in traditional times. Other writers indicated that in pre-contact times, illustrations of child and wahine abuse between hapu did occur as these socialisation units battled for ahi kaa rights to whenua, coped with slights leading to utu/revenge, and/or dealt with desecration of tapu (Salmond, 1991; Binney & Chapman, 1986; Ngata, 1970: 1961: 1959; Best, 1925). Analysis of historical material suggests that while inter-family violence did exist, because the whanau relied on its members, intra-family perpetrators who abused their own were severely punished (Kohere, 1949;
Lambert, 1925).

Metge (1995: 267-268) explored how violent behaviour in the Far North was dealt with historically. She explained that it appeared as though many of the responses were based on a measured form of whanau and community sanctions:

“A certain amount of violent behaviour was tolerated, though not approved, by the Wāhine Māori themselves as well as the elders, if the man was a good husband and provider when sober or if there was held to be provocation. Persistent and unrepentant offending, however, resulted in action being taken by the wife’s whanau, especially her brothers, and, if it failed to effect improvement, by the local Marae or Tribal/Maori Committee… Whanau which were functioning effectively preferred to deal with excessive violence themselves… the main ways it was handled was through the mediation of a third party… Sometimes a man who offended against community standards in this matter was punished and warned against repetition by giving him a taste of his own medicine.”

In contemporary times, by contrast, Stanley (2002) contends that the responsibility for addressing and seeking solutions to stop family violence rests with Tāne māori gathering together to discuss issues of this nature freely. Hokowhitu (2003) argued that the intricate dynamics of both Maori masculinity and cultural/societal antecedents of Maori male violence challenges any one-dimensional views of Tāne Māori as potential essentialist prototypes.

Maori domestic violence became a major contemporary concern by the mid 1900s, as identified by the Maori Women’s Welfare League (Rogers & Simpson, 1993). Wāhine Māori also identified Maori male dominance as having a negative impact on wahine development (Te Awekotuku, 1991). Hirini, Flett, Long and Miller’s (2005) ‘Frequency of Traumatic Events, Physical and Psychological Health among Maori’ reported Maori females were more likely to experience and report sexual abuse as a child or adult, family violence, and/or the traumatic death of a loved one. Koziol-McLain, Rameka, Giddings, Fyfe and Gardiner’s (2007) descriptive study concluded:

“…That direct partner violence questioning in a general practice setting yielded a high disclosure rate. Three out of four (Maori) women disclosed violence by a partner; nearly one out of four disclosed violence by a partner in the past year.”

In an attempt to explain the origins of violent behaviour, Logan (2006) critically analyses Dr Rod Lea’s proposition that Tāne Māori have a genetic map to signal a tendency towards being violent and aggressive. Other researchers (Stanley, 2002; Vakalahi, 2001; Rogers, 1993; Ministerial Committee of Inquiry Into Violence, 1987; Gidlow, 1977) challenge this biological deterministic position, unpacking an assortment of personal, interpersonal, mental, emotional, cultural, political and environmental factors that influence Maori men’s tendency to perpetuate family violence.

“The ‘urban drift’ of Maori from rural sectors (throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s) was another historical phenomenon that accelerated change in the dynamics of traditional whanau and hapu structures and functions (Bradley, 1995; Metge, 1995; Selby, 1995). Urban drift gave rise to a plethora of whanau social constructions with Borrell (2005) studying emerging urban Maori identities and reinforcing the notion of a growing Maori ‘underclass,’ composed of a dangerous anti-societal cocktail of negativity, indigenous poverty, violence, dysfunctional parenting and unsettled families of origin.”

Balzer (1999; 1997) wrote of the findings in the Hamilton Abuse Intervention research and pilot project, based on the ‘Duluth Model’ from Duluth, Minnesota. The study contended that much of the work to reduce or prevent men from abusing had been done with men and their victims from
within a ‘victim blaming’ mode. They concluded that in order to alter, or prevent domestic and family abuse, a shared framework of community intervention that places a premium on the co-ordination of community-based programmes, services and practitioner engagement, with both victims, perpetuators and communities as a whole was needed, but was unfortunately absent from current programmes.

Communities of engagement, in relation to Maori whanau, are viewed as critical in the process of selecting strategies to deal with family violence prevention. For example, Suzanne Pene – tangata whenua co-ordinator of the South Auckland Family Violence Prevention Network (July, 2006), spoke about a strategy of tackling abuse within ‘at risk’ whanau, through adoption by a ‘healthy’ whanau, for extended support and guidance.

Mikaere (1994) contends that difficulties associated with a colonised reality meant Maori were violated as a people by dominant culture and that the impact was increased violence in previous places of safety, such as the whanau kainga. Cram (2005: 22) speculates on a range of proactive possibilities available for Maori communities to construct a social environment that enhances the wellbeing of whanau members.

Pirihi Te Ohaki Ruwhiu (2005) argues that rethinking is required to deal with whanau pain and anguish resulting from family violence, with strategies grounded in tikanga matauranga Maori:

“Ahakoa o nga taumahatanga me nga nookore tanga o te ra kei waenganui i a tatou katoa, hea oranga he whakakiitanga. Kia hapai ake te wairua.”

“Although there are trials and tribulations around and amongst us all, a wellbeing that must be spoken of is to raise our spirits/our ideology our philosophies/our world view.”

Davies (2005: A11) discusses the broad implications of domestic violence. She reminds us that:

“…violence is… built on the abuse of power. It also permeates our backyard. It is tempting to believe that domestic violence occurs only in other people’s communities. If we are rich, it is easy to blame the poor. I have heard some Maori claim that there was no family violence before colonisation. Some Pakeha believe it is only brown people who beat their Wāhine Māori and children. In reality, violence against Wāhine Māori and children does not seem to be confined to one culture or one time in history. Neither is it reserved to those who live in poverty. Nevertheless, poverty does exacerbate risks and limit options.”

The circulation of whanau violence prevention resonates fully in the comments from Kruger, Pitman, Grennell, McDonald, Mariu, Pomare, Mita, Mahi and Lawson-Te Aho (2004: 12), who in unison state:

“The presence or absence of violence is indicative of the state of wellbeing or disease of whanau, hapu and iwi. Whanau violence is a labyrinth because it is often housed inside ‘impostor’ tikanga (the illusion) that has been purposely designed to validate its practice, to confuse and to prevent escape of victims. It also resists change or transformation which makes whanau violence considerably more difficult to treat and heal. There are layers of protections that are built up around abuse. Some of these are the rationalisation of violence as tikanga. Too many accept violence within the whanau as ‘normal’ and valid. The irony is that violence is the most profound expression of powerlessness that is sustained by the entrenched belief that we cannot change the circumstances that lead to the perpetration of violence.”
within ourselves. The tragedy is that some surrender from the hopelessness and the inability to see beyond immediate circumstances. None of these devices led to whanau wellbeing. They only perpetuate violence. To know about whanau violence is no longer good enough. To do something about whanau violence is what is needed. Violence is a weapon with victims at each end. The nature of whanau violence: There is nothing in the Maori world that promotes and encourages the idea of whanau violence.”

To conclude, the focal point here has been an indigenous perspective of Family Violence Prevention, as echoed in Wright’s Stolen Continents: The Indian Story (1992: 8). He states “I make no pretence of giving equal time to the invaders”. This implies that the key to understanding family violence prevention is based on placing one’s cultural roots to the fore in order to comprehend, unravel, discern, make sense of, and create appropriate strategies and programmes to combat its tentacles. That can only be done effectively when indigenous peoples take time to use their own cultural perspectives to make sense of the dilemmas changing gender roles have had on them.

This overview has reviewed past and current types of Maori responsiveness and creativity towards family violence prevention. Its purpose is to highlight the ‘work in action’ aspect of Maori communities’ endeavours in addressing the impact of family violence at the individual decision-making level, through development of more appropriate violence-free family traditions within Maori communities and in the wider societal fabric of Aotearoa New Zealand.
Grow up o tender child in the days of your world. Seek out the skills of the pakeha for your material wellbeing, give your heart to the treasures of your Maori forebears, as an adornment for your head, and your spirit to your God, the creator of all things.

This section gives an overview of whanau/family wellbeing and healing specific to Maori and the status of ‘Tāne Māori.’ Much of this material comes from participation in a project called Arotake Oranga Whanau which worked alongside tangata whenua social and community work practitioners and experts to develop a ‘child and whanau wellbeing assessment framework’ (Ruwhiu, 2006).

An analysis of Maori wellbeing that deserves special mention is Ngata’s famous call above. By stating ‘ko to waiura ki te Atua, nana nei nga mea katoa,’ Ngata illustrates that his analysis of wellbeing is firmly grounded in the multi-dimensional theme of wairua. Metge (1995: 82) describes the centrality of wairuatanga:

“…of importance is respect for the spiritual dimension (te taha wairua) which complements and completes the physical dimension (te taha tinana) in the world in which humans live. As Donald Owen puts it: Whiringa a nuku, whiringa a rangi. Woven together on earth, woven together in heaven. There is an interweaving of the two dimensions. Worldly things have spiritual origins. Things begun on earth must be completed in heaven.”

Bradley (1995: 29), in his analysis of the role of Maori social workers who work alongside Maori whanau, issued the following challenge regarding appropriate engagement:

“…it is imperative to gain an understanding of what they perceive their wairuatanga to be. It may be as simple as having a favourite tree, or spot at the river to something as complex as having a deep seated depression…”

In terms of wellbeing, to have a universal source of inspiration drawn from the well of wairuatanga, is to be exposed to tangata whenua ideologies, philosophies, paradigms and discourses (also known as theories) that feed the tangata whenua/Maori soul (Ruwhiu, 2001). The following synthesis of interpretations of wairua was constructed at a Think Tank Hui for the Arotake Oranga Whanau project (Ruwhiu, 2006):

- Wairua should be a primary consideration that traditionally was familiar to, and regularly accessed by Maori to assist in healing;
- Wairua can be broken down to explore things that the whanau hold sacred, their prohibitions and their protocol around dealing with unhealthy and unclean things or issues;
- Wairua is a dynamic, not a static phenomenon;
- Wairua provides for safe practice discussions;
- Wairua involves identifying relevant spiritual gifts held by whanau;
- Wairua recognises that all things have a spiritual identity; part of the task is to check out whether these are healthy, helpful, negative or dangerous for whanau wellbeing;
- Wairua invokes korero about the ideologies of tangata whenua, in this case Tāne Māori.
Although Ngata identifies the foundational aspect of wairua in his statement above, he connects this aspect of wellbeing to other social forces and relationships. Whanau and whakapapa are synonymous, in that the fabric of humanity involves understanding the layers of relational and interconnected dynamics that bind people to people (Ruwhiu, 2006; Thomson, 1993; King, 1992; Pere, 1991). Whanau realities are diverse (Selby, 1995; Bradley, 1995), with multiple configurations, for example, same gender parenting and matua whangai. Metge (1995: 16) in exploring the depths of whanau with Taitokerau kaumatua, was introduced to flax as a metaphor for whanau, and records:

“They identify the rito in each fan as child (tamaiti), emerging from and protected by its parents (matua) on either side. Like fans in the flax bush, parent-child families in the whanau share common roots and derive strength and stability from forming part of the larger whole. Like rito, children are the hope of continuity into the future. Flax and whanau alike live through cycles of growth, dying and regeneration. New life grows from the old.”

The core values of this statement indicate whanau is the most basic social unit in Maori society. Common roots join past ancestors with those who stand in the present, and will continue into future generations. In relation to this common genealogical roots framework, the following whanau characteristics display the depth of wellbeing inherent in whanau:

• Whanau is where Maori values, beliefs, ideals and ethos are practised;
• Whanau is built on the power of belonging;
• Whanau decision-making processes are based on collectivist values;
• Whanau does not exist in isolation There are wider connections to consider, as whanau is part of a hapu, which is part of an iwi.

(Ruwhiu, 2006)

Whanau is a social structural entity woven together by whakapapa. Mauri ora provides a pulse to measure the health and wellbeing of the members of that human gathering place (Durie, 2005; Hirini & Collins, 2005; Riley, 1990). The dynamic realities of humanity are reinforced by the thematic ingredient of ‘mauri ora’ covering all dimensions of physical, mental, emotional, recreational, health promotion and educational realms of wellness and wellbeing (Kingi, 2002; Durie, 1984). Mauri ora is inclusive of all spheres of reality, including the natural, human and spiritual spheres.

A sense of self worth within a whanau is a major component of wellbeing. ‘Ko Au’ and ‘Mana’ are two conceptual themes that combine to increase understanding about the dynamics of Maori self worth. Our sense of ko au, where personal identity is found, is in the intersection between natural, human and spiritual realities (Huata in Ruwhiu 2006; Borrell, 2005; Hollis, 2005; Barlow, 1991). Hemara (2000: 68) provides a working definition of mana as:

“…authority, control, influence, prestige, power, psychic force, effectual, binding, authoritative, having influence or power, vested with effective authority, be effectual, and take effect.”
It is important to remember that mana was imbued in humans and in all other spheres of reality that make up ko au. Maori then, have as their cultural articulation mana atua, mana maunga, mana awa, mana roto, mana moana, mana wahine, mana tamariki, and so on. The conceptual themes of mana and ko au when combined, either strengthen or weaken a person’s perceptions of self in relation to others. Reeves (1979: 10) sums this up in a critical evaluation of his Maori ethnic identity:

“…I am a Maori. I claim and I am claimed by Maoridom, it’s where I get my understanding of myself, it’s where I am enriched… Identity as I hinted, is offered as well as claimed. I was offered it and I found out that in laying claim to that identity I took a tiger by the tail. Identity means searching, finding, and for me never quite arriving.”

The dialogue about inter-relationship between self and others is understood when a person identifies themselves. There is a weaving whitiwhiti korero that is laid down, to bind the human (people connections), natural (land mark identifiers) and spiritual (esoteric locators) dimensions of a person in their world view as a means of highlighting their cultural identity. A common structure to illustrate the use of ko au and mana as a means of identification follows:  

Ka tangi te titi, ka tangi te kaka, ka tangi hoki ahau. Tihei mauri Ora.
Ko te amorangi ki mua, ko te hapai o ki muri, te tuturutanga o te Maori mana motuhake, ake ake ake tonu atu.
Ko nga waka e…
Ko nga maunga teitei…
Ko nga awa hohonu…
Ko nga marae…
Ko nga hapu…
Ko nga iwi…
Ka tu atu ahau i runga i te whariki e whakaiti i mua i a koutou
Ko taku ingoa…Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena ra tatou katoa.

2 The gaps here are filled based on the individual connections with whanau, whenua and tikanga.

This dialogue explains the depth of our interconnections through the gods, our mountains, rivers, habitats and through the living ranga/threads of human whakapapa/genealogy. In every dimension of ko au, mana is the cultural adhesive that binds us to the people connections, land mark identifiers and esoteric locators from the different dimensions (Ruwhiu, 2006; 2001; 1999).

Key characteristics of Ko Au and Mana

• Ko Au adds to self worth and is based on the use of Maori thinking, Maori paradigms, Maori world views and Maori discourses.
• Ko Au enhances transference of cultural knowledge wisdom and experience.
• Ko Au provides a relational analysis of the natural (Te Ao Turoa), human (He tangata, he tangata, he tangata) and spiritual dimensions of reality (Te Ao Wairua).
• Ko Au is often used to measure the depth of one’s own understanding about identity and the interconnected world of whanau Maori.
• Mana increases and decreases under certain conditions, it is about power and prestige and is expressed in many forms, including for example mana atua and mana moana.
• Mana is the outcome of living Maori qualities, values and beliefs such as aroha, utu, awhinatanga and so on, and is affected by changing environments.
• Mana is something to be respectful of, as the consequences of disrespecting mana are felt through the generations.
• Mana, although intangible, is often a gauge of self-esteem, and links to korero regarding the cultural adhesive that binds Maori world views together. Mana can be enhanced, nurtured, strengthened and used to bless others.

Tikanga Matauranga combines traditional and contemporary practices framed by Maori knowledge and wisdom (matauranga and moihiotanga Maori). Tikanga Matauranga is the impact of cultural insight on ways of doing (nga tikanga) influenced by cultural understanding (matauranga Maori). Prevailing commonsense-ness (thinking constructs), decision-making
and behaviour choices are determined through generations by Tikanga Matauranga (Ruwhiu, 2006; Mead, 2003). Tikanga Matauranga gives form, maintenance, transformation and measured standards of behaviour in three dimensions of reality (the natural, human and the spiritual. It revisits the power of transformative actions for effecting paradigm shifts and changes. Tangata whenua should continue to reflect on this when considering a family violence-free future. The common characteristics of Tikanga Matauranga are:

- about ways of doing that have a history that can be traced;
- thinking about why and how we do something, together;
- a recognition that some practices defined as tikanga are not always healthy, nor appropriate to advance whānau wellbeing;
- recognising the ability of a culture to transform, become innovative and adjust to changing times and circumstances;
- notions of consistency, holistic healing, constitutional order, social justice and social development;
- an inspirational source of liberation;
- practices that advance cultural empowerment;
- the protocols of inter-relationships that weave people together or are broken when people trample over each other.

This section, Whiti Mai te Ra, argues that to fully understand the dynamics of wellbeing there are four essential components to aid a paradigm shift around family violence prevention for Tāne Māori:

1. That cultural thinking be viewed as a source of inspiration for change;
2. Change can not be achieved alone, but must remain located within whānau and communities;
3. Tāne Māori engage in development of new healthier traditions;
4. A sense of self worth for Tāne Māori comes through promoting the phenomenon of healthy holistic Maori whanau wellbeing.
Te Rongonui o te Taniko – Patterns Speak presents a brief analysis of five significant tangata whenua analysis patterns to address family violence prevention. It makes specific reference to key tenets from Te Ao Maori and Tikanga Matauranga in the transformation equation. The analysis patterns are: Mauri Ora, Te Whare Tapa Wha, Te Wheke, Nga Pou Mana and Powhiri-Poutama.

Mauri Ora

The Mauri Ora conceptual framework was developed by the Second Maori Taskforce on Whanau Violence, which was made up of a group of Maori practitioners working in the field of whanau violence. The practitioners identified, discussed and agreed upon the particular characteristics of their practices that have potential to constructively transform violence within whanau, hapu and iwi into behaviours that enhance mauri ora/wellbeing (Kruger, 2004). The framework describes three fundamental tasks for addressing violence:

- Dispelling the illusion that violence is normal, acceptable or culturally valid;
- Removing the opportunity for violence to take place;
- Teaching transformative practices for the liberation of whanau.

As well as these tasks there are three elements for creating transformation from violence:

- Te Ao Maori (the Maori world) which describes six cultural constructs for application as practice tools;
- Te Ao Hurihuri (contemporary realities) which describe contemporary influences that make the practice of cultural constructs difficult;
- Transformative elements which apply cultural constructs from Te Ao Maori while recognising environmental and contextual influences from Te Ao Hurihuri.

This framework advocates for the validation, practice and further development of Maori-specific therapeutic models from a Maori paradigm. The framework is non-prescriptive which allows whanau, hapu and iwi practitioners to apply the responses in a localised way that best responds to their own communities.

The Amokura family violence prevention project is grounded in the Mauri Ora Framework, developed using Maori cultural values, beliefs and practices.
When considering Maori health and overall wellbeing, Durie (1984; 1994) contends that a healing approach based on Maori perspectives of the world is of paramount importance. This critical analysis of Maori health uses a metaphor of four walls and the corners of a house, hence the name Te Whare Tapa Wha. A metaphorical house is used to represent singular, plural and collective human entities. For example it could be viewed as an individual, family or groups of people. Optimal health and wellbeing is secured by the centricity of the taha wairua, and the balance generated between all four integrating dimensions described by Durie (1984: 5):

“Health, from a Maori perspective, has always acknowledged the unity of the soul, the mind, the body and the family: the four cornerstones of health; te taha wairua, te taha hinengaro, te taha tinana, te taha whanau.”

Durie (1994) further describes in detail the focus, key aspects and thematic conditions of each of the cornerstones that frame Maori health and wellbeing. Taha Wairua, the spiritual dimension focuses on the places and identities that were sought for guidance, along with the conditional themes involved in understanding the nature of unseen energies that impact on Maori health and wellbeing. Though these dimension have been analysed before, the most important learning came from frames of reference attached to each dimension, below:


It is believed that te wheke, the octopus, is a sea creature that is easily dispatched as it gives up without a struggle once captured. It’s use as a metaphor provides a powerful image about the fragile nature of Maori health and wellbeing. This framework or model was developed by Rose Pere over years of advanced work and engagement with whanau Maori in trauma. Like octopus tentacles, this framework has eight key areas of analysis and core ethical principles to guide those working with Maori. Pere (1983; 1985; 1991; 1997) identifies these:

1. Wairuatanga – Spirituality;
2. Hinengaro – Mental wellbeing;
3. Tinana – Physical wellbeing;
4. Whanaungatanga – Extended whanau;
5. Whatumanawa – Emotion;
6. Mauri – Life force;
7. Mana Ake – Unique identity;
8. Ha a Koro maa Kui ma – Inherited strengths.

Pere (1997: 3) explains the symbolic use of the other parts of the octopus:

“The head represents the child or family and each tentacle represents a particular dimension that requires a certain thing to help it give substance to the whole. The suckers on the tentacle represent the many aspects that exist within each dimension. The tentacles move in and out in an infinite direction as the octopus moves. The tentacles can also be intertwined merging together sometimes with no clear boundaries.”
In unison the eight tentacles and other significant features of the octopus provide a map for those using a Maori psyche of infinite wisdom to address health and wellbeing issues relating to those who seek relief. This framework requires in-depth practised knowledge and wisdom about the centrality of cultural realities, and relies heavily on navigating the wairua dimension. Practitioners must understand and use regularly, the gifts of the spirit to assist in unravelling evidence of ill health and jaded wellbeing. In the words of kaumatua Pirihi Te Ohaki Ruwhiu (Ruwhiu & Ruwhiu, 2005: 5, 6) those using the Te Wheke framework, need to be:

“…culturally and spiritually at ease, aware and competent in assessing/engaging and inclusive by nature, in order to work with Maori whanau who are suffering (5)… must be competent in using tools of access and engagement that open up the wairua dimension…sharpening up…cultural and spiritual tools require competency in the use of karakia, noho puku, mate kite, moemoea, pukorero, tauparapara, whakapapa and te reo Maori. These tools of engagement unlock the healing elements of wairuatanga and need to be circumnavigated regularly, with ease and competency (6).”

Nga Pou Mana

Nga Pou Mana, as a framework to assess Maori health and wellbeing, can be described as a set of values and beliefs which rest upon four supports. Like Whare Tapa Wha and Te Wheke, Nga Pou Mana components include whanaungatanga/whanau; taonga tuku iho/cultural heritage; te ao turoa/the physical environment; and turangawae/a land base (Kingi, 2002; Durie 1994; Henare, 1988). This framework also has other interacting variables that use individual and group wellbeing including mana, cultural integrity, and a stable economic base underpinned by confidence and continuity.

The Nga Pou Mana framework differs from the other two in that it places great emphasis on the external environment and using oral traditions to influence its stability. These differences are facilitated through awareness about choices regarding new behaviours and environments that provide positive support for long-lasting change. Although the Nga Pou Mana model is not promoted within the education sector like Whare Tapa, it is similar in nature in that it allows for further education in things Maori.

For Maori, it is important to note that health factors have largely been replaced by lifestyle factors (Durie, 1994). These include reduced family support, alcohol and drug misuse, unemployment, poor nutrition and substandard housing. These lifestyle factors now impact heavily on Maori health (Ratima, Allen, Durie, Edwards, Gilies, Kingi, & Waldon, 1996). Tangata whenua realise that good health must be measured by cultural and holistic indices as well as physical ones such as weight, blood pressure and eyesight.

Powhiri Poutama

In the 1990s social work practitioners identified their practice frameworks and associated models (Dreardon, 1997; Bradley, 1995; Mataira, 1995). Two arose, that combined to became known as Powhiri Poutama, from the numerous frameworks of intra-cultural exploration. The tukutuku design Poutama, as a practice framework, centred on its progressive nature and a layered analysis approach. It required practitioners who were endowed with adequate knowledge of tikanga Maori, to be able to make sense of, describe, enhance and translate, using cultural symbols, the needs expressed by whanau Maori in crisis (Stanley, 2000). At around the same time, phases of a Powhiri were being conceptualised as an engagement model of practice for dealing with whanau health and wellbeing. Hollis (2005: 34-35) describes how the two frameworks join an eight stage critical analytical practice framework, known as Powhiri Poutama.

In Haronga (2003: 3) ‘Powhiri’ describes the stages of a practice model, while ‘Poutama’ framed that practice within a Maori view of the world based on Tikanga Matauranga. The following clarifies in more detail each of the phases:
Karakia is the vehicle that enables one to move from tapu to noa, or vice versa;

Mihi, whakawhanaungatanga, whaikorero is the introduction that is used to give or gather information, depending on whether you are tamatihiri or tangata whenua;

Whakapuaki refers to the stages of a flower. Blossoming. This is a metaphor for information gathering;

Whakatatarata is about the more fully open blooming stage, in which more information is given about the take (situation), this is a diagnosis step;

Whakatangi is about feelings, whatever they may be;

Whakaora is about the healing or treatment needed;

Whakaoti is about the end stage;

Karakia is about moving back to the start with a cleared self.

Kingi (2002: 253) identifies an eight point summation analysis of a range of commonalities in these Maori frameworks, he argues they:

“…endorse Maori values; Maori philosophies; attempt to apply cultural paradigms to modern time and modern services; are not about perpetuating old practices; usually developed with Maori users in mind; are compatible to other more conventional measures though having different priorities, starting points, and explore parameters not looked at by other measures; and are developed by Maori health workers, Maori researchers and Maori academics.”

These frameworks are significant in supporting Tāne Māori in healing, remaining violence-free and promoting family violence prevention, suggesting these outcomes will ultimately emerge from mahi in Maori conceptual frameworks that advance Maori health and wellbeing.
The four suppositions that set the scene for this Literature Review were:

- Tāne Māori are the pivotal centre of interest for this project;
- A global critique of literature and research specifically about family violence with associated prevention strategies is necessary;
- Taking stock of indigenous men’s, in specific, Tāne Māori experiences of family violence prevention;
- Securing an understanding of tangata whenua critical analysis paradigms and discourses that guide efforts to address family violence from a tangata whenua critical analysis framework perspective.

The review encompasses international literature about intimate partner violence (including in indigenous settings), literature pertaining to Māori wellbeing, culture and whanau, and tangata whenua models of analysis and practice used to address violence and abuse.

The following conclusions have been drawn from the literature:

- Males are the major perpetrators of family violence and need to be involved in changing their behaviour, with the support of others;
- Males often use faulty reasoning and rely on irrational ideology to justify their actions to blame the victims of their abuse for the violence in their homes. Transformative behaviour can only occur if transformative educative action directed at Tāne Māori is grounded within an ideology that challenges gender power inequalities;
- A range of factors were identified that affect violent behaviour in the home such as poverty and addictions (especially to alcohol and drugs). Part of ending family violence involves minimising the impact of these influences;
- Violent behaviour increases mental health concerns for all family members, including children who witness abuse and abusers. Changing this behaviour would improve mental health for all whanau;
- Change strategies need to be culturally contextualised to emphasise the power of cultural paradigms in healing and proactive strategies to reinforce changing behaviour conducive to whanau wellbeing;
- For some, change involves healing from within, others need support groups in the journey to become violence-free;
- The history of colonisation in indigenous families means that healing also involves emancipation through a specific social construct of cultural significance;
- Historical precedents both of violence within whanau, and of strategies for addressing such occurrences should be taken into account.

There is notable consistency between these conclusions and the themes that became evident in the pukoro of participants.
Part Two: Te Ara Pono mo Nga Tikanga Rangahau – Research Methodology

Tena ano ra to taua kahu, na to matua ra nana i waihanga, na rua te pupuke, na rua te mahara, na rua te hotahota na tua waihanga, hei kahu ra mo taua ki te po.

There is, of course, our cloak. It was woven by your parents, by recess of knowledge of thought, recess of enterprise and by prodigy of learning, as a robe for us into the night.

(Ngata & Jones in Hemara, 2000: 69)

“…[M]ethods are like a kaleidoscope: Depending on how they are approached, held and acted toward, different observations are revealed… that will not permit one interpretation to be stamped upon it” (Denzin, 1989: 235). Denzin reminds social science researchers of diverse pathways that can be taken in order to: unravel; make known; challenge; verify; explore; debunk; reconstruct knowledge and wisdom of social phenomenon under scrutiny and investigation. The challenge for social science researchers is to maintain a sense of inquisitiveness through fostering, as Wagner (1993: 15) states, an ideology that “ignorance is a better starting place than truth for assessing the usefulness of research”.

With this insight, the whakatauki above provides a metaphor for Part Two of this report – a cloak with historical, ideological, and philosophical roots in its formation – to illustrate the importance of understanding and comprehending the nature, form and construction of a critical analysis or principled kaupapa to frame the research methodology.

Te Ara Pono mo Nga Tikanga Rangahau – Research Methodology, examines the ideology of this research and the process of illuminating Tāne Māori points of view concerning family violence prevention for whānau Māori.

This next part of the report is structured as follows:

SECTION ONE: Te Whare Kokorangi – Reflections, provides an overview of the choices made regarding research mode, direction, methodology, ethics and framing.

SECTION TWO: Te Whare Tokararangi – Anchoring, concentrates on the project’s journey by Te Mata o Nga Tāne Māori.
The name ‘Te Whare Kokorangi’ translates as ‘The Galaxy’ and provides a metaphor to understand, analyse and contextualise choices made on the research mode, direction, ethics and framing for this report. The metaphor establishes a critical reflection of the thinking behind actions taken to explore family violence prevention, as discussed by Tāne Māori. The nature of this research experience is unique. The words of Jackson (in Perrit, 1992: 8, 9-10) provide a conceptual taura (rope) that binds the research journey to Māori ideology, pedagogy and methodology. This differs from most reflections about research methodology which tend to start with an excursion into complicated terminology associated with western theoretical explanations.

“*The Maori truth has survived… The recent nurturing of the battered Maori soul has led not just to a reclaiming of the language, the music, and the traditions. It has also led to a reassertion of the philosophies which underpinned them (8)… But the pain will end… because as Maori we are now seeking to reclaim the validity of our own institutions, the specifics of our own faith, and the truths of our own history. That process will not only nourish once more the Maori soul, it will also eventually undermine the conceptual framework of the Pakeha world and the oppression which has flowed from it. It will thus be, a ‘redemption’ of the hopes expressed so long ago in the first remembered wisdom of our word.”* (Jackson, in Perrett, 1992: 8, 9-10)

This section begins by grounding research methodology in a Māori context, by a discussion of research in general, covering issues such as quantitative versus qualitative research approaches, action-focused directional guides, and ethics. Finally, the research methodological framework for this project and it’s components are identified.

The premise advanced from the whakatauki, ‘Me hora te whariki, me whakatakoto nga take,’ is that the first action in preparing for a hui is to lay down a whariki. There are processes and protocols, tikanga, that one can use to engage effectively with people (Schuster, in Wetere et al, 1984). Exploring tikanga in research is about scrutinising the methodologies embarked on by researchers. The major premise, emphasised in the whakatauki that informs this project, is based on a Māori perspective that seeking wisdom, knowledge and understanding, or in a word ‘research’ (Eruera, 2005; Stokes, 1985), has never been conducted in isolation from the lived historical cultural realities (Bishop, 1996), philosophies, ideologies, power human engagement inter-relationships (Smith, 1999; Tomlins-Jahnke, 1996; Smith, 1986; 1986a) and theories of indigenous people (Ruwhiu, 1999; Pihama, 1993).

For Māori, the tangata whenua/indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, the phenomenon known as research was used in ancient times (Gilgen, 1991; Walker, 1990; Smith, 1986; Stokes, 1985) as displayed in creation theories and myths (Royal, 1998; Ruwhiu, 1995; Sinclair, 1976). Research aided our efforts in exploration, comprehension, making sense of and understanding the relationship between the world we lived in and our primeval existence (Bishop & Glynn, 1992).

From early contact times, the research frameworks, experiences, and outcomes for Māori people changed as tauwi dominated the exchange of information with their indigenous Treaty partners. The fascination with Māori views of the world, and ways of living did little to debunk prevailing, irrational myths (Durie, E: 1998), did not address the ills experienced by Māori, and tended to generalise their research findings to all Māori (Drummond, 1937; Best, 1925; Dittmer, 1907).
Smith (2004: 4-5, 5, 7) reflects on the impact that tāuiwi-dominated research has had on Māori:

“…the history of research from many indigenous perspectives is so deeply embedded in colonisation that it has been regarded as a tool only of colonisation and not as a potential tool for self-determination and development (4-5)… This shift in position from seeing ourselves as passive victims of all research to seeing ourselves as activists engaging in a counter-hegemonic struggle over research is significant (5)… The research stories however also served the purpose of demonstrating that research offered transformative possibilities that enabled Māori to conduct research that countered the negative history of research in terms of the nature of inquiry, the methodology, the significance and relevance of the research and its impact on families and communities (7).”

From another perspective, Stewart (in Cram & Nairn, 1990: 13) reminds us all of the diverse realities that exist in Māoridom by stating “Te rongonui o te taniko, kei roto i te whiriwhiri no, mau tonu tona ataahua – The beauty of taniko is that there is more than one pattern”. With notions of uniqueness, plurality and diversity firmly established, the emergence of Kaupapa Māori research paradigms and associated praxis (Smith, G, 2002; Smith, 1999; Bishop, 1996; Te Awe kotuku, 1991) continue a line of thinking that places cultural wisdoms, in this case Māori wisdoms, at the centre of research ethics and engagement, not as a marginal afterthought.

Royal (1992) argued about the centricity of whānau-inclusive research practices that reconfigured Māori control of research decision-making, while Te Whaiti (1992) and Irwin (in Du Plessis, 1992) outlined the importance of finding our un-captured indigenous voices to map research that was beneficial for Māori. Mead (1996) went on to identify five working principles of Kaupapa Māori research – whakapapa, Te Reo, tikanga Māori, rangatiratanga and whanau.

Similarly, Smith (1999), Ruwhiu (1999), Walsh-Tapiata (1997) and Bishop (1996) all espoused the importance of Māori conscientisation and Māori self-determination to de-mystify, deconstruct and reconstruct research in Māori terms, and also to produce theoretical platforms that advance critical Māori analyses on the kaupapa of research.

With this type of critical grounding in the dynamics of Kaupapa Māori research, Bevan-Brown (1999) listed ten baseline components that support and reinforce moves by Māori communities and Māori researchers to clearly stake their ownership of research as defined by Māori. These components include working within Māori frameworks, with Māori as active participants with expertise in all spheres of research engagement, dealing with issues of significance for the benefit of Māori, an expectation of excellence and high quality, and an understanding of the role of Māori culture in methodology, measures and procedures.

Walker, Eketone & Gibbs (2006), Powick (2002), Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson (2003) and Walker (2001) all validate and legitimise Māori philosophical, ideological and conceptual frameworks as pivotal to any research journey with Māori communities. Hona (2007) advances this approach by re-emphasising a common theme throughout the literature, that Kaupapa Māori research is about recognising the influence of dominant hegemonic ideologies, while at the same time giving support to the advancement of Māori research perspectives, actions and analysis.

Hona (2007) at a research wananga (23-25 March 07), provided further insight into the link between hegemonic practice and Kaupapa Māori research and contends that:

“Research is hegemonic practice; kaupapa Māori indigenous research is counter hegemonic research; research is vital to the development and advancement of indigenous societies and is not to be impeded upon by mainstream superstition.”
Wilkie, Berryman, Himona & Paul (2001) were adamant about the counter-hegemonic practice of exposing the lived experience or hidden context within Māori narratives. Recognition of this ideological foundation is of critical importance given the focus of this research, which is to draw accumulative wisdom from Tāne Māori, to contribute to the healing of whanau suffering from Tāne Māori-generated family violence.

This project is about exploring family violence prevention by Tāne Māori for liberation praxis purposes, on behalf of whanau Māori, constructed and processed with Māori world views and a paradigm of Whakawhanaungatanga Kaupapa Māori as the research framing. Having clearly identified that paradigm framing, the other major components of research methodology can now be examined.

Pursuits of truth (Wagner, 1993) can be done in a quantitative way, hinging largely on the scientific protocol described as a positivistic reductionist research approach which supports the gathering of statistical data using scientific methodologies (Stewart, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 1995). The methods employed in quantitative research were not appropriate for this project.

A Whakawhanaungatanga Kaupapa Māori frame is consistent with a qualitative approach, an approach:

“…[that] is well suited to studies that seek deeper views and seeks a deeper understanding than purely quantitative research can provide… Such methods provide a means to explore respondents’ points of view with depth and detail; it also places the respondents’ viewings within a wider social and political context.” Stewart (2007: 76)

To understand social phenomenon from this approach involves identifying qualities that can be used to interpret and explain behaviours in order to understand how these qualities impact on and construct social realities. In this setting the researcher is not viewed as an objective, authoritative, politically neutral, value-free observer. They are seen as an engager, much like an active participant with flaws, feelings and insights that impacts on the social phenomenon under study (Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 1990).

In summary there are some common contrasts between quantitative versus qualitative research. Bryman, (2004: 287) lists these as:

- Point-of-view of researcher versus point-of-view of participants;
- Researcher distant verses researcher close;
- Theory testing versus theory emergent;
- Static versus process;
- Structured versus unstructured;
- Generalisation versus contextual understanding;
- Hard, reliable data versus rich, deep data;
- Macro versus micro;
- Behaviour versus meaning;
- Artificial settings versus natural settings.

There are instances where quantitative and qualitative research can be used in tandem to cover such things as statistical reference points with in-depth exploration of the social values evident by respondents. For the purposes of this research however, the qualitative approach was included as one of the elements of the critical framing of Whakawhanaungatanga Kaupapa Māori research to examine family violence prevention from a Mana Tāne perspective.

Kemmis & McTaggart (2000: 568) highlight three other unique and central features of Action Research as a methodological approach:

“…shared ownership of research projects, community-based analysis of social problems, and an orientation to social action.”

Two key elements identify this project as action research. First, the time taken to be inclusive of participants from the outset of the research journey, rather than at the end; secondly, the collaborative participation with communities of interest. The goals of this project have been to both report the particular social phenomenon,
and then attempt to improve, transform and liberate those participating. For these reasons, the principals of Action Research are inherent in the Whakawhanaungatanga Kaupapa Maori research frame for Mana Tane and the Family Violence Prevention project.

Ethics provide the necessary guidelines that allow navigation through the quagmire of moral dilemmas that emerge from the diverse dynamics of human engagement regardless of methodological approach. Research tends to open up hidden places in the human heart; a process that can damage participants, and their significant others, or even large communities if not managed appropriately (Walsh-Tapiata, 1997; Patton, 1990).

Wilkinson (in Tolich, 2001) examines the core ideas of research ethics:

“Research done on humans offers all sorts of benefits and burdens to all sorts of people... because research both offers benefits and imposes burdens, there is a need to think about the circumstances in which research would be justifiable... the key topic in research is how we should treat others.”

Discussions about ethics include, amongst other topics, informed consent, subject choices, intellectual property rights and indigenous rights. Powick (2002: 23) explains why this framework has provided a core element of the Whakawhanaungatanga Kaupapa Maori research methodology:

“Tikanga reflects Maori values, beliefs and the way they view the world; and kawa is the process by which Maori promote, protect and develop tikanga. The aim of Maori research ethics is to ensure that respect and protection of the rights, interest and cultural sensitivities of Maori are gained.”

Amokura has a clearly defined set of ethical principles and practices to guide research projects. Developed by Dr Fiona Cram and affirmed by Amokura governance, they are consistent with the Kaupapa Maori research principles previously discussed. The early inclusion of participants in the design of the research project resulted in the development of ethical principles in terms that were meaningful to them. This proved to be important preparation for managing issues that arose during the research journey. The principles were:

- Ko te tiakitanga: Look after people, make sure they’re cared for – be protective of whanau participating in research;
- Ko te aroha: To do our mahi in love and reverence, not just for the sake of doing it;
- Ko te manaaki tangata: To support and provide spiritual support, to bless;
- Ko te whangai tangata: Food, knowledge, reciprocity. Give in order to receive – we need to practice our research on ourselves, we need to open up first – indigenous ethical research practice;
- Ko te whakamana nga tangata: Respect people and what they bring – confidentiality and ownership of the research – na tatou;
- Ko te whakaiti: Remain teachable, humble, approachable, and have a sense of humour in all our mahi, remembering that laughter is good for the soul – acknowledge the skills, knowledge and wisdom of all participants.

The research framework, Whakawhanaungatanga Kaupapa Maori Research, is expressed in the whakatauki “Ka kahi te toi whai te maramatanga – If knowledge is gathered, enlightenment will follow” (Sinclair, 1976: 5). Such a framework creates a progressive, developing working research paradigm to gather a unique resource to support Tāne Māori contributions to the kaupapa of whanau violence prevention. It also assists with the development of a plan to strengthen Tāne Māori in Oranga Whanau principles that can be used for the health and wellbeing of whanau, hapu and iwi in Taitokerau. If knowledge is gathered using a framework within an area of concern for Maori, the likely outcome is added enlightenment on that kaupapa. The qualitative approach provides a means for gathering pukorero from the lives of Tāne Māori who are survivors of violent abuse, and who are now also proactive advocates for safe whanau environments.
The Amokura research strategy written by Dr Fiona Cram identified three potential research projects around the theme of Oranga Whanau. A kaumatua project, a rangatahi project and a Mana Tane project were proposed, the latter being outlined as:

“Mana Tane: One component of whanau ora that we know very little about is why and how Maori men, especially those who have in the past been perpetrators of violence, choose to be violence-free within their whanau. The project will explore the pathways Tāne Māori take to free themselves and their whanau from violence, and in their further aspirations for whanau oranga. It is anticipated that these pathways will be intimately related to Maori men’s roles as partners, fathers, grandfathers, community leaders and kaumatua.” (Cram, 2005: 22)

Te Mata o Nga Tane

One of the first aspects of practice methodology was the selection of Tāne Māori to participate in this project. The selection process was strongly reliant on collaborative engagements between Tane and Wahine Maori. The joint gender effort evidenced here illustrates collaborative interactions for healing that are demonstrated throughout the rest of this research.

The aim was to select and set up a core research group of Tāne Māori, to develop research capacity in Taitokerau, and to be able to discuss all aspects of the research project’s direction, form and progress. The initial protocol/tikanga of hui a kaupapa was used to discuss the possible parameters of this research journey. This was an opportunity to come to grips with the research focus and to develop a plan for an initial gathering of a Tāne Māori resource group (later known as Te Mata o Nga Tāne Māori).

A general selection criteria and protocol to identify Tāne Māori as potential core research participants was established as follows:

1. Tāne Māori had to have been exposed to one or more violent environments, whether it be home, school, work, or community and to have become violence-free;
2. Tāne Māori needed to live in, or could whakapapa back to Taitokerau indicating that they belonged to, or had a vested interest in Taitokerau-tanga;
3. Tāne Māori approached to participate in this research were selected by Wāhine Māori (either by their partners or service organisations in their communities), who viewed these men as Safe Tāne Māori.

Four men, identified by Di Grennell and Wāhine Māori working at Amokura, made up the core research and think tank roopu. Three of the four Tāne Māori chosen by Amokura – Witi Ashby, Phil Paicea and Steve Halliday – were not previously known to the researcher. They all had a record of active work in their communities to advance whanau wellbeing. I knew the fourth tane, Hemi Horne through Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW).
In line with the notion of Taitokerau-tanga, Heta Erueti my whanaunga from Kaikohe, became the fifth invited Tāne Māori onto the core research and think tank roopu. Validation of his nomination came from his partner of seven years and Wāhine Māori involved in Te Tangata Whenua Takawaenga o Aotearoa (Maori Caucus of ANZASW).

This group had a preliminary meeting with Di Grennell and I to:  
- hear more about the project;  
- look at ways Tāne Māori might be able to participate in the project (building research capacity), and how Amokura could best recognise that contribution;  
- generate ideas for making sure that the mahi is high quality and effective;  
- discuss ways of ensuring the project is carried out to enhance mana for Tāne Māori participants and their whanau.

The one clear message, aside from tentative support, was that Tāne Māori present wanted a hui whakawhanaungatanga.

The Bream Bay hui whakawhanaungatanga was significant in this research journey for a number of reasons. First, the project outline was revisited, as requested by Tāne Māori present. They also reaffirmed their agreement to be part of the core research group. The first question from Tāne Māori at this gathering was ‘what’s this research all about?’ even after the previous korero about the project.

Second, through a hui a roopu process, the core research group created six ethical research principles to guide the project and made links to Amokura’s ethical research principles.

Third, the core research group confirmed the centricity of Whakawhanaungatanga Kaupapa Māori research methodology for this project. An example of this centricity was displayed as respondents were exposed to research project methodology only when it had first been tested by our roopu. During this hui we used self created charts generated from a mixture of whakapapa/genealogical maps, timelines of significant events, concept displays and life cycle depictions.

Fourth and finally, the core research group spent time developing a sense of whānau that was to become a critical and centrally enduring characteristic throughout the entire research experience. The principle espoused here was about the importance and significance of building real relationships and friendship with each other, something that is not always forthcoming when Tāne Māori gather to engage.

A further hui in Hikurangi gave the core research group a name, Te Mata o Nga Tāne Māori. The function and purpose of the roopu was also consolidated at this hui.

The journey as Te Mata o Nga Tāne Māori was to:
- get to know each other;  
- get to know the kaupapa of family violence prevention;  
- identify our ethical principles;  
- test tools on ourselves;  
- jointly complete the research proposal;  
- identify our role as an advisory body for this research;  
- identify which Tāne Māori will be approached for the next stage of research;  
- set up protocol for inviting other Tāne Māori to participate in the research;  
- prepare a PowerPoint presentation to better inform possible participants and their whanau.

The Participants
Te Mata o Nga Tāne Māori were the first participants in the research process. They engaged in seven key hui during the course of the project, and numerous other kanohi ki te kanohi encounters with each other, other prospective participants, and Leland. A list of potential respondents had shrunk from twenty-five to twenty, partly due to an initial check about their eligibility with Wāhine Māori involved in community social services. Other tane expressed strong interest in participating but were unavailable to be interviewed within the required time period.
A strategic plan to meet all those who might possibly participate in the research, using a road show type presentation to introduce the project in more detail, was selected, with a contingency strategy of individual or whānau visits for those unable to attend hui. The questionnaire design was reduced from seven explorative areas to four. This, along with the research proposal were confirmed and validated by Te Mata o Ngā Tāne Māori.

It was decided that all prospective participants should go through a PowerPoint induction, whether at one of the several hui held to secure participants, or one-on-one. The PowerPoint induction was a critical part of fully informing potential participants about the research, and making them fully aware of the issues participation could raise for their whānau, particularly those who were victims of violence. In more than one instance tāne considering participation took the PowerPoint back to their wider whānau before deciding whether to participate.

It was essential that all participants had time to consider whether they wanted to be interviewed or not. As the list of Tāne Māori unable to participate increased, Te Mata o Ngā Tane brainstormed possible participants using their community networks. Phil Paitea was instrumental in spreading the kaupapa of this research amongst Tāne Māori from his haahi. He put forward ten names, of which six accepted the wero to come forward to tell their stories. The use of this network explains the emphasis on Christianity from some respondents.

It is important to note that these Tāne Māori were also confirmed as safe by wāhine and other community members. This leaves a challenge for future research projects of this nature to explore the experiences of other Tāne.

Seven Wāhine Māori also participated in the research. For six of the Wāhine Māori the selection process was not the same as for their partners. Selection was based on availability for interviews and their wish to participate, or they were approached after interviews were complete to deal with issues that needed a further Wāhine Māori perspective. The seventh Wāhine Māori was already part of the overall planning and co-ordination of all three projects, helped with minutes and gave valuable insights in reflection processes with Tāne Māori.

Most of the Tāne Māori were selected and interviewed between September 2006 and the end of January 2007. There were instances when family did not support their Tāne Māori participating because of the ongoing impact of experiences with family violence. Each prospective participant would be telling whānau stories as they described their own journeys.

Some whānau were still engaged in healing processes and felt participation in the research could be problematic. This was an important consideration where victims of violence, whether children, partners or former partners were concerned. For others it opened korero about intergenerational abuse, with potential for other whānau members to be identified as abusers or victims. One tāne met with his partner, parents and extended family before accepting the invitation to participate.

In total, twenty Tāne Māori interviews were carried out, and seven Wāhine Māori (partners and immediate whānau of these Tāne Māori in question) were interviewed. The korero and decision-making became healing processes for some participants and their whānau.

There was a lengthy process of reviewing transcripts of original interviews involving numerous visits and email exchanges. Partners, children and other whānau members of participants were involved in deciding what korero and identifying information could be included in the final document. Te Mata o Ngā Tane and Amokura staff were guided by the ethical principles developed for the project to make sure the needs and rights of participants were respected.

A final hui was held at Bream Bay to discuss how the report should be presented, possible uses for the findings, and to reflect on the experience.
Gathering the Pukorero

An initial seven-part schedule of guide questions was reduced to cover four theme areas based on feedback from Te Mata o Nga Tane. Ultimately there were five ways of gathering participant stories or pukorero: audio recording, video recording, handwritten notes, diary entries and use of charts. This served a goal of creating possible resources that could be used in healing programmes or promotional strategies for disseminating of information to a wider field.

The charts were the creation of each individual Tāne Māori participant. They became a guiding tool to open up our own narratives about what happened to us in our whanau settings in relation to violence, healing, change, learning, growth and adaptation. Using these charts became a process for all the participants, demonstrating how those who created the charts could open them up and decipher them for others. In other words, Tāne Māori held the ‘mana’ of their stories. Another illustration of centricity was the research ownership. All participants had vested interests in the research, and a requirement was that they needed to be kept informed on any issues that might impinge on the future health and wellbeing of themselves and their families.

A journal system to gather collaborative reflections on any project-related thoughts was to be kept by individual members of Te Mata o Nga Tane Māori. This did not happen for the majority of the group for a range of reasons, including lack of training, time management difficulties, limited written skills, and personal communication preferences. As research team leader I found the tool invaluable, to gather my reflections.

Maori practices were evident in the ways in which individuals, couples and groups were invited to participate in the research, informed of developments arising, kept informed of the project’s progress, and accessed because of their expertise for advice and support. For each contact point a hui a kaupapa – gathering for a purpose – was used. Tikanga was observed through the use of mihimihi and karakia in the opening and closing processes. Kai was also used to break the tapu of the kaupapa and to clear pathways in the three dimensions of reality – natural, human and esoteric. The hui became a place of friendship, collegial support and a safe environment for Tāne Māori to discuss our journeys regarding the study.

Each of the Tane and the majority of Wāhine Māori participants were given a general project information sheet, detailing the intentions, goals, purpose and function of the research. A signed permission form was required from each participant to outline that they had observed, and were fully aware of all their rights before proceeding to the information gathering stage.

Issues

The initial intention and wish of Te Mata o Nga Tane was that all Tāne Māori participants would be named, as part of their ownership of the research, a critical ethical variation from the usual safety net of ‘anonymity and confidentiality’. This proved complicated as dialogue between prospective respondents, and their whanau, raised a range of implications about being identified. Thirteen identified themselves formally using mihimihi in the end, while the other participants took up the offer to maintain anonymity by using pseudonyms. After discussions with whanau two, of the Tāne Māori who had previously agreed to be identified, gave permission for their stories to be shared with the use of pseudonyms and removal of identifying information. Particular care was taken to protect the privacy of children and young people, and the partners of participants. After considerable consultation, including seeking external ethics opinions, it was agreed to use pseudonyms for all participants in Korero. In addition to the review and feedback loops used with each participant the final document has been extensively reviewed by Wāhine Māori from Amokura.

One of Amokura’s overall research goals is to develop research capacity in Taitokerau. Te Mata o Nga Tane were identified as a group that could be trained to conduct interviews with other participants. Most Tāne Māori in the roopu indicated that they were not available for these
tasks, as these Tāne Māori were already involved in their respective fields of practice – mental and general health, social services, men’s groups, religious outreach and leadership groups, youth at risk, community development and tertiary education sectors. However, they did feel comfortable becoming an overall advisory and reference group for the research. They gained insights into research processes and made valuable contributions to the development of ethics and processes.

One group member, Heta Erueti took on the role of assistant researcher with a mandate from the group. Due to his role in tertiary education this furthered his personal professional development and forms an ongoing contribution to the learning of students he works with in turn.

Collective ownership was espoused in reference to the ethical principle and standard ‘ko te whakamana nga tangata’. This meant each respondent, their whānau, along with Amokura, shared in the ownership of intellectual property that emerged from the research project. This was stressed each time a new participant was introduced to the kaupapa of the project. The multiple layers of personal interaction and ownership meant completion of the project extended well beyond the intended timeframe.

This research experience has shown that while it is important to have a theoretical framework, it needs to be driven by, or translated into real research practice to serve observers and those observed. Examination of the Mana Tāne project reflects a collaborative experience built on Whakawhanaungatanga Kaupapa Māori research tenets, principles, values and beliefs.

At the beginning of this research journey, in discussions with Di Grennell, Michelle Erai and Te Mata o Nga Tane members, the goal was to create a unique research project that focused on a pro-active, healing and transformative thinking paradigm. It was known that there was very little research giving Tāne Māori perspectives on family violence prevention. Experience of this research project reinforces the need for Tāne Māori to be active in sharing their stories and successes in healthy whānau development and wellbeing. The four themes – Violence Free; Oranga Whānau; Safe Tāne Māori and Tāne Māori Aspirations – emerged and frame the findings of this research.
Section Three: Nou te Rourou, Naku te Rourou – Tāne Māori in Taitokerau Speak Out

Kahore a te rakau nei whakaaro; kei te tohunga te whakaaro.
The block of wood has no understanding; such insight belongs to the skilful carver.
(Riley, 1990)

Nou te Rourou, Naku te Rourou – Tāne Māori in Taitokerau Speak Out, provides a critical space where Mana Tane openly discuss their thoughts and feelings on the areas of investigation for this project – being violence-free, oranga whanau, Safe Tāne Māori and Tāne Māori aspirations. At the same time a small group of Wāhine Māori gave further insights into the emancipatory journey of their Tane. The voices of these wahine, named Nga Tamati Tioriori, will conclude Chapter 3 and their thoughts will whakamana significant parts of this ongoing discussion. It is also important to recognise all immediate whanau and extended whanau whose pukorero might be highlighted in these recorded experiences. Healing and learning are implicit research goals of this project; the value of the articulation and the opportunity to record these stories is acknowledged here.

To relate to the whakatauki above, readers will now be introduced to the innermost thoughts and feelings of those who are healers in their own right in this field of practice; these participants bring to life the realities of whanau oranga, just as a skilful carver carves patterns full of meaning and understanding. This part of the report provides ‘te ha o te ora’ or ‘the breath of life’ on family violence prevention from the point of view of Tāne Māori, their learning, experiences and wisdom.

The guiding questions used to draw pukorero directly from participants about the dynamics of whanau development and whanau violence prevention were organized around the four project themes and are listed below. Not all questions were asked of every participant.

1. Violence-free: Dispelling the illusion that family violence is normal and acceptable.
   - Examine the journey you took regarding whanau development?
   - Describe what creating a violence-free environment means to you?
   - What made you want to create a violence-free home environment?
   - How did your whanau react to this?
   - How do you explain the haka and its place in relation to the debate about violence and Maori men’s aggressiveness?
   - What were some of the challenges and barriers that faced you in making this conscious change in thinking and behaving?
   - What helps you to remain violence-free today?
   - How has your life changed and what key learnings have you identified from your journey toward becoming violence-free in your home?

   - What does oranga whanau (family wellbeing) mean to you?
   - What are the key ingredients for oranga whanau?
   - How have you responded in the past to oranga whanau?
   - How do you respond to oranga whanau now?
   - What tools do you believe are important in strengthening whanau wellbeing?
3. Safe Tāne Māori: Removing opportunities for the perpetration of whanau violence through education for the empowerment and liberation of whanau, hapu and iwi.

- What do you consider to be characteristics of ‘Safe Tāne Māori’?
- How might these be perpetuated as new traditions?
- How did it make you feel to know that your peers, wahine in the community, your own whanau, and/or your own hoa rangatira view you as being a ‘Safe Tāne Māori’?
- What is the role of a ‘Safe Tāne Māori’ in your whanau/hapu/iwi?
- What do you expect of a tane who is viewed by wahine as being a Safe Tāne Māori?
- Is it important for Tāne Māori to be involved in this research? Discuss your answer.

4. Tāne Māori Aspirations: creating, teaching, passing on transformative practices based on Maori cultural imperatives that provide alternatives to violence.

- What do you want for your whanau, hapu, iwi in the future in regards to a violence-free home, community and societal environment?
- What cultural gifts help you in your aspiration to create positive changes in your home?
- What legacy do you want to leave for your children and your whanau?
- How are you going to make sure that this eventuates?
- What do you think about sharing the learned knowledge with other Maori, other indigenous people, tauiwi?

Each theme is explored firstly, through the voices of the tane themselves, then analysed and summarised. The voices of the participating wahine conclude this section to provide a wahine contribution on these same themes.
Part Three: Nou te Rourou, Naku te Rourou – Tāne Māori in Taitokerau Speak Out

Section One: Violence-free

Te Pakanga i te Kainga

The sayings ‘home sweet home’, ‘home is where the heart is’ or ‘there is beauty all around when there’s love at home’, reflect a sense of nurturing and belonging associated with the creation of a safe haven in the confines of one’s whānau. The accounts of Tāne Māori upbringing experiences which follows reminds us that certain whānau environments are dangerous, and are unlikely places in which to foster child and whānau health and wellbeing.

The influence of parents and significant adults in moulding young Tāne Māori perceptions of appropriate behaviour at home was a common experience. Tamati illustrates this sentiment, saying significant people, often parents or other adults, set the scene for experiences with violence and put-downs that tend to linger throughout a lifetime.

This section is separated into two parts. The first, called ‘Te Pakanga i te kainga’ (the war in the home), explores Tāne Māori life stories in relation to their exposure to, or upbringing within a violent home and/or community environment. Defining memories are provided, thematic patterns are identified and significant factors associated with violence are discussed in the conclusion.

The second focus is on ‘Te Ara humarie’ (the humble pathway). It brings together Tāne Māori stories about significant changes that were critical in supporting their efforts to become advocates of violence-free homes and communities. Significant findings are interpreted in the summary and highlight facilitators of change.

The conclusion draws together the two parts, identifying the factors associated with violence and the facilitators of change that assist ongoing discussions about the relationship between ‘the war in the home’ and ‘the humble pathway’ themes.
“I’ve got a very strong recollection of my dad. He was a very violent fellah, especially in my younger days growing up and at school. It wasn’t a very happy time. Growing up into my teens he never lifted a finger. But before my teens he was very hefty [with] the old boot and the old hand. And the closed fist stuff too. It wasn’t just the slap across the ears… likewise it wasn’t just the physical abuse, but also the verbal abuse as well. That kind of leaves a bit of a mark there [on you] especially if every day of your life when you’re growing up… you’re told [that] you’re hopeless… useless [and just a] waste of good space."

Similarly, Steve speaks of his relationship with a mother who introduced him to the intoxicating power of violence in the home setting:

“One of the things I remember when growing up was a lesson I learnt from an incident with my mother. When you see the fear in other people’s eyes you think you’ve won. I remember how my mother used to give us a hiding, then one day I stood up to her and nearly beat her but the thing I remembered was I saw that fear in my mother’s eyes. I knew I was the king of the house after that… I dictated when the violence was going to happen in the house when my father wasn’t around.”

Another point Steve raised was reflected in the harsh way that a whanau member was brought up. He recalls seeing her fight other Wāhine Māori, and this type of behaviour has now been passed on to, and practised as, a normal part of living by some of her own children. He simply states, “so it goes on” demonstrating the insidious nature of such traditions. Mita recollects:

“There were whanau in his community who were known for being violent. The grandfather, the father and now the sons were powder kegs. Prone to blowing up at the drop of a hat. The moko’s were exposed to that behaviour and the prognosis didn’t look too promising for them… to break that cycle.”

Chris also noted that while being disciplined by his mother, the fear factor implicit in those actions was something that he then turned onto his younger siblings when caring for them. A deeper inspection into his life stories brings to light ways in which anger and violence covered over the pain of being a victim of sexual abuse.

All these pukorero/stories raised three key points to consider about the impact of home life on modelling violent behaviour. Point One focuses on the ill-use of adult or older sibling power over others (inclusive of partners and younger siblings) as an intimidation strategy. Point Two looks at how the resultant fear is passed on to those lower in a whanau pecking order or hierarchy. Finally, Point Three indicates the effectiveness of violence in covering up all other forms of abuse. These three points of consideration were discussed by participants as a normal part of whanau socialisation.

Tom observed the dilemma where “parents said things that did not always align with what they tended to do”. Like Tamati, both Tom and Rewi emphasised the dangers of psychological violence, and more importantly, how these patterns were passed down family generational lines to create further tension in homes of origin. Tom also identified the function of alcohol in influencing the setup and maintenance of unhealthy family environments characterised by physical violence.
“When I was fifteen, you sort of did the same things that you watched happen at home. There’s one thing that I learnt [when] my father said “You are never [a] man if you touch [or hit] a woman” and my dad never touched my mother, ever! But you see there [were] all sorts of other abuses too. There was the mental, there was ‘the eye’, the look… my mum was the disciplinary, and I can always remember the rod from my mother, whether it [was] a broom, a poker, a steel rod, anything she could grab her hands on. That’s the way she disciplined us. [She also was brought up hard] and she always used to tell me [that] when she got older… she used to fight her father with her fists. And so she was known pretty well up where her hometown is, ‘cos… there [were] twelve in their family and she was the second oldest daughter and so she was brought up pretty violent. And her family was the same as my dad’s family. We were all into alcohol. [It was at] the centre of everything. So when I left home [at] fifteen years old, all the stuff that I learnt [by] watching my mum and my dad [came with me]… I went out, [and met] a lady, we had two children and I did the same stuff to her. I never touched her physically, but I [did abuse] her mentally and [in] all those other ways.”

Rawiri took the time to explain that similarly, as a young teenager in his home turf, you either got into alcohol or drugs. One stimulated him to fight while the other mellowed him out. Growing up in the Far North, in his community there was an unwritten expectation that young Tāne Māori needed to be strong and hard. This expectation, combined with addictive stimulants and emotional frailties, was the basis of his pukorero that reminds us of the progressive nature of unmet expectations, anger, and jealousy that can lead to whānau violence:

“I tended to get into dak [marijuana] rather than alcohol because I thought alcohol wasn’t good for me. When I got on the juice, it fired me up and I got into a lot of situations [such as] fighting and that sort of stuff. So dak was sort of a bit better for me ‘cos it mellowed me. I had a quick temper, and I could lose it. You know, when I played sport sometimes, it used to work as an ally. I remember [a situation when] my dad kicked me in front of my mates at a trial game [and I got embarrassed]. He came over and I didn’t know he was watching and he booted my backside in front of all my mates [because he felt I was playing poorly]. I was about 13 years old. I was so ashamed, so I just got the ball in the second half and [scored] three tries. Some [of those tries] were [obtained] just out of sheer anger. I also found that probably I had issues around jealousy. I don’t know why? [Maybe it was because] I had bad relationships in my early days. For example, with one girl I found her mucking around on me so there was this thing of paranoia I had about trusting another person. I didn’t realise how greatly those things affected me until later [on in my life]. In the first three years [of my marriage] I don’t think I hit my wife. But when we had our second son that’s when I first hit her. Just out of sheer anger. Now I’ve got to say in my whānau I never actually saw my father hit my mother. But I hit my wife and you know this is the real weird thing about it but you could say if I was haurangi that the beer did it, but bro’ there were times I was absolutely straight sober. And I just had this paranoia going on in my head then. You know, all my wife was doing, was that she was just wanting to enjoy herself… [but that jealousy and paranoia] stuff just came in that ended up in me turning to violence and anger. I would hit her.”
Mau’s pukorero reflects a history of conflicting standards, where a mother tried to distance her immediate family from the effects of alcohol and violence, but finally succumbed to her husband’s wayward life style:

“It was about this time she started drinking. Before that she never drunk or smoked cigarettes. My father was a hoon... everyone loved him for being the life of the party. I think booze changed him. I think my mum gave in when she joined in drinking. I always have memories of my mum being an angel and my father a demon. I’ve seen my mum so humiliated having to wear make-up to cover the bruises and marks, [and wearing] Donna Awatere [type] glasses and [still having to] go to work. I used to cry for my mum. My dad never used to hold back. It was the booze… I’ve seen my mum get beaten like a man. I have one memory of my younger brothers flying across the room into the wall. I remember that I wished my mother would shut her mouth and take it. Terrible memories, if she would stop arguing the beatings would stop, but my mum would never give in.”

Jim on the other hand followed a whanau member right into the core of gang culture in South Auckland. It was an exciting life that placed whanau lower down the list of priorities to gang norms, relationships, commitments and loyalty. Violence was naturally part and parcel, an important ingredient of that culture:

“I joined the gang scene, gang warfare and back in the ’70s the warfare was big. The normal gangs, Black Power, Mongies, Headhunters, Stormies, and junior gangs such as the KC (King Cobras) were all actively clashing. We started out with the Storm Troopers then created another little gang called the ‘Black Aids’. We got sick of walking everywhere and while we had cars, we all decided to get right into motorcycles. We (my brother, and I along with our cousins and mates) became the Storm Trooper MC [motorcycle club]. We then ended up creating a club called the Tribesmen motorcycle club. We got right into the gang scene. Like getting chased by cops every night and you get [to] know every alley way in South Auckland. The cops can’t catch you all the time, but when they do catch up with you they don’t have much mercy for you. I found that out a few times. You might get away with a few things, but the odd times the Police catch you a karakia really comes in there because it gets dangerous.”

Though siblings, Matiu and Pita had very different perceptions of the impact a violent father had on their life journeys. Matiu recalls the loss of his grandmother, at the same time as he was coping with his father’s obsession with promoting male aggressive behaviour in the home through the sport of boxing:

“When I was doing my genogram, I remembered a lot of good moments. Especially when our grandmother was staying with us, she was such a major factor in our lives. My dad used to really love her. But when she died, I think our world fell apart and things started to change, such as the fighting between mum and dad. I also remember when dad brought my younger brother and I boxing gloves for Christmas... and he used to get us to fight hardout. We were only four and five... and the first one to cry got a hiding. Dad used to just sit there, like he was obsessed, watching us fight. And my brother and I fought for years, right up until I left home. We hardly talked to each other when we were younger.”
Historically, Matiu contended that unfair and unequal treatment permeated a volatile relationship with his father. After a motorcycle accident hospitalised him at 16 years old, he recounts the intense negativity between himself and his father:

“...I got badly injured and was taken to Middlemore Hospital. While I was in there my mother pleaded to the doctor that she wanted to nurse me at home. I didn’t have any major fractures, but had a lot of lacerations. So she took me home. And apparently heaps of people came to visit me that night. I didn’t know that they came. When I woke in the morning, I was all bandaged up and had crutches, and I was back in one of the rooms at home. I was actually shocked to be back there. Next moment, I could hear familiar voices. I could hear my father screaming at mum, down in the kitchen… this was after been kicked out the year before.

He was screaming and swearing at my mother, you know really intensely, and so I struggled up and got up on my crutches and I went into the hallway and I saw my dad shoving a knife at my mother and I just did my normal rescue mum thing, and yelled out “dad”. When he saw me, he just saw red and the next minute the knife came flying down the hall way ‘woof’ and I just dodged it… and it just went passed me and as soon as he saw that it missed, he barrelled down the hallway, ‘cos it was me again. As he came down, I thought. I just had one chance and I got my crutch and as he came running, “whack” just smashed it across his face, but it didn’t do nothing. He just pushed it away, pushed me into the room, took out his teeth, took off his shirt and just smashed me to a pulp and just kept smashing me. I had my fists in a ball and he just kept smashing me until my fists finally opened up, I was just a bloody mess in the wardrobe and he told me to get out, so I dragged myself down to a friends place and yeah, I didn’t see my dad for a couple of years after that. My mother always tried to keep in touch.”

Pita on the other hand, saw their dad as his hero, even though he too had had several violent altercations with his father. In general Pita’s childhood memories were coloured by images of a supportive father who enjoyed taking his children on adventures and who loved the whole notion of strengthening extended family ties. Pita also acknowledged that being exposed to a violent home environment and upbringing did come back to haunt him in an altercation with his own son many years later:

“And that’s where I went to the ‘Eastern Suburbs Rugby League Club’ and dad was right there [supporting us at tackling practice]. He would take us along to the games and one memory I have is of [playing in] a curtain raiser at Carlaw Park when New Zealand Kiwis were playing the French. Nobody seemed to notice our game, [the] curtain raiser, but dad did. I heard his voice yelling out to me from the sidelines, so that was a great event and it really meant a lot to me that dad would take the time to, you know, invest that time into us.

“He took us on lots of adventures. I remember going to Hahei, down in the Coromandel, when there was nothing there. He [also] took us to Te Hapua at least twice a year. dad was great on whanaungatanga and he was very popular with, not only his relations, but my mum’s relations. We’d often travel on a Sunday over to visit mums side of the family in Blockhouse Bay and Te Atatu North, [so] those are [some of the] memories I have of dad… [he] had a great time [with us] when we were kids and I had those good memories but then he couldn’t handle us when we were teenagers.
“But my dad was my hero to me [but] Matiu had very different, really terrible experiences [with my dad]. I don’t know what it was. It was just like that expectation of the eldest… But dad grew up in that culture where you sorted things out with your fist. I always thought I never wanted to do that to my kids… and there came the day when it happened with my eldest [son].”

Matiu and Piripi did not have very healthy relationships with significant Tāne Māori in their lives as they grew up. Matiu remembers being the recipient of violence in the home from his father. While he was taught how to work, there was very little in the way of positive dialogue between he and his father as he grew up. In one particular incident. he recalls, after a hiding from his father, loading up a shotgun and pointing it at his father with the intention of “reclaiming his sense of self”.

For Piripi, often these Tāne Māori were falsely revered for their sexual prowess and violent exploits. He recalls:

“I’m getting flashes of cruelty coming back to me. My uncle used to have a farm on the Kaipara. I remember a time when our uncle took us and my cousins to collect oysters at Karamu. Dropped us off to pick ten sacks of oysters, but because of the conditions we were only able to pick a few sacks. We came back early to the trailer. He got angry with us for coming back earlier then he had anticipated, so he told us to all get on the trailer. There was nothing to hold on to. He sped home. He was cruel to us then. It was a miracle that we didn’t fall off and hurt ourselves. My cousin was yelling at his father to slow down. We were only about 12–13 years old. We finally arrived home and my cousin hoed into his father. He got a hiding for that. We were all covered in dust – our hair was matted with dust and we were white with dust. At his tangi I didn’t say anything about my uncle. It wasn’t the time. One day I finally was able to speak to my aunties about their brother’s cruelty. No body spoke about it because they were scared.”

Tamati contends that in his area “The people… were cruel, violent and sexually abusive especially to their own… both male and female, through the whakapapa lines”. From his world view, Tamati felt that impressions of their abusive sexual, verbal, mental, emotional and violent behaviour remained etched in the historical and physical grounds of his papakainga, where the abuse occurred. These natural entities still give off for him, negative wairua. As he states:

“I can see one of my abusers up town in Whangarei and I have no problems engaging with them [but] I find it difficult going back to that place because of the abuse that we experienced as children. I think it’s got more to do with… a lot of memories for those of us brought up there. It is not my favourite place, but it will always be my papakainga, it will always be my place of birth, nothing will change that, but I wouldn’t want to go back there and live… it reminds me of what happened there… negative memories of the abuse.”

Although not focusing, as Tamati did, on environmental associations and influences created by whanau condoned violence, Daniel also indicated that there were many of his own iwi and hapu that he had had contact with in the urban metropolis of Tamaki Makaurau, South Auckland who “came from homes that have been very, very violent… [and] very sad”.

Manifestations of violent behaviour appeared to be normal practice for many of the Tāne Māori whilst growing up and attending school. The illustrations from five Tāne Māori here provide different points of view about that place of engagement where violent behaviour towards others was fostered, ultimately their own whanau. Bill described in one of his life strands, the way Maori children were ill-treated in the public school system:
“Now, when I grew up, the land that the native school was built on was given by my grandfather and father... I was brought up in that environment where we only had to cross the road to go to school. [But at school] we couldn't speak Maori in those days, it wasn't allowed. [The] Maori culture got left out [of school]. The first real violence that I picked up was when I was in Primary School. This [one] teacher had this way about him where he used to line all us Maori kids up and put a stick on our heads like a cane. And you had to read a book... under pressure. If you didn't know the words he'd crack you one. He was doing the rounds one day like this to all of us... And one of these boys next to me stumbled on his words. The teacher went crack on his head, and [the boy] dropped and fainted right there in front of the whole class. And those were my first experiences of violence from people [outside of my whanau] other than my own mum and dad giving me a kick or something.”

Daniel rarely experienced firsthand the impact of family violence in his upbringing, but as a private boarding school pupil, he was well aware of the fact that bullying was a display of the imposition of intimidation and power that accompanies violence towards others, often mirroring family dynamics:

“Yeah I’ve always been of the view that you must be able to take care of yourself, but never be in a position where you use that for [intimidation purposes]. When I was at college I had two very distinct types of role models that I saw. One used intimidation to stand over the younger guys [with the attitude of] basically do as I say or else. And the others were guys that people respected because they respected others no matter who they were. I definitely in my own mind felt more comfortable wanting to be like the second of those two. I never, ever felt comfortable about standing over anyone else and forcing them to do things I wanted them to do.”

Rewi went to a Maori boys’ private religious boarding school where he felt the full brunt of male socialisation. That journey into manhood was associated with initiation into a cycle of violence that perpetuated fear, sexual abuse, intimidation and powerlessness. Manliness was covered in ugliness and seemed to contradict the religious tenets espoused by the boarding school. Despite that history, a sense of brotherhood did emerge, often a phenomenon associated with a 'survivor mentality':

“My first exposure to violence and other forms of abuse did not occur in my home, but rather when I went to boarding school. The senior boys were brutal. What had been done to them when they were juniors got passed on to us. Because we lived in dormitories, at night time the duties of care and protection were left up to the senior pupils who reigned terror on us. Yeah, we learnt what fear was all about. I remember every night they would beat up on us. If we retaliated the hidings got worse. No adults were there to intervene. We just couldn’t wait until we became seniors. I remember one of the junior boys was also sexually abused by a senior, and that led to his suicide. We all knew who it was. Yeah we couldn’t wait to get out of being a junior and learned to hate and fight and become the next ones to hold power. When I think about it, those times were hard. We felt the cutting edge of cruelty but that also provided us with a sense of brotherhood. Strange when you think about it.”
Tuhono, like Rewi, identified that his early schooling was a place where he practised the art of confrontation. This led to his premature departure from home into a more exciting lifestyle that regularised and normalised violent activity. The roots of his perceptions of violence were nurtured in secondary social circles that emerged from a network of friends from the confines of school, that later came to immerse him in the urban street culture:

“From that time, at intermediate school I was starting to get friends and we began to hang out on the streets at night. Nowadays you’d call us street kids. I got caught up in that sort of environment. Yeah and all violence, that was part of the go then. You had to show you could handle yourself at nights to hang out with those types of groups. And that just became part of my life really. So after a year or two of that, I got into too much trouble, so you know how they had wards of the State? Well I ended up being one of those. I was placed in a boys’ homes and then in [a social welfare foster] family home, for about two to three years overall.”

One participant reflected on a catastrophe that led to the hospitalisation of both his daughters. The correlation here is how various forms of abuse within the home leave mental scars that impact negatively on the status of overall health and well-being of family victims. Several participants reinforced korero about the mental health costs of family violence for those they abused. Such mental health costs ranged from low self-esteem, depression, personal character assassinations, distrust, fear, anxiety and secretiveness at one end, to full blown psychosis and schizophrenia at the other.

The themes identified in participant stories are reflected on at the conclusion of this section.

Te Ara Humarie

This part of Section Two exemplifies what some might term a ‘changing state of grace,’ either based on a defining moment in time, or a series of accumulative moments, where a move from being violent to choosing a ‘violence-free life’ in the home setting was manifest. Each Tāne Māori interviewed had reasons for transforming abusive behaviour to non-abusive behaviour. Their words of wisdom about this ‘changing state of grace’ follow.

Tamati was forthright in highlighting that change was the result of an accumulation of significant events leading to a conscious decision to change his lifestyle. He recounts a significant experience based on inflicting pain on another human being. Fatherhood also affected his conscious decision to change, wanting to make sure that his children were shrouded with love, which he had not experienced:

“There were a lot of trials and tribulations along that pathway in my growing up. I didn’t have a very happy childhood but we made do with what we had. We put up with a lot. I think it was through fear that we had to live through one day to another. I was also shifted around a lot from farm to farm, as a child, to help my uncles and aunties out. I experienced all types of the abuse [that] went with that [shifting around behaviour]. As an adult, I shifted from home into the city of Wellington where you had to prove yourself, your worthiness. The only way to do that was to become integrated into a violent society, which I did quite well. I became a gang member.

“When I was in the gang I remember one of my turning moments was a regrettable incident with a kuia and her mokopuna. She was privy to a violent episode called ‘a home invasion experience to do with
“My wife’s brother was leader of a rival gang ‘Storm Troopers’. I was leader of the Black Power. We went through the gang culture, drugs etc., then we had a daughter. My partner began dreaming about a home with a white picket fence. I thought it was all about me. She said that she was sick of this gang lifestyle – I don’t want to do gang life. She gave me a choice to come with her and start a new life or stay [in Whangarei]. I stayed while she and my daughter left and went down to Christchurch. I went on my normal way. Got arrested. What turned me around was that all the bro’s said that they’d be there for me when I went to court but no-one came, and more importantly, I was so used to turning up in the court and singling my wife out, but this time she wasn’t sitting in her usual place. That impacted on me. So as soon as I got bail I headed down to Christchurch to be with my wife and daughter.

“What was unique was that I was now in an environment with different people. I was around Pakeha and Maori (who were tradesman – quite positive role models). No one was looking for dak (marijuana) neither were they into partying. However, I started hanging out with similar elements that I was used to in my time with the gangs and got back into my old ways. My wife’s father passed away, so we returned to Whangarei and I went back into that gang scene full time”.

It took a series of events for Piripi to become accustomed to responding in a new violence-free way in the whānau environment. It involved deconstructing an identity as a gang leader where he was ‘king of his castle’ and entitled to dominate others. Becoming violence-free also involved challenging his own social upbringing as a Tāne Māori which he describes as littered with “abuse, self-centredness and anti-social gang related behaviours”. As well the impact on his wife and children, Piripi acknowledges the impact of his role modelling on his brothers.

His change in choices was characterised by a cumulative journey that involved separation from loved ones, looking at how his example influenced his brother, and having a spiritual ‘change of heart’ experience. These aspects were borne from a number of experiences. The first experience is based on choosing his gang life over being with his partner and daughter. The second involves unpacking what happened to his younger brother Neville. The third experience involves his partner’s encouragement to convert to Christianity:

“Along with creating new traditions conducive to wellbeing, Tamati also pointed to his grandmother, Herepo, who provided respite for him. Piripi also related to having positive female influences in his life:

“My positive role models were wahine not tane. One of those influential in my life was my grandmother – [she] got [a] QSM, was a midwife, lived in Kaipara, did the old style weaving…”

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“I know how he (Piripi) feels about his children. I always say I love them. I never got that from my dad and never heard my mother say it either. I think making a change is more of a conscious decision. After being brought up in a very violent background I knew that wasn’t the life for me and my kids, so I decided to choose to be violence-free. And though it hasn’t been an easy road to follow I am standing on this kaupapa today!”

Along with creating new traditions conducive to wellbeing, Tamati also pointed to his grandmother, Herepo, who provided respite for him. Piripi also related to having positive female influences in his life:

“something happened to one of our lads (gang members) so we decided to pay a visit and it didn’t matter who got in the way. We went through I think about four or five houses to hunt this fellah down. In one of these houses this old kuia was present. I can still see the fear in her eyes when we all marched in and dealt to the young fellah that was there. She could hear the screaming as we dealt to him. That is one of the things that I have regrets about, that I’ve reflecte on and am still paying penance for it.

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“My brother was an intravenous drug user... myself and my older brother both accept that we were responsible for introducing our younger brother to the gang scene. We were his role models. We introduced him to gang-tanga. I was hard into drugs. My older bro’ was into booze... he came into our world of sex, drugs, violence and rock ’n’ roll]... He followed us into that scene and used a dirty needle that led to hepatitis and finally he contracted cancer. It was a humbling thing for me and my older brother. I spoke to my younger brother often about God and he became a Christian before he died. I remember one situation that has stayed with me. My brother couldn’t even bathe himself. But what was sad was watching him physically begin to waste away because of the cancer. My older brother and I had to bathe him. While we were washing his back, [I was holding my brother in the shower], he was soiling himself. He was crying because he was so embarrassed about not being able to do things for himself. We just comforted him. It really touched me. What I learnt from that experience is that your greatness will be measured by the way you care for others. That is my nature now. Do good things to and for people”.

Piripi’s spiritual experience initiated a pathway of significant lifestyle changes.

“My partner had an encounter with an American evangelist from the USA, who had previously been in the gangs as well. That influenced my wife and she became a Christian. I remember [being] on my hands and knees crying out to God to change my heart and I’m a changed man today. My spirit (wairua) is no longer in poverty.”

Steve’s story didn’t identify one specific event that turned things for him, rather the change occurred over a long period of time. Recently he has seen the value of gathering Tane together in support groups to participate in their own healing. Pete finally discovered how past experiences of family violence continued to influence people’s perceptions of others when his brother-in-law mentioned one night at a party:

“You know why my mum hated you. Why our family hated yours? We know what you Tāne Māori are like. We knew what your uncle was like and we know that he still gives his wife the bash, and he is in his sixties. We knew what your dad was like. When he joined the church he cut it out. And we knew what you could be like. You know why she hated you – because every few generations there is a powerful attraction between our Wāhine Māori and your Tāne Māori... and your Tāne Māori have just about kicked the living daylights out of our Wāhine Māori. [One of] your tupuna [one] of our princesses hooked up with him... we don’t know why. When she went to leave him he booted her in the teke to crush her pelvis so she could never bear children to another man and he left her in a pool of blood.”

Pete was shocked.

“I was reeling from all this korero because all the korero from my whanau [regarding this tupuna, was that he was an] amazing man [with] tohunga abilities. I didn’t want to hear all this but it forced me to reflect on this stuff. It helped me understand our connections.”

Concerning his own challenges about violence in the home, Tarawa, like Pete, credited the astute friendship of a brother-in-law with providing him with a range of thought-provoking stimuli that supported change. In doing so, the brother-in-law was protecting his sister from violence through verbal intervention:
“He started laying little seeds… that made me think. One thing he talked to me about was violence. He said, ‘You know bro’, violence is not just giving the missus a black eye. It is all the other shit. The holes in the wall… they are all stamps of authority. It stamps a warning that this will happen to you if you don’t do as I say. Bro’ that shit stinks. I have a lot of hope for you two. You have no idea what you can become. Your union can break a powerful cycle within our whanau’ I used to think back on my own life. I would think I am becoming the person that I hated… so he would say stuff like that and I would think about it. He was a regular influence on me. When I think back, he was looking after his sister and he was helping me. I figured that he thought if he could help me be a better person his sister would not have to live the life of violence.”

An important part of change for Karl and Rawiri involved direct communication from their wives. Rawiri’s wife gave him an ultimatum concerning the abuse:

“…my wife [said] to me ‘If you touch me again, you mongrel, I am going to take our kids and I’m outta here and you will not see us again.’ And one of the things with my wife… I knew that she meant it. And that was the ‘click’ for me, so I’m going to lose everything and when the anger’s gone you know, the sorrow period wanes, but you know, it wasn’t like I could do this again. I was fairly sure that she would leave. And so I knew I had to change. And I knew the issue was that I was losing everything, because I [couldn’t deal] with the anger [and the rage] that was happening inside me… Yeah the fact that I was talking to her about this stuff… she challenged me and said ‘You can’t just blame your dad because in the end you are still doing it’… and I said ‘I can see where the triggers are’… and she said, ‘Well you’ve got to move on’… [and my next question to myself was] well how do I move on?”

Part of Rawiri’s journey involved identifying that in order to move on, family violence needed to be de-mystified. This was done through talking with mates, developing a support network, being honest and challenging illogical thinking that placed the blame on his victims, in this case his own family:

“… I remember when my second eldest son took off… [I was] trying to change and do things right. And then my bro’ came along and I said… I’d like to talk to my son because he was living at [his] place, which I thought was good… I just [wanted] to have a word… to talk to him, and set things right and apologise. He said ‘Oh yeah OK’. So my son came over and we sat down and we started talking for a little while and then I exploded again, just got into this argument, and my son said ‘Aah you’re full of bull’… he took off back to my mates place. I saw my mate the following Monday, and I said to him ‘You should come with him and be a mediator.’ My mate… looked at me and said ‘Na… deal with your shit first and then we’ll talk’… that was the korero, and when he did it he was looking at me and his lip was quivering… that was a brave thing to do, because my heckles went up [but] I looked at my mate, and I said “Oh Kia Ora bro’… I knew what it would take for you to say that”. And I said to him “You know bro’, I know of very few people who love me that much that they’d tell me honestly to my face what I didn’t want to hear’… him and I are very close.”
Rawiri’s experience shows clearly the value of surrounding yourself with good people, those who respect you enough to be bluntly honest with you, to make sure that any effort to change and transform is reinforced, not just to prop up your ego. Several of the tane had to forego relying on their network of friends who reinforced the myths and continued to practise behaviours of addiction and violence as normal.

Daniel was more circumspect in his belief that people had to first commit in their minds to making the change, then back that up with a plan and associated actions that advanced proper respect for loved ones. Violence-free for him meant “a place of safety, a place of happiness, a place where people can express their own individuality without being threatened, a place where people want to be.”

Matiu mentioned he had used physical violence on several occasions. His main form of violence however, was mental abuse. His lifestyle choices generated an unhealthy home environment, that everyone else within his circle of friends functioned in similar ways made his behaviour appear normal. Time out from whanau meant that Matiu had an opportunity to consider what he really wanted:

“I’d punch holes in the wall, throw things around, because I thought that was OK… It was the lifestyle I was living, bouncing at the clubs, going out drinking with the boys, all that rubbish, trying to justify my actions and [my wife and I would] get into arguments. And that’s when the mental abuse would occur. I sent my partner and the kids back to New Zealand for a holiday and… although I enjoyed the lifestyle I was leading, that small space away from them gave me time to ponder about what was really important in my life… That’s when things began to change for me… I woke up in the morning and couldn’t hear any footsteps in the house, and I didn’t like that and I remembered thinking ‘Oh hell where’s my family, what am I doing here?’… So I rang my wife and she came back immediately… I knew I had to make a change. Leaving Aussie was a start… within a week we were back in New Zealand as a family.”

Jim also describes a lifestyle of being totally immersed in an Auckland motorcycle gang sub-culture that was built on disrespecting others, violence, and pacts between club members that superceded whanau responsibilities. However, like Tamati, the realisation that Jim was a father of a growing son moved him to consider a possible change in lifestyle, but he found this was easier said than done:

“…I just kept being involved in all the gang scene stuff… ten years, I was right in the thick of it, you know shocking, shocking, I can say that now because I can understand where it all leads to, and that’s what I call it today, totally a waste of time. You know ten years of my life down the tubes, every plan and career that I had in place, out the back door… [I] just kept living that [life style]… you know [I then started thinking I’ve got to] make changes cause my son’s getting bigger, he’s getting older he’s observing everything around us, he can see what’s going on, whether it was violence… drugs and alcohol, whether it was financial issues… and I knew that wasn’t the way of bringing up young people. So I just wanted to make a change… but I didn’t know how to… And one of the things [that stopped me from making changes] was an event that I was part of when we started up the Tribesman motorcycle club… we all made a ‘pact’… a vow or whatever you want to call it, that nobody was to pull out until a certain age. There were about 12 of us that started the club, we all got in a room all huddled up together, ‘Motorcycle club for ever’ Shocker, when I think about it, shocker. But at the time it’s like, we’re macho, staunch as, this was our whanau [the club], nothing else mattered.”
Tuhono was from a similar background to Jim. His efforts to change were not based on one significant event, place, or person/s, but like Piripi, a cumulation of aspects strengthened his resolve to make real changes in supporting the establishment and maintenance of a violence-free home environment. Jim went on to espouse four key messages about the tide of change for him: first, trauma often facilitates change; second, like Rawiri, the influence of his partner; third, interpretations of cultural wisdom can both heal and curse a person; and fourth (much like Tamati’s experience), the natural world also has history that needs to be taken into consideration. Jim looked to his papakainga as a place of healing. For him and his whānau the history of this whenua and their whānau experience of violence was intertwined. Despite his wife’s objections they moved home to support the changes he wanted to make. The challenges they faced were profound and life changing. He recounts:

“…Sure enough a change happened, and it was a cultural and spiritual reawakening [for me]… my dad shot my brother, the one I idolised; shot [and killed] him point blank… he gave himself up and the police took him into custody, so that was him, pretty much in jail… I went to visit him one day and I just said to my dad ‘Why?’; I couldn’t say anything else I was just so angry and he just looked at me and said he had to… my dad was from the old school he was like a tohunga… he had a role as he put it to me when I visited him, but I didn’t understand it then… concerning the land… [in our whakapapa] violence was from way back as I knew it…

“And I remember one of the things my dad said to me [was that] ‘If ever you go back to our place [our papakainga] you karakia or you go away, you don’t stay there’. What he meant is either you go to church or you don’t live here on this whenua because of the violence that occurred there… then I started thinking, the reason for being right with Atua [was to protect us from that history of bloodshed on the land], and then I remembered in my young days all the good times… when we were a family going to church, and that changed my whole life… from then on I made up in my mind, this is what I’m going to do… because I wanted [that type of upbringing] for our son. The true effects of that day, have made me think of my own relationship with my son, and [I] vowed never, ever to get in a situation that would cause so much pain, heartache, anger as what happened on that fateful day [that my father shot my brother].”

Pita took the unusual step of going to counselling with his wife because he started to encounter similar struggles his father had grappled with, such as dealing with teenagers, being in a relationship (which in Pita’s case is cross-cultural), frustrations generated by miscommunication which often led to arguments and threats of parents leaving the whanau circle. Major changes in dealing with whanau came when he physically choked one of his teenage sons. This event continues to remind Pita of the dangers of abusing loved ones. Pita also described his conversion to Christianity as a critical part of his change process. More importantly, it gave him insight into understanding how lengthy the process of forgiveness really is, and the value of committing to “no more abusive behaviour”:

“At this time the [entire] sting of that [abuse] hasn’t been taken away from my son… It took a lot of years for me and I know that that will be the same for him too. Like once [a] father grabs onto their boys and physically uses violence on their children, it’s a scarring that can last for years, and I think we all get to the point as parents, we just think, ‘I can never change that’… it’s in there, you know, it’s in the past cause like, you have these regrets, all of us have these regrets [about] something I never wanted to do and it just came out. But I know my boy
loves me and I know he [even] today said
to me ‘dad have a good interview today,
I forgive you’. These hands [of mine] were
meant to bless our kids, to help our kids,
not to hurt them… so its something I’m
not proud of and I look forward to the
time when the sting will be taken away
from him. The Lord says he can turn the
hearts of the sons back to their father.
He’s the only one I know who can take
away that regret and deal with it.”

Chris’s change of heart was prompted by several
factors, including a desire to learn more about
anger due to anger management problems, his
job as a social worker and a desire to discontinue
physically abusive behaviour towards his partner
and their children.

“I remember that as a teenager I had
a real mean streak capped off with a
volatile temper. I had normal growing up
experiences as a kid and sibling rivalry
commonly occurred in our family of
seven living brothers and two sisters,
but when I got violent it had more to do
with [having] been sexually abused, first
when I was 15 years old by a whanaunga
and then as a 16-year-old by my uncle’s
relation who had cared for four of my first
cousins, who were all male and were also
abused. That relation of my uncle’s just
happened to be a paedophile. Of those
four cousins, two have since committed
suicide, one doesn’t know if he’s Arthur
or Martha and the eldest responded like
I did – taking it out on others, hurting
them physically, not sexually. I couldn’t
talk about those two events with anyone,
not even my brothers… so the way I dealt
with it was by using violence, smashing
people over, being sullen and angry
and going off at the drop of a pin. That
plagued me in sport as a rugby league
player, friend, partner and father.

“One of my difficulties was that my way
of coping was to respond immediately…
by hitting out. When I got married, that
continued. My partner bore the brunt of
that fierce behaviour. My turning point
came in 1986 when I got into a rage for
something that happened. I can’t even
remember what the igniting issue was,
but I remember assaulting her, even
dragged her out of the house by her
hair and was about to deal to her with
a taiaha. It’s as if everything was in slow
motion, I couldn’t believe I was doing
this to my loved one. By some miracle
I stopped. It was because my inner-self
kicked in, as a realisation hit me. I had
reduced this proud wonderful partner of
mine into a whimpering mess. She feared
me. I knew then I needed help, we needed
help, so I went to the Hawkes Bay Men
Against Violence Group and began my
journey to being violence-free.

“There were several relapses… as a
father I was very sharp at disciplining my
children, but this has waned, with more
of a focus on trying to talk through the
issues in our weekly family council.”

Accepting personal responsibility was a major
step forward for Haare, that needed balance with
real transformative action toward un-normalising
what had become normal behaviour. Both Haare
and Pita moved the healing outside the sanctity
of the home and included the expertise and
support of others.

Karl’s defining moment came when his children
said to him enough is enough. For years the
whanau had put up with his mood swings
and violent outbursts, but that came to a halt
when his daughter finally told him that was not
acceptable behaviour anymore. Being the apple
of his eye, she was the only person who could
have said that to him. Time out was required.
Karl removed himself from the whanau kainga
for a period, which prompted a personal journey
into re-evaluating the importance of whanau,
connecting with appropriate support and
opening himself to learning.
Tom saw the 1980s as a time when change occurred for him in relation to whanau health and wellbeing. This meant having to recount a whanau life bound up in parent-to-child violence, drugs, heavy alcohol consumption and stifling fear of loved ones. What follows is his account which acknowledges that change can be quite swift when the wairua dimension is accessed:

“So we lived in the local Waipu pub and we did all the party things. You had no goals, all you did was work, you get your money, you pay back all your bills, your beer bills, your drug bills, your food bills, whatever else and then you go and book up again to get your next fix. And life was [that] week after week. This occurred for thirteen years. I was on the dole and that’s what we did, we grew marijuana trees and we survived, I lived off the sea… and that’s how I taught my kids and I still thought it was a good way to teach them. But really my kids had fear… the whole lot of them had fear, of me.

“And my biggest ultimate change was [in] 1989, I just had enough of this. I knew I was going to end up in jail because all my ex-dealer friends were in there and there was a lot of D’s [detectives] around here catching all the drug dealers and all sorts of things. My mother, she was a praying Christian, and she prayed her butt off for us. And [that year] was the time that I walked into the local Hahi and I’ve been there seventeen years now, and from then, life changed, because I knew something occurred that pre-empted the change. I’d given my heart to this Jesus.

“And so you start looking at yourself, and my wife eight months later, she came into the Hahi and then we started recognising all these faults and we started seeing… the spiritual hereditary things that came down in our whanau and we saw the mental abuse, the physical abuse, we never had sexual abuse although I know it happened in my family. And so we started learning about ourselves and we started talking to each other, and listening to each other. And that was the biggest change, it was called communicating. We started talking and being real about things that were happening in our lives, and things that happened, when we were partying years ago.”

The stand-out factor in this korero from Tom is the power of the ability to truly communicate with a loved one. It gives whanau a real tool to assist in identifying things previously unknown, those things that perpetuate violence and pain in the home. Matiu also had numerous defining experiences that were to shake the very foundations of his whanau. With the depth and intensity of violence from his father, it was hard to fathom that there would ever be any form of reconciliation between these parties. The history of his departure from the family home reinforces this point:

“It was coming up to my fifteenth birthday, and that’s one thing that in our family we used to celebrate was birthdays. I came home after school and waited around until my parents came home. It was quite late and my mother prepared the candles on the cake. And they told me to go out ‘cause the tradition is that you come in and they sing Happy Birthday… so I stood there in the hallway and they called, ‘Matiu come in’, so I cruised into the kitchen and the candles were glowing and all the lights were out, and all my brothers and sisters were singing ‘Happy Birthday to you’. So as I approached with a big smile on my face to blow out my candles, I was just going to blow them out, pursed my lips and blow, when my father grabbed me by the back of my clothes, dragged me out to the door and he said ‘You’re out’. He had planned to kick me out on my birthday. I thought that this was a joke.
And I thought this can’t be happening. The next moment I could hear mum and dad screaming and he came outside. I was still standing there and he rushed at me to belt me and told me to get across the other side of the fence.

“So you know that’s when I got kicked out. It crushed me. I can remember collapsing on the other side of the fence into a foetal position… my world just fell apart… “

Even Matiu’s wedding day was tainted by his father’s drunken behaviour – that evening his mother was beaten to a pulp by his father, who then spent time in Auckland Central Police cells for domestic violence. Not long after this, he reports:

“I was 19, Aroha was 17 when we were married… I hated what my father used to do… but not long after I got married to Aroha, the very thing my father was doing I began to do also. I couldn’t understand that, I always thought that I hated violence between loved ones, but then I started getting into alcohol and drugs and basically I put my wife through seven years of battering. It was just terrible. And she’s got her own story on that, but I used to be intensely jealous. I even used to beat my wife up in front of her family. I’ve got no excuses for all the violent, sexual, emotional abuse… I was just so angry. Another thing that used to make me angry was that I felt useless as a Maori, because I couldn’t speak the language. Everyone thought I should because of where I came from. I was also a heavy drinker and didn’t always give the money to Aroha for the up-keep of the home and our children. I just thought about myself and drank it away. I also got my wife into drugs and all that.”

Three themes manifest here: Matiu became the very person he detested – he became intensely jealous, an abuser, a batterer like his father; the lifestyle, which he also introduced his partner to, escalated the abuse involving drug, alcohol and sexual abuse. Finally, issues that surfaced for Matiu about his own cultural identity as a Maori male generated internal self-hatred.

A most touching moment came when his father modelled a ‘change of heart’ by approaching Matiu in his twilight years seeking forgiveness:

“In 1981 something significant happened where my father came north from Wellington and he took me up to the urupa at Te Hapua where his father, grandfather and great-grandfather are buried. He had asked me in the morning ‘Can I speak to you son’. So we went up and he poured out his heart to me about being a rotten dad to me. He wished it had been different and that he had come here today, to ask for my forgiveness. It was amazing, for those sorts of things, never ever came from my dad’s heart. There were tears. I embraced him. When he left, I thought, great, a new start, however, a week or so later, I got a phone call that dad had died.”

Matiu highlights a core influence which has been a common theme in effecting change amongst the majority of these Tāne Māori. They all affirmed the influence of a higher power in transforming and maintaining healthy violence-free behaviours. Bill, who appeared to be on a roller coaster ride spiralling downwards, lured by vanity and popularity, fast cars, alcohol and drugs, while his whanau was disintegrating around him, provided such an example:

“Being able to give up your position as top dog, or most popular league player, or being the best at everything you do, having the best car and stereo, partying hard at all costs with your mates at all hours of the day or night like there was no tomorrow, indulging in alcohol and drugs etc. I realised that these things
were bringing a dark side and not so good element into my life and the life of my whānau. The effect was becoming more apparent within my personal relationships, with my wife and children and with my wider family. Beginnings of isolation, paranoia and carelessness [emerged].

“I tried my best to reverse the downward trend, but found it really hard… I kind of wanted to make a change you know, [but she left] and she became a born-again Christian… I ended up at a full gospel fellowship… there was a young guy there… with all these tatt's on him, [he'd] been in jail. And I thought shit is this fellah going to speak to me. What can he tell me?… the young bugger! And then he stood up and he started talking about his life and a bit about God and a bit about the Devil and how bad he was. But honestly speaking, he was telling the truth and I was the one ‘hiding stuff’ that my family didn’t know about it. Not many people did. It was all under the table stuff. On the surface I was doing good things… it didn't affect my work and all that, but there was an undercurrent, that was pulling me down and I realised that, so when this young person stood and was talking about that, I thought, true mate true… being introduced to a spiritual realm changed my life and the way that I was thinking at that time.”

Realising that change is something that cannot be achieved in isolation, like many of the other Tāne Māori, Bill perceived divine intervention. In his words, as with Tom and Matiu, the transformation was immediate:

“That was the most significant change in my life and from that day on I never smoked another drop of dope, I never went back into that life, and I was glad to do that, I was happy to do that as it wasn't getting me anywhere.”

**Violence-free – Overall Conclusion**

Reflection on participants’ voices in Te Pakanga i te Kainga suggested ten key themes that relate to family violence continuance within whanau Māori:

1. A definite and significant role that parents, caregivers, other adults (including teachers, extended family members, coaches) had in role modelling, legitimating, validating and normalising whanau violence. There were illustrations of male and female violence towards children, but overwhelmingly extreme violence and controlling behaviour was most associated with male adults.

2. Victims of family violence did contemplate reaction directed at either the prime abuser or those in weaker social status positions (perhaps related to a concept of utu).

3. Children were survivors who internalised behavioural messages and saw the advantages of violent behaviour as a means to an end.

4. Whanau violence was multi-faceted and included all forms of abuse including those of an emotional and sexual nature, as well as physical.

5. It was recognised that personality altering stimulants, such as drugs and alcohol, contributed greatly to creating unhealthy places where violence became an increasing possibility.

6. Violence left a ‘long tail’, which, unless addressed and cleared appropriately, was resistant to change.

7. The natural world, or environment where the abuse occurred, gave off negative vibrations that needed to be addressed.

8. Colonisation and racist policies in the public arena legitimise violence on indigenous people and often found its way into whanau traditions as a form of counter-transference abuse.
9. Negative human emotions, such as lack of trust, jealousy, hate and poor self-esteem were often the baseline from which violence was chosen as a response. There were suggestions that infidelity (or fear of betrayal) caused further distrust in relationships and advanced the possibility of increased whanau violence between partners or their offspring.

10. Cult status appears to be given to Tāne Māori who epitomised a certain practice of masculinity, a combination of barely restrained physical aggression and sexual prowess (Infidelity).

The korero in Te Ara humarei captures that space and time where change in thinking, feeling, touching and living occurred. Critical thought and informed activity must be joined before transformative behaviour can take root. The critical thought process is frequently stimulated by defining moments or experiences. It is, as indicated by its name, ‘Te Ara Humarei’, a real pathway built on humility. Seven key themes emerging from the interviews about the transformative journey experienced by Tāne and Wāhine Māori participants are discussed below.

1. Seeing the pain

This theme centres on motivation: any change needs to be driven by self-love, and love for significant people, inclusive of partner and children. The motivating trigger could involve loss, either through bereavement of a loved one, fear of losing loved ones, loved ones exiting the family home, and finally separation or disengagement from loved ones. Without emotive fuel, attempts to change were highly unlikely to occur. Emotive fuel is not enough to effect positive change — support is also required from self and others.

2. Touching the heart and clearing the mind

It was recognised that such a process was a personal journey, of ‘initiating a changing state of grace’, which can only be done by and within Tāne Māori themselves. This means engaging with and challenging illogical thinking patterns which maintained violence in the home.

3. Wairuatanga – a ‘God & I’ moment

Complete change for Tāne Māori correlated with personal engagement with the wairua dimension of health and wellbeing. This engagement centred on some Tāne Māori re-evaluating their spirituality and elevating that to a more prominent position in their lives. For some Tāne Māori ‘Christianity’ provided the initial thrust for their active pursuit of healthier whanau relationships, which earlier they would have not have believed possible. For others the spiritual journey was stimulated by engagement with whakapapa, whenua and identity.

Remarkably, on more than one occasion, changes caused by a connection with wairuatanga were instant and completely opposite to the violence and abusive behaviour they had previously propagated in their homes.

4. One does count

The major premise here is that the influence of others, or role modelling, does facilitate change in violent behaviour. All Tāne Māori respondents cited the influence of significant others in assisting them to take the necessary steps to stop violence and maintain a violence-free home. Their accounts illustrate a reinforcement of the fact that family members, close friends or respected associates who know of abuse occurring, can definitely generate a climate for change by directly speaking about it. Inherent value came from people engaging with people, heart to heart, wairua to wairua, kanohi ki te kanohi. Criteria for a good role model centred on violence-free behaviour toward others and their specific relationship with Tāne Māori abusers.

These role models came in all shapes, sizes, walks of life, ages, with or without abusive histories, tattooed or non-tattooed, Māori or non-Māori, ex-prison inmates or ministers of religion, genealogically related or unrelated, work colleagues or sports friend or foe. People outside an abusive home can activate significant changes inside it, by exemplifying violence-free living, and by using their
connection to speak up at opportune moments with abusers, in those quiet down times when they might be receptive to critical life-changing korero.

5. Establishing new boundaries

Change is supported by working through it with others, having a close network of friends and family to fall back on for advice and support, attending men’s groups, or transformative training workshops/seminars to ‘skill and knowledge up’ on a range of self-improvement methods for more effective communication with whanau. The power of group synergy de-cloaks family violence by making it a ‘known phenomenon’ – healing need not, and arguably cannot, occur in isolation but through active sharing.

More importantly, myths that promote the continuance of family violence, though pervasive, were challenged at individual and family levels. Several tane described cutting ties with former friends and associates as a necessary part of change. This does beg the question of what societal ideologies might need addressing, given the perspective many Tāne Māori have that their abusive actions were normal and (prior to change), justifiable.

6. Healing in service

Tāne Māori efforts to change from abusive to non-abusive behaviour included an element of service to others. In their journey towards ridding their lives of violence, there were acts of selflessness that Tāne Māori displayed, especially to those whom they had abused earlier. This could possibly be a form of healing where words are proven by behaviour (actions speak louder than words) that truly reinforced they’d had a ‘defining moment’, and that change had indeed occurred. It was noteworthy that every tane interviewed for this research project now currently works in a capacity that involves ‘giving back’ to their whanau and wider communities.

7. Healing and remembrance in Te Ao Turoa

This factor gave new meaning to the notion of being ‘part of the land’. It was recognised that the natural terrain mapped out identification markers that the human dimension depended on. Strengthening connections to Te Ao Turoa accelerated transforming from violent to non-violent behaviour. It was also recognised that past violence had a tendency of lingering in, around and throughout the natural environment. In Maori thinking, everything has a mauri in both the natural and human worlds. When abuse occurs in one dimension, it ultimately impacts on the other; if a child is abused in certain parts of a home, those places need restoration because mauri is jaded, as a hurt person would give out a feeling of hurt and be in need of restoration or healing.
Section Two: Oranga Whanau

Introduction

The purpose of this section, Oranga Whanau, is to gain a clearer picture of their journey towards strengthening their own whanau and fortifying themselves with appropriate skills, knowledge, wisdom, new experiences, new history, new traditions and a sense of purpose responsive to achieving and maintaining whanau Māori health and wellbeing. Oranga Whanau critically evaluates thoughts and impressions of all Tāne Māori research respondents.

The Conclusion summarises principles for sustaining Oranga Whanau that emerged from the analysis of their responses.

Oranga Whanau

Rawiri starts this journey by describing how health and wellbeing begins with the individual:

“I suppose I’ve always said that wellbeing starts with you, ‘yourself’. It’s about how you feel, and how you see the world, and how you feel about yourself, and if you’re in a good space and you’ve got things to help you deal with issues that come up in your life… that sets the pattern for [a] family. And I think it is about individuals too, within that family [that are given] good opportunities for expression.”

Rewi was very clear about the importance of ensuring whanau create safe time and space to converse with one another about their ‘own thoughts and feelings’, and in so doing, accentuate the growth of oranga whanau:

“One new thing we’ve tried to do in our home is to have kai together as a whanau so that we can catch up. That wasn’t easy to do… ‘cos we were all used to doing our own thing. What I like about it is that I’ve been filled in about what’s up with our kids.”

Piripi saw the healing process and responsibility for change laid squarely at the feet of Tāne Māori. However, he was also aware that this healing could not occur in isolation from wider whanau – echoing the sentiment that we all need help from others at some time in our lives:

“What I want for my whanau is a violence-free atmosphere. Before I can work with my hapu and my iwi, I have to start with my own family. It is no good me going around showing other people how to build their whanau when my own house is falling down. So for me it is most important to start with my own family in terms of making it a violence-free atmosphere. Basically it has got to start with me… for any change to happen.
I had to make the changes so that it will filter down through my family… My change has been progressive. It did not happen overnight. My change is continual. It’s a daily thing… something that you have to work on regularly… something that you need support to do. Surround yourself with like minded spirits… People that have taken part in this research. Those are the sorts of people that give me the strength to carry on with the mahi that I do.”

Mita spoke of the value of extending that network to include other Tāne Māori striving for safer family environments:

“Being with friends who don’t abuse their loved ones, knowing that there have been other tane changing their ways has also become a valuable source of strength and support. These tuakana role model really looking after their own. It gives me strength and hope to carry on.”

Rawiri also reflected on three key elements as essential to advance oranga whanau. The first is awareness of one’s own talents. He had good skills and talent in kapa haka, it gave him a sense of self-worth, and reinforced that he was not useless or dumb. The second and third key elements were whakapapa and role-modelling:

“…we are part of a bigger [social group], we are not individualised, and when I look at whakapapa… we are part of a bigger picture… and a lot of that framework about family, community, society is for me a very strong part of who I am. I’m not here just for me… Having… a network of other people so that when you need [help] or input they’re there… [another thing is] dialogue within your family, people within your network or your whanau that actually can give positive input. [In essence] the importance about knowing who you are… [your] whakapapa about being Māori, it comes back to being happy about where you fit, understanding roles, you know, those are also key.”

The learning Rawiri presents here is that whanau wellbeing includes the ‘collective strength of others,’ and can markedly reinforce one’s positive efforts to learn, transform, change, develop, grow and pass on to the next generation valuable knowledge and skills. Identifying those who hold knowledge in whanau and local community and using them respectfully brings everyone benefits. Tuhono expanded on this, adding that although he had previously been an abuser, he had to come to terms with the belief that after a journey of healing and restitution, he now has contributions for those searching for healthier ways to deal with family matters, stress and conflict. His contributions are evident in the church responsibilities he now shoulders.

Rawiri also emphasises the importance of having healthy whanau relationships built on meaningful communication. He speaks of teaching people by example how to deal with conflict and how to practise these strategies in their own whanau.

“Whether it’s with our friends, whether it’s with our immediate family, whether it’s going to be with our nuclear whanau, it’s all around relationships… [being] able to dialogue [with one another],… [using positive communication] tools when confrontation come[s]… its about practising [healthy ways of engaging with each other]… it can happen if you discipline yourself to practise those processes… it’s about you being able to discipline yourself, and [that creates and] sets into motion opportunities for everybody.”

Matiu adds to this with his description of the importance of developing positive communication in a family. The time he spent learning to really communicate meant that he could read signs and respond with mana enhancing strategies. His home environment
began to foster the oranga whanau principle of Te Ahurutanga – it became a safe place, a refuge:

“I suppose [oranga whanau] is about caring, sharing respect, support… when people can sit down and talk openly without the violence. When things aren’t right we have to sit down and talk it out instead of harbouring it and letting it fester… [It’s about] honesty, love, people feeling safe. That’s it bro’, my home is nice to come home to, before I’d go somewhere else, but because of the changes that have occurred [I enjoy coming home].

“Being able to articulate my thoughts or feelings, instead of letting the thoughts of anger determine things, showing my feelings. I’ve learnt new skills, communication. I’ve learnt how to communicate positively even when one is angry. I suppose before I acted it out, where as now I’m able to say, let me have time to think. Before I’d just act on it, now I read my body, I know how I’m feeling, now I think ‘What am I going to do?’, because I know the outcome is going to be more positive. Having love in the home.”

Chris also commented on the importance of being tika within one’s self. The result was a sense of peace that needed fostering for oranga whanau. As Tāne Māori set an example of sharing healthy feelings of love with their immediate whanau members, this could begin to happen.

He recalls a mind-shifting experience as a child when his grandparents gathered the whanau together for special events. The mind-shifting aspect was based on a realisation that unity and development of communication skills was cultivated in that setting. His parents promoted a sense of unity by holding weekly regular family time, where development of communication skills occurred as each member of the whanau were given an opportunity to teach each other, play with each other and learn new skills. They also took the opportunity to share their perceptions about living in a manner conducive to whanau unity by spending quality time with each other as a family, learning to put words to feelings and taking part in fun activities. All these aspects are about making sure that oranga whanau is fostered.

In support of building a whanau sense of togetherness Karl contends that working together is important:

“Having time together as a whanau was new for us… we had to make time to be with each [but it] meant that we got to experience unity first hand. We [actually] had fun… it gave me an opportunity to teach my boys how to work. Yeah things like completing tasks, tending gardens, concreting, keeping the backyard tidy… make a hangi… shelling kutai, how to catch eels, to snorkel for koura, how to do haka and also to cook a feed. [It gave me] a chance to ‘you know’ talk about the birds and the bees with them… to be proud of being Maori… how to care for themselves and to respect loved ones, especially wahine.”

Tom pointed out that it was important families communicated with each other about changes going on in their home so that progress and development was recognised. He explains, for Tāne Māori, communication is a powerful unifier which can’t be achieved in isolation from one another:

“Yeah the big one for wellbeing is communication. It really is… like we’ve got a whanau reunion this Christmas, so it’ll be the first time all my brothers, sisters, their wives, husbands, their children [will be] coming back from Australia. So this is going to be another awesome [experience]… and first time [I’ve] ever met [some of] them… some of my iramutu are eighteen, seventeen, fifteen, I’ve never seen them, I’ve never seen the sister-in-law, ‘cos they all went to Aussie when I was fourteen, so they’ve
been gone over there for thirty years… [and] I believe that being here in our faces with each other we get moments to share. If they’re not here we can’t share. You know… that’s what I believe [oranga whānau is all about] communication."

Pita, like Chris, advocates the view that ‘just having fun with our kids’ was a big step in the right direction toward healthier whanau wellbeing. He spoke about ‘respecting the individuality of family members’ and showing them appreciation when it was merited. Pita recalls how favouritism generated sibling conflict and violence as a child and a youth, with his elder brother Matiu. The tendency of parents or significant adults to create favourites from within their offspring is not an oranga whanau promoting trait. Illustrations of oranga whanau living include setting a good example, loving our children, displaying a sense of stability through boundary setting and practising spiritualities. Pita says:

“…treating them as individuals [you see] I wanted to be a lawyer [but I had to remember not to place that expectation on my children] about trying to make a lawyer out of any of my kids… Not trying to get them to do what I didn’t do… also no favouritism… just to love them all the same, and create safe boundaries for them. [Letting them know] here’s the line, [as] I believe that kids feel safe with that, having safe boundaries, this is what you can do and this is what you can’t do. I had my nephew stay here recently and for him he hadn’t had any of that but he felt safe with [in the] boundaries that my kids had grown up with. Yeah we think that teenagers won’t like [having boundaries], they actually seem to push the boundaries right to the limit… but they actually feel safe [and] feel loved. “

Equal treatment of all children was backed by Pita’s thoughts on maintaining clear boundaries and acting as heroes or role models for our own children. Steve truly believed that investing in a relationship and developing communication lines was the key to sustaining long-term family wellbeing. However, his upbringing was not built on that principle of healthy family relationships:

“I had to be taught how to say ‘I love you’. I know my siblings have had to learn to say those words also.”

Steve is now trying to build a different environment for his children from that which he and his siblings were raised in. It has meant promoting oranga whanau by conversing in a pro-active, supportive fashion because he is not the main caregiver of all his children. In the past he did not become involved in their lives; now, even with his two teenaged daughters, who are not living with him, he tries to let them know that he is there for them if they need support. For Steve, it is important to instill in his children a way of acting and thinking that was not previously part of his parenting approach.

“…I am the solo parent of a ten-year-old daughter and I keep saying to her one day you’ll be going to University. It’s important for me that my kids do well to get out of the negatives. I have a daughter in New South Wales living with her partner that I haven’t met yet. I have asked her if he hits her and she said that he doesn’t. I tell my children, one hit, that’s all, don’t receive the next one. I just hope they listen to that advice.”

Bill appears to have gone through a difficult past but emerged at the other end with much to offer about understanding oranga whanau. He advocates holistic healthy living that is inclusive of a spiritual practice. He gives a summary of all other important elements to achieve family wellbeing:

“Wellbeing today, for me, is to know God first and his son Jesus Christ and the reasons we are here on this earth. [Next, is] to know who you are and that you are valued as a person… that you have excellent relationships with your family and with your friends, that you are respected wherever you go and whatever
you do because you have earned [that] respect. [Other] ingredients to… the healthiest life that you can possibly find [involves] eating healthy, heaps of exercise, lots of sleep, owe no man anything if that’s possible. To be able to live life to the fullest, in a wholesome and healthy way [should be our goal]. To have a keen spiritual awareness is ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you,’ be for-giving, be kind, be loving, be generous as much as possible, these things have a way of repaying you in a way you would never expect.”

It is reinforced here, that crises are a critical time of reflection and great learning. Bill recounts the experiences of dealing with sexual abuse of his children by extended whanau. The trauma impacted on the lives of young Wāhine Māori who were once very active, athletic and well-balanced, who are now recipients of mental health services. Whanau responsiveness was immediate and real.

Bill did not dwell on bitter memories, but instead he and his family adjusted and organised their lives for the needs of their children. Like Matiu and Piripi, Bill built a home on their papakainga, to provide a safe place, cited as a reservoir from which to replenish body and soul. Matiu identified the tools necessary to support whanau/family wellbeing and touches on a principle that illustrates a way for people to strengthen their family units:

“I try to go the extra mile with people to [be] empathetic. My heart gets touched a lot in many places. I feel like I’m the wounded healer. Relationships, that’s what I’ve learnt about relationships. We’re all together… still we’ve had to face challenges. ”

Matiu believes that family violence can definitely be prevented. He also discussed the importance of people in families taking time to ‘talk heart to heart’ with each other, to listen to the whisperings of the spirit and to lead by behavioural example.

Daniel builds on Bill’s comments about holistic wellbeing, and also refers to the importance of strengthening relationships by being role models to our children, or as Pita commented earlier, ‘…be their heroes’. Daniel further clarifies three key considerations in relationship building. First, place others before oneself. Second, access to resources, events and opportunities are related to increased achievement. Third, realising that understanding whatever happens now will create an impact on the lives of future generations:

“[Provide] role models [as] parents, [by displaying] the ability to be able to have strong relationships between parents and child… make sure that the children are in a position of being able to have access to all things that are going to help them achieve in their lives… [remember that the] first part of the practice is being not focused on yourself. And understanding that a large part of oranga is how you treat other people… the focus therefore is on someone else… as the first priority. The second thing is the concept of what I’m doing here is not just shaping me… I’m shaping me and another generation. And hopefully because of the influences of that generation the ability to shape the next generation that’s still not born. I think a lot about that now with my sons, being married, coming to a point where they’re expecting to have families themselves very soon, and asking myself how will they do, how will they do in this whole thing of oranga?”

Jim felt that respect and open natural displays of affection would go a long way towards addressing oranga whanau. The words ‘I love you’ appear to be very difficult at times to say, but in his korero it is central to any healing space. Being able to share that with each other is transformative by nature as peoples’ mind sets are affected by expressions of love.
“I think respecting family for who they are, respecting your wahine, letting them know that, and showing that. I cannot remember my dad or mum hug, kiss, hold hands, nothing. And I thought hey [that must be] normal. So in my upbringing I thought [that’s how one behaves in a relationship]. That’s what I did… but now I’m actually happy to [show outward displays of love]… I can now verbally say to my wife… every day almost… that I love her, and we both try and do that. We say to our young fellah and our daughter-in-law that we love them. We say to our moko everyday that we love them. So for me oranga whanau is all about understanding whanau.”

Tuhono shares a key learning about oranga whanau, that it is based on a premise that if one's culture contains pono or truth, then family violence can be effectively addressed by using cultural roots (knowledge, wisdom and experience). Building on the whakaaro from Tuhono, Karl identified more tools that involve transformative mana enhancing actions.

Karl states:

“I think education [is also another place to strengthen oranga whanau]. It’s amazing what’s out there [to help people change]. The other thing is probably my upbringing in karakia… the… church lifestyle, you know, change a patch on the back for a tie on the front. You know, change from motorcycle… me on my own… I’m macho, to a car with my family in it. [The third tool is] Work! [It’s] important [to the wellbeing of Maori]… [It was all about developing] a good work ethic. Without this work ethic one became idle, and then had too much time to waste.”

Cultural understanding frames a positive, proactive and healthy way to maintain oranga whanau. Tamati was mindful of the fact that while he was raised in a community known for violence, depths of traditional learning meant that he was equipped with tools that became magnified when he became a father. These values of whanau, manaakitanga, whakaiti, and being independent are reinforced as he engages with his children, now young adults themselves. As a fluent speaker of te reo and secure in the tikanga he learned from his grandparents, he is able to provide cultural support to extended whanau, especially for tangihanga.

For some tane cultural identity was problematic due to their own levels of comfort in Te Ao Māori. Others were impacted on by the abusive behaviour of senior male figures who were seen as exponents of tikanga or who occupied leadership roles. Negative views of identity as Māori were compounded by internalised and institutional racism. Cultural identity plays a major part in anchoring and/or grounding a person. When cultural identity is in disarray, minimised or marginalised, respectful behaviour is less likely. It is refreshing to see that Pete’s pukoro shows, as did Tuhono’s, how accepting and building on cultural identity can encourage wellbeing.

Pete says:

“I made the conscious decision to learn more about tikanga and Te Reo when our first baby was stillborn. My in-laws did [her tangi the Māori way] and I never, ever want to be in a situation where I don’t understand what was going [on] in the korero. It also sparked my conscious decision to learn ‘Ko wai au?’. One thing I can say about my wife’s whanau [is that] they were very strong in their taha Māori, te reo [and] tikanga. They understood their whakapapa links. My whanau had been disconnected from that… Pete turned to his mother-in-law to teach him. This was part of a process of reconciliation where he sought her forgiveness for his previous behaviour and attitude.

“She [began] teaching me… te reo. We would go to a tangi and I would have to learn the waiata and my mihi. I would have to go over and over the waiata and mihi. What I developed with her was the love of waiata… my reo started to improve, my cousins started to rely on me.”
Oranga whanau principles are present in the slogan ‘Mean Maori Mean’, as it encapsulates the validity of being Maori, of being proud of our Maori heritage, of seeking appropriate cultural skills for positive engagement purposes and of validating our perspective of the world. By learning more about Te Reo me ona tikanga Pete felt ‘at ease’ with his cultural self and this flowed into his family life.

**Conclusion – Sustaining Oranga Whanau**

Overall, dialogue from research participants emphasised the need for progressive development of whanau, built on two essential strategies, the first is based on a wero or challenge to re-examine the logic that reinforces abusive behaviour. Simply, the strategy replaces illogical abusive thinking with non-abusive Maori values bases. As Tāne Māori explored the messages within their own life stories, and those of their immediate and wider whanau networks regarding oranga whanau, a non-abusive Maori values base began to be established.

The second strategy for establishment and maintenance of oranga whanau was willingness to replace abusive peers, practices and environments with supportive friends. The characteristics of support people changed as significant change occurred, which prompted forsaking acquaintances and events still tied to violent abusive behaviours. New traditions and new skills sets were needed to reinforce the value base highlighted in the essential strategy of ‘mind shifting’.

What follows is a list of values, or tangata paradigms’ with an example for each which provides practical ideas for Tāne Māori in the healing journey to revitalise relationships and connections with whanau. This list touches on values that Tāne Māori have mentioned in the research dialogue above on oranga whanau, and is supported by the literature as discussed in Section 2 [p21]. The philosophical composition includes the following values and beliefs:

- **Aroha** – viewed in its purest form as a sense of love for others, in particular for Tāne Māori as they change their violent behaviour on their home turf/papakainga.

- **Wairuatanga** – to have ideological frameworks to assist Tāne Māori to replace illogical thinking for change, cognisant with Maori ways of viewing the world.

- **Te Ahurutanga** – placing the safety of our loved ones and our places of engagement as a prime consideration in healing strategies.

- **Te Hohonutanga o te Whanaungatanga** – valuing and forming trusting relationships that should be the basis of interactions between Tane and Wahine.

- **Manaakitanga** – to support Tāne Māori to acknowledge the power, prestige, self-respect and humility of self and others.

- **Whakatohatohatanga** – Tāne Māori account for the power of sharing experiences with others, a learning journey for tuakana and teina.

- **Pukorerotanga** – Tāne Māori engage in honest self and whanau wellbeing appraisals to support their change in non-violent thinking and behaviour.

- **Tino Rangatiratanga** – Tāne Māori display real patience and acceptance through owning the right to enjoy and foster healthy whanau environments.

- **Whakawhitihitih Korero** – Tāne Māori take time to strengthen communication lines and feedback loops.

- **Te Puawaytanga** – Tāne Māori at the forefront for the advancement and support of growth for the betterment of whanau and self.
Safe Tāne Māori
Whitiwhiti Koreroreo

Matiu gave very clear expectations of what he perceived to be characteristics of Safe Tāne Māori. These Tāne Māori had to be non-violent in all aspects of living: with their partners, children, extended family, friends, workmates, and neighbours. These Tane also had to be good role models. He describes what this might entail:

“It’s about uplifting people’s mana. I coach a lot of touch [rugby] and I am very mindful that when I am working with children that I don’t trample on their mana, or put them down, or make them feel insecure or below me. I always have this thing that the way I talk to them should be uplifting. That to me is a safe Tane… Everyone you meet [recognises that] you are positive towards them, you uplift them in everything you do, so it is not just about the physical stuff. It’s about being a role model… it’s about walking the talk.”

Matiu was drawn into the research, partly through whakapapa links to the researcher, and also through discussion with Wahine Toa of tangata whenua Takawaenga o Aotearoa (Maori Caucus of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers) who fully supported his inclusion in the project. Affirmation from his partner indicated that his commitment to whanau is displayed in the way he uses his new set of communication skills to deal with conflict, anger and confrontation, in the home (a blended family), with wider whanau, at work, and in the community at large.

Mau adds another aspect of being a Safe Tāne Māori, by explaining that they did not have to be perfect human beings, but they did need to have done solid yards – educating themselves and working consciously to be non-abusive to other family and community members. In addition, he felt that Safe Tāne Māori might well be at ease with their cultural and personal identities.
Pete demonstrated Safe Tāne Māori behaviour when he appealed for ample time during the huilhui processes in order to discuss issues and implications with his parents, partner and family about participation in this research and the issues that would potentially come to light. Only after obtaining that consent did he agree to participate. Rewi felt positive about his whanau mandate to participate in the research. His had been an arduous journey to change and this was recognised by his loved ones who fully supported his desire to share the learning in this project.

Tom’s point of view was that it takes years to arrive at a place of ‘knowing that you have changed for the better. Confirmation for him about being a Safe Tāne Māori, has come in the way that he relates to those in his whanau, and also through positions of trust he now holds in the community, such as working with young people to further their education. Mita was under no illusions that, whilst he was viewed by the wider community in a respectful manner because of his service, in fact, the reason for participating in the research was based on the trust that his whanau placed in him, as his commitment to change had been backed up by safe practices.

Throughout the research Chris was very mindful of the need to be up-front about his past and current activities. Identification as a Safe Tāne Māori still bore anxiety, because, as he put it, only ‘you and yours’ really know the status of affairs regarding what is happening in your own family circle. Chris sees Safe Tāne Māori as human beings with ‘warts and all’ (limitations and strengths). Like Tom, on the element of ‘real change’, it is interesting to note that Chris’ own brothers and sister still recall the old Chris’ who would fly off the handle at the drop of a hat and ‘find that its taken years to relinquish the associated fear’ – even when the change is noted. Tane suggested difference was referenced in two ways, first comments from colleagues who provide part of a critical picture; second, from whanau members’ verification of behaviour. Chris mentions: “When my eternal partner says you are a ‘Safe Tāne Māori’ and my 14-year-old son says that he’s not fearful of me and he knows that I love him, then I know I’m okay because these people know me and live with me, day in day out.”

Rawiri felt that one of the most prominent characteristics of a Safe Tāne Māori had to do with displaying a ‘real ngakau’, that is, reflecting an honest attitude, sincere desire to be a valued part of a family and community and a work record of ‘walking the talk’. Tamati’s connection with the ‘real ngakau’ metaphor was what he also describes as ‘walking the talk’. To be a Safe Tāne Māori involves change for the betterment of whanau. This whakaaro is hardly breaking news, but it is refreshing, given the sparse research available on Safe Tāne Māori. Tamati recounts: “Well it’s about making a change, making a difference. There has always been research done on the perpetrators (the offenders). There hasn’t been much on the lives of those tane that have actually changed. There hasn’t been anything about them, not that I know of. It’s positive having a look at a group of Tāne Māori who made change for the betterment of their whanau.”

Rawiri is realistic in critically analysing expectations placed on Safe Tāne Māori. Like Haare, he highlights that Safe Tāne Māori also got ‘heckled’, faced problems, and blew fuses, but one of their defining abilities was to be able to use reciprocal supportive networks effectively. He identified his immediate whanau as his most important source of feedback. In his view: “… I think ‘safe tane’ is about a person that knows their limitations… knows that they always have to be on guard [because] it isn’t a pill that you take and you’re better… it’s about continually talking, continually working on it, ‘til the day you die.”

“I suppose I wanted to participate [in this research] because there was dialogue that there were Tāne Māori going through the same thing and I wanted to participate purely on [that] basis. Not [because of] what I could say to people, but probably what I could learn off others. That was more my interest and the reality for a lot of people in the māhi now, is we know… a key of working
Rawiri acknowledges that participation in this research as an opportunity to be with like-minded Tāne Māori and potentially contribute to the change process of others.

When Pita informed his whanau about being asked to share in the research experience, the following comment from his son emphasised for him that the experience of abuse has a ‘long tail’ for the abused whanau members:

“When I told my whanau [about participating in the research] my son thumped me [and said] ‘Interview me and I’ll tell them [all about it] – tongue-in-cheek]. [However, to me] the sting’s still there, so that’s a warning about even going down that line, that road. It might only be a little thing that happened within an hour but unless the sting is taken out, it’s still there years later. And there has to come a place [and time] where as a father you have done all you can in terms of repairing that [situation] but then it’s about [when he’s ready for healing]… Yeah, but for me personally like for my son, the opportunity provided itself. I apologised, and I had to come to a point where I had done all I that I needed to do, and now the rest was for him to give.”

There are times when former abusers receive affirming feedback from loved ones they have abused. Pita received a note (following) from his son. This shows two significant points of learning. First, how being a Safe Tāne Māori involves steady role modelling of an inclusive, healthy way of living. Second, that affirmation of changing behaviour may be received from formerly abused whanau members.

“Dad… many times when we are young we don’t realise the worth of things that are in the lives of other, but as we grow and mature we begin to value the qualities that were there all along. Dear dad happy birthday… thank you for paving the way for me and taking the time and including me in everything you did when I was a child, I would not be doing what I am doing today without you first paving the way for me to walk. I love you dad, happy birthday, love your Son, I love and admire you and I’m proud to have you for my dad.”

Bill saw Safe Tāne Māori as having no fear about being scrutinised, or taking action when issues of family violence amongst their clientele, or circle of friends surfaced. As an example, Steve role models Safe Tāne Māori behaviour working with abusive men. These Tāne Māori also appear to be coming out of a state of denial and accepting accountability for the pain they have inflicted on whanau.

In relation to taking action Haare recalls an event that happened with Daniel:

“I was out with Daniel and our walking roopu, early in the morning when we were just about to finish our exercise, when we rounded a corner and a chilling scream pierced the air. A young couple were in a vehicle having a domestic but before we could intervene, the male driver erratically took off. Our female roopu members prompted Daniel and I to run after the fleeing vehicle. Screams could be heard again. The young woman had jumped out of the vehicle when they approached a roundabout. We ran up the street in time to be confronted by a rather large young man and his partner who was in a very distressed state.
Our actions of intervention at that time came on top of knowing that we couldn’t stand idly by. Putting ourselves (Daniel and I) between the distressed young woman, who had obviously been subjected to violence, [and] her partner who wanted compliance, on reflection was personally quite dangerous, but seemed minor in relation to supporting the stopping of violence between this young couple.”

Karl emphasised that Tāne Māori need to facilitate whanau education on whanau violence prevention. He saw this as an important characteristic to identify those considered to be Safe Tāne Māori. When the New Zealand movie ‘Once were Warriors’ came out in the 1990s, he decided to call the whanau together (parents, brothers, sisters and their partners) to attend the premiere. The impact was evident immediately after, as they gathered for a kai and korero. Issues around family violence were discussed in a heartfelt manner, and reinforced the value of protecting our whanau by engaging in open, transparent dialogue about things that would, in the long run, benefit our wellbeing.

When Matiu was approached about being part of this research experience he had no problems with stepping up and telling his story. His comment at The Pulse hui (9 September 2006) was clear and distinct; he maintained that “we have to tell this story even if it hurts to hear it”. At that hui, and in his interview, Matiu contextualised his statement:

“This kaupapa is much like a cobweb that comes back all the time – it’s time to get rid of the spider and only then will the cobweb making stop.

“Not that I think I’m above anyone else. I just think that in my journey there might be a part that might be helpful for others even if it [touches only] one person.”

Daniel reminded us that expectations placed on those deemed Safe Tāne Māori whilst high, are things that everybody should aspire to – it should be no surprise that others recognise that these are desirable traits as well. For him the most important place of learning and fostering such expectations has been in the confines of his own home. The beneficiaries of such behaviour include himself, his partner and their children. Daniel role models these expectations and is comfortable and satisfied with the security and trust these expectations have created in the home environment:

“…[A ‘Safe Tāne Māori’ would] have to be someone who I totally trust, not someone who I would just have a brief knowledge of. And they’d have to be someone who is mature enough. I’m not sure how to describe that word more clearly, but mature is meaning that they’re not going away to do something stupid. They’d not take my children into an environment that would be unsafe. Inside myself… [hearing that others view me as a ‘Safe Tāne Māori’] doesn’t surprise me. I’m happy because that’s who I believe I really am. Well ultimately my relationship with my wife is a relationship that is one of total trust and total respect for each other. In spite of knowing that we still have our own weaknesses and our own times of frustration where things are said that we regret! But we work through things when that does happen. So [in] terms of my relationship with my wife, I can totally feel comfortable with the fact that our relationship is built on [a] solid [foundation] grounded [on] trust.”

Haare echoes a common theme made by many other respondents, that being safe as a Tāne Māori should happen first and foremost within one’s own family circle; an additional aspect to values and beliefs associated with in-whanau safety acknowledgement and promotion:
“I think you need to know what real love is. You’ve got to be genuine, or really concerned about the wellbeing of your family! And you’ve got to show it by your actions, and how you speak it. Because you can talk about it all the time but if you’re not doing it, it doesn’t create a good environment. So I think that’s a characteristic [of Safe Tāne Māori] – do what you say. Be true to your values and principles.”

Perhaps the most important message that every single Tāne Māori who participated in this research gave concerning being a Safe Tāne Māori was articulated by Piripi:

“People recognise the mahi I do in the community. I was a hard arse fellah, now they all ask for me. It’s a good feeling that people respect my mahi. I’m always aware of that and I keep myself humble. I’m looking forward to greater things.”

Conclusion

Safe Tāne Māori is summarised in the words of one of the Wāhine Māori partners who highlights, “It’s still work in progress,” as Tāne Māori continue to learn more about dealing with the tension between contradictory attitudinal factors.

From the data provided in this research, a ‘Safe Tāne Māori’ profile is under construction and thus far comprises of two main factors with an accompanying listed skills set. The first main factor to consider is entitled ‘Demographic factors’. These explore the contextual environmental space that could well enhance measurability of safety propensity/likelihood of Tāne Māori. Inclusive within this contextual environmental space are such determining factors as age cohort, disposable income, mandating, employment; educational attainment, current relationship status, etc.

The second layer of this construction comes in two parts: First, are the listed identified attitudinal factors. Identification of existing attitudinal changes and associated thoughts and feelings that are used in regard to the addressment of illogical thinking that maintains status quo, is the purpose of this part of the profiling construction. Of significance is that these identified attitudes reinforce emancipatorial and transformative practices, which directly challenges the normality and acceptability of family violence. The second component is provided under the label of behavioural evidential supports: commonalities regarding the manifestation of appropriate and safe behaviour, and possibly new traditions facilitated by Tāne Māori deemed safe, are explored here. An overall emphasis of these behavioural factors should be reflected in strengthening whānau dynamics by the removal of activities that perpetuate whānau violence.

The third and final part to this composition of a ‘Safe Tāne Māori’ profile, looks at the necessary skill range acquired by those Tāne Māori viewed as safe and to identify any commonalities in that desired skills set which could be utilized to enhance the emergence of up and coming ‘Safe Tāne Māori’ practices.

The main difference is in the fact that the Tāne Māori participants have shown commitment to a peaceable way of life that places high value on promoting oranga whanau.
This section, Tāne Māori Aspirations, maps out the positive direction participants sought for themselves and their whanau. Exploring these aspirations challenges the view that Tāne Māori are unhealable, unsalvagable or uncaring, by opening a window into their hearts regarding their moemoea and the legacies they want to leave.

Tāne Māori Aspirations
Whitiwhiti Korerorerero

Rewi began this korero with the aspiration and hope that his children and loved ones would use the illustrations from his own life to prompt changes or improvements in managing a non-violent home:

“I just hope that my children learn from the legacy I have left, that no good comes from bashing other human beings. I was a bastard, but not any more. That change, and how it came about, is something that I hope they will refer to when they become partners and parents living in their own spaces.”

Rawiri articulates his desire to ensure that his children feel good about themselves and have the necessary tools to create safe home environments. Rawiri states:

“In the middle of [the whanau chart I drew] I wanted to be a good father. A good provider, which I saw from my dad… to take care of the family the best way I could. And that’s what I still want to do. I look at my first mokopuna and I’m like oh I want my hands on that mokopuna ‘cos I made some mistakes from my kids and I can help my kids now. There are things that I know now and I won’t sit back… (I want to provide good) input into my mokos’ lives. And I think that’s the way you can make change. You start out with your own. I suppose the legacy I want to leave for my children [is] that they are confident. That they feel good about who they are. And that they have a set of tools [to help them so that they] don’t need to use violence in any form, in any way, in any shape. And when I say that, I mean they don’t have to use intimidation, because those tools are the things we’ve used when we were out of control, and those tools leave scars. The legacy I want to leave my children is to be violence-free in their lives, in their homes.”
Karl had similar thoughts to both Rewi and Rawiri about leaving a legacy for his whanau built on ‘positivity’. He hoped that through his example, they would plan to pass on a non-violent home as a normal part of life in the future.

“I hope that my children take a lot of positive things out of seeing how I’ve changed, and that in the future they’ll use some of that stuff in their own lives with their own partners and their own children. I’m so grateful that I still have contact with them given our past history. My legacy to them is that I want them to know that change is possible, that non-violent living is possible, yeah, that we have to plan for our futures so it’s just normal living without being violent to loved ones.”

In unpacking what it might mean to have a non-violent home environment, Matiu’s aspirations for his sons in particular was that they would take the time to build whanau relationships based on real communication with each other instead of fear:

“I’m also, wanting to tell my boys about putting their thoughts into words. I want my kids to be happy in their relationships. I want my sons and their partners and my mokos to be in a safe and happy environment. Also that my mokos will love their dad, not fear him. Likewise, that their partners will not fear them.”

Jim also contends that the main aspiration he has for whanau is about building a legacy in the home environment based on strengthening the whanau unit. His moemoea makes this point very clear:

“What I want to see come about is to be a close family sustained by good values and beliefs… that we’re confident in each other, that we respect each other and that we take the time to support and nurture each other. I’m not saying that we have to be a perfect family, but that we can still work on things that need to be improved on. But that’s what I’d like to have, that is my aspiration, to have a close-knit family. And if we think about the marae concept and how a hapu or a whanau come together, then that’s what I’d like for my whanau.”

Continuing the theme of building a healthy whanau environment, Tom contends that leaving a legacy built on the example provided by Jesus Christ is essential for his whanau wellbeing – especially in contrast to the drinking culture that he was brought up in, with its associated abuses:

“Well personally, because of my faith I want our children to believe that I was a good loving dad. [I want them to know that I really love them]. The most important thing is really ‘love’. That, you know, they knew me as a loving father, grandfather and great-grandad. So that’s my legacy, it has to be the love. It has to be the love of my haahi, the love of my Jesus. That’s what I want to leave them. My hope is that I will see all my tamariki in heaven. My aspirations for my whanau, is that they actually all become Karaitiana (Christian). In saying that I want all my whanau, especially my whanau up north, and my whanau back home in Waikato, …I want that culture of the bottle (alcohol drinking culture) to be gone… my aspirations for my children and for my whanau is that they care for one another, they look out for one another, they’re there to help one another.”

Tuhono, when questioned about the legacy he wanted to leave for whanau, also emphasised the value, importance and inter-connectedness of whanau and God. He related the following experience:

“A few years back we had the burial of a capsule up in Monument Hill, and a wide range of people in the community were identified and invited to put together valued items or messages to be buried in this capsule. It would be opened one hundred years in the future. I put in
there the legacy that I want to leave for my children, for my mokos, and that is a message of ‘families are forever’. Families are everything for me... but one other thing I said that God is first and family is next, but it all encompasses everything anyway, because Atua is first. And we hear it on the marae – ‘Nana te timatanga me te mutunga o nga mea katoa’; He’s the beginning and the end of everything and we’re a part of that as a family, so if my family can do that then that is my legacy to them.”

Matiu also saw how central his ‘legacy of faith’ was to support change to non-violence with whanau. Yet, his greatest desire was to receive affirmation from his mokopuna that he was indeed a Safe Tāne Māori role model. A close second aspiration is his desire to reinforce the message of zero tolerance to violence in his papakainga.

“Well, there’s my legacy of faith. But I also want my mokopuna to know that their papa was a safe papa. I have concerns about the messages around the sport of boxing and fighting, probably because of my own background. Apparently, my dad used to get his nephews to fight each other in the ti tree, after school, just like he did with me and my brother. So I’d like to say simply, no violence for our families, no matter what, and there will be far less regrets. If there is a problem, I encourage you to seek out help for the sake of your whanau.”

Pita reflects similar sentiments with his aspirations and desired legacy for building a home environment free of violence for future generations. He also has a whanau-centred legacy strengthened by faith, positive change and enduring love:

“I want my kids to [build] safe violence-free homes for our mokopuna. Another aspiration for them is that they know we’re there for them. The legacy I am wanting is for my sons to be heroes to their kids, and I want my daughters to be like their mum. The kids know their mum loves them. The legacy that we want to leave our kids is a legacy of love... that they create love inside their family environments. Another is that they also get an education because it opens up opportunities. If my partner was here, she’d say our Christian faith is really something that will last the kids forever. It’s something that’s really helped us know? ... I think that the legacy that I want, is to see our kids happy and looking after their families, loving their wives, loving their husbands and loving the kids.”

Love for others, and fostering manifestations of love in day-to-day living is a common theme that resonates throughout Tāne Māori korero. Daniel’s aspirations for his children reinforces korero about the power of passing love on through the generations by being living examples for posterity. He also signals a hope that their children reach full potential:

“I want my sons to be able to love their wife and their children, the way that I saw my parents love each other, the way that, hopefully, they’ve seen my wife and I love each other. And that they have all the opportunity to achieve the full potential they have within themselves in all areas.”

Karl is vehement that the legacy he wants to leave for future generations is not glorifying a past that involved gang membership. The legacy he wants to leave is built on loving, eternal family units:

“I honestly avoid sharing all the negative stuff I was involved in as a young person. I get young people; nephews, their friends, cousins, my friends from before. They come, they mention things to me. They say ‘Oh hey, were you in the gangs and all that stuff?’ And I honestly say to them ‘Never mind the gangs mate, they’ll get you nowhere.’ That’s it. You know, don’t
tell me there’s a good gang, because there isn’t. My nephews, close family, in-laws, brothers or sisters all ask how it was when I was in the gangs! I nearly fall into a trap by telling them all about the stupid things we got up to. But I think again and instead I tell them the same thing, ‘Never mind that mate, what we’re doing today, right now, is a far better thing.’ Never mind worrying about all of those gang things. That’s history. For me I need to put a real good picture out there for my whanau, for my mokos about what it’s really like now. The gang culture was part of our lives but its time to talk up being in a family that is caring and displays such things as eternal relationships built on love.”

Chris’ aspirations and legacy he hopes to leave for his children and future generations are characterised by recognising violent behaviour as displays of inadequacies in human engagement, rather than anything to be revered. Chris wants to see a ‘passing on’ of attributes that reinforce abilities to facilitate real change in behaviour:

“I have many aspirations for my whanau. That my partner and children feel safe and loved in our home. That our children never ever forget who they are and who they represent, that they feel comfortable with being Maori and also that they feel comfortable about living their faith. That they see violence as a form of unrighteous dominion, based on lack of communication skills rather than something to glorify. The legacy that I hope to leave for my partner, children, grandchildren and loved ones is that when they think of me, they’ll remember that they have the power to positively influence others, to change if need be, to never give up, to understand the value of being loyal and trustworthy and to know the importance of really being loved and respected.”

Pete’s aspirations centred strongly on the importance of connection to his cultural roots. He saw abusive behaviour might be quelled by a legacy passed down through iwi whakapapa links. Pete explains:

“The legacy I have, and hope to pass down to my children, is that the relationship that my wife and I have is not just through our tamariki. But it goes back several generations in whakapapa… to my understanding our whakapapa here is not linear, it is not a single line of descent. It is a line of descent based on merit and achievement. We have waka up here and maunga and they are all ours. We have the ability to draw on the strengths of all our maunga and waka.”

Piripi identifies that his aspiration of creating a non-violent setting for his whanau was prompted by the challenge that one should tidy up their own backyard before supporting and strengthening others. He was very clear that Tāne Māori needed to promote this aspiration and endeavour.

“What I want for my whanau is a violence-free atmosphere. Before I can work with my hapu and my iwi, I have to start with my own family. It is no good that I go around showing other people how to build their whanau when my own house is falling down.”

Tamati’s critical analysis of his aspirations and legacy for whanau are cognisant with his proactive cultural stance and practices regarding supporting Tāne Māori efforts to uplift their whanau and be responsible caregivers. Even though Tamati was not the main caregiver of his older children when they were younger, the importance of making a principled stand against whanau violence and being a responsible parent continues to be part of his legacy for this whanau. Tamati says:

“I want to leave a legacy of being violence-free. Ki te mohio te ha nei te tika te pono te aroha. Not in a
Tāne Māori in Taitokerau Speak Out: Section Four: Tāne Māori Aspirations

Steve’s aspirations are all about the emancipation of Tāne and thus their families, using education and peer support strategies to achieve this end. Steve outlines what he has found working with other men:

“Unfortunately, Tāne Māori in general have reservations about attending men’s programmes. A lot of Tāne Māori think that they may be viewed as weak by doing so. I think every man needs to attend these men’s programmes. They can all get something out of it and that is all about having a better life. From the violence, I’ve got scars, I’ve got teeth missing. There’s nothing positive at all about violence. When we were young we felt ten feet tall and bullet proof, or we thought we were. It is not until maturity comes around that we find out that these were idiot games.

“I think I am of some use to the Tāne Māori that come here because I have done a lot of what they are now doing. When you get a man in his sixties … learning that there is more to life than what he has been doing for the past sixty years or so, it is satisfying to see the changes such Tāne Māori make. However, it is sad to see the impact on them regarding the realisation that they have wasted so many years by being violent in different relationships. There is no long-term value in what they have done. Everything is short-term. Whether it is for an hour, a month a week, one must remember that there are some sad outcomes to such behaviour. There are Wāhine Māori and children dying all the time. It’s got to stop before it becomes the norm. What I see is that those actions of abuse to loved ones occurred because Tāne Māori lacked knowledge, information and proper tools to deal with conflict in their homes. They lacked education and support. There is a better way than killing somebody to get your point across and we as Tāne Māori need to learn this if we haven’t already.”

Steve’s aspirations are all about the emancipation of Tāne and thus their families, using education and peer support strategies to achieve this end. Steve outlines what he has found working with other men:

“Unfortunately, Tāne Māori in general have reservations about attending men’s programmes. A lot of Tāne Māori think that they may be viewed as weak by doing so. I think every man needs to attend these men’s programmes. They can all get something out of it and that is all about having a better life. From the violence, I’ve got scars, I’ve got teeth missing. There’s nothing positive at all about violence. When we were young we felt ten feet tall and bullet proof, or we thought we were. It is not until maturity comes around that we find out that these were idiot games.

“I think I am of some use to the Tāne Māori that come here because I have done a lot of what they are now doing. When you get a man in his sixties … learning that there is more to life than what he has been doing for the past sixty years or so, it is satisfying to see the changes such Tāne Māori make. However, it is sad to see the impact on them regarding the realisation that they have wasted so many years by being violent in different relationships. There is no long-term value in what they have done. Everything is short-term. Whether it is for an hour, a month a week, one must remember that there are some sad outcomes to such behaviour. There are Wāhine Māori and children dying all the time. It’s got to stop before it becomes the norm. What I see is that those actions of abuse to loved ones occurred because Tāne Māori lacked knowledge, information and proper tools to deal with conflict in their homes. They lacked education and support. There is a better way than killing somebody to get your point across and we as Tāne Māori need to learn this if we haven’t already.”

Mau hopes his legacy will be that whanau remember him as a principled man. He recalls unfavourable memories of Tāne Māori, considered to be leaders of his extended whanau, that were regular abusers of their wahine and tamariki. That legacy, he felt, needed to be ousted and replaced by meaningful, principled efforts to whakakotahi the branches of his whanau. That was the legacy he wanted to leave for his loved ones. Mau explains:

“I want to be remembered as a kind, loving and loyal husband, father, and uncle to my children and their cousins. This is what I want for my legacy. My aspirations are to change the thinking in our whanau, where my father and uncles have been violent towards each other, towards their partners, towards us, their children. I won’t have this continue and my way of stopping this is by being an example of someone who believes in living a life that is not dominated any more by violence and unfaithfulness. So I’ve got to stand up and be strong to make that happen.”

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Conclusion

Tāne Māori aspirations open the door to evaluate transformative practices based on Māori cultural imperatives that provide alternatives to violence for whānau Māori. Two themes emerged from the discussion of aspirations. First, how these Tāne Māori individually wanted to be viewed now and remembered by loved ones in years to come. Secondly that achievement of their aspirations is dependent on clear direction setting and planning. That directional planning is something Tāne Māori and their whanau can do to work towards the end goal of having a home environment that is devoid of family violence.

Listed (in no order of priority) are elements that might well make up a tool measuring what is important to Tāne Māori, the types of legacies that they want their whanau, tamariki, mokopuna, extended whanau, loved ones and friends to remember them for.

The legacy measure has been created from the feedback Tāne Māori gave for this section of the research. It will be very interesting to return this to Tāne Māori in this form (probably with more elements added) as responses might set in motion personally tailored programmes to support their aspirations and meet the conditions of those legacies that they want to be remembered for. As whanau members contribute to this korero it will provide Tāne Māori with a performance measure as to whether or not they are really working towards their perceived views of what they consider to be their legacy. There could be discrepancies between desires and reality as seen by their immediate and close whanau members and friends.

The research materials gathered on Tāne Māori aspirations might act as a stimulus in supporting rational, motivational prompts to maintain and strengthen healthy changes made within whanau environments by those who were once abusers. The materials also reinforce positive behaviour, instill new traditions and propagate whanau growth-building values.

A Legacy Measure: What Tāne Māori Wanted to be Remembered For

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<tr>
<th>Composition of One’s Legacy</th>
<th>Degree of Importance</th>
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<td></td>
<td>No 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financially stable</td>
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<td>Promoter of healthy whanau wellbeing</td>
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<td>Non-violent and peaceable</td>
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<td>Caring, respectful individual</td>
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<td>Honest</td>
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<td>Caring, respectful and giving</td>
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<td>Principled</td>
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<td>Communicative and sensitive</td>
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<td>Solid and always there for loved ones</td>
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<td>Faithful and spiritual</td>
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<td>Willing to learn and make necessary changes</td>
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A Mana Tane Echo of Hope: dispelling the illusion of whānau violence
– Taitokerau Tāne Māori speak out
Final Comments

Participants were offered the opportunity to express some final thoughts on this kaupapa. Kahuri ano te rakau ki a ratou mo nga mihi whakamiharo i te kaupapa, hei oranga ra i o tatou nei whanau!

I just want to just say to all the brothers… that the fact that you’re involved with this says to me that you want to be real about making change… that we need each other… to encourage, to awhi, to manaaki, to tiaki each other because a lot of the stuff that we’ve been learning in our own walks is going to be really needed in the generations to come [especially] as we sit down and listen to all the stuff around us, [we need it] more so right now. And it’s not [going to] come from any psychologist that all come from overseas. It’s not going to come from other people, from other communities, its going to come from us living in our own communities with our own men, because we have similarities of backgrounds and understandings, so that’s why we need to break it down and make it real [for our whanau]. And so I just want to wish everybody the best… I’m looking forward to catching up and sucking those fish eyes in unison because it’s [in our] style of doing it, ‘the sucking of the brains at the back when you finish’ [and enjoying each others company]. So I’m looking forward to catching up to all you fellahs and having a kai together.

Again, I just want to say I’m really glad to be a part of this kaupapa and I hope that you come on board and do [tell] your stories. We’re going to start to see some keys, some key links and hooks that all of us can use so that we can become better at what we do [in our efforts to change and support others’ changes].
I speak specifically to Tāne Māori: show humility, let humour into your lives. Be prepared to ‘story your past’ so that we also benefit from knowing and understanding our past, especially where we’re coming from and what we’ve been through. And there’s always a light at the end of the tunnel. Life is not all doom and gloom. Kia kaha, kia manawanui. Keep up the good work, and keep up the vision of being violence-free. Love all your whanau as much as you can and give them big hugs all the time.

Here are my final comments to Tāne Māori reading this research. People that are part of this research need to lead by example. Not only is it important that what we say on this research is heard, but in this experience is something that we live as well. We are not giving lip service. What we say in this korero is what we live. That has to be the lifestyle now for me, to be effective in the work that I do. If the Tane Māori are on this journey, well, it’s a start, because that is where it happened for me too. There were a lot of things leading up to those changes in my life. This is how I can put it in practical terms. It is about making these changes. People say they find it hard to change. I say yeah it is hard to change too, but when I was going to lose my family, that was the motivating factor for me to make some changes. How I describe that change, it is like getting into a car and making a U-turn. Instead of going the way that I was going I had to make a U-turn and go the opposite direction. And so I have continued to do that. It has been hard but my children, my grandchildren, my friends, my hapu and iwi are important to me. The only way I can influence my family, hapu and iwi is to lead by example. I think we need more leaders that are heading in that direction.

I have words of advice specifically for Tāne Māori attending any men’s programmes. To assist you in choosing a violence-free way of life, you may need to pull away from your friends, so called friends, to become violence-free, alcohol-free, to become drug-free. It’s maybe a hard thing to do. A lot of your friends may think that there is something wrong with you by pulling away. But really the problem is with them. A friend of mine gave up drinking and I used to think that there was something wrong with him. I wouldn’t say I have stopped drinking but I have certainly cut down. A lot of my friends think that there is something wrong with me but it is the way I choose to live my life now. Not everything for me comes out of a bottle anymore. Your friends may try to drag you down. They may call you a poof for not joining in doing what they are doing. It is not always easy to stand alone but it is worth the effort if you can do it for the sake of yourself, for the sake of your wife [or] partner and for the sake of your children and whanau. It is well worth breaking away.
I currently work as a tutor in mental health and became involved with this project along with some good brothers of ours. For me, those Tāne Māori who are either watching or reading or talking about this research, I'd just like to say it is not going to be easy but it will be worth it. The changes you make in your lives will enhance your everyday living. Put the hard yards in and the gain is awesome. To have your kids and your partner not fear you and to see love in the home is a real big positive. A home where respect is earned by doing positive and good things as opposed to respect created by fear, is just awesome. I know that if you continue to make changes in your life nothing but good things will happen to you and your whānau. You will be a lot happier, at ease with yourself and family. I wish you all the best for your changes, small steps and big things will occur.

To all other tane in this kaupapa, be yourself and tell your story the way it is and you will continue to grow into the man you always wanted to be. Wellbeing today for me is to know God first and his son Jesus Christ and the reason we are here on this earth. Then to know who you are and that you are valued as a person, that you have excellent relationships with your family and with your friends. Wellbeing also means that you are respected wherever you go and whatever you do because you have earned that respect.

My thoughts are, to us as Tāne Māori, that we will pass this way [life] only once. We will choose to either to make a positive difference in our own lives, personally for ourselves and secondly for our relationships with key people, such as our partners, our wives, our children, our extended family. Because we will pass this way only once in our lives, my whakaaro would be ‘Make it a journey that you will enjoy and look back on with no regrets’. Life’s too short to have regrets, and if there are regrets from the past you can’t change those now, but you can definitely change today and you can definitely change the future. I have a sincere belief and confidence that Māori [are] destined to [be] a successful, vibrant, capable culture that [will] not dwindle and go away. That we would thrive and achieve a whole lot of things in our lives that we were destined to achieve. It was told by our ancestors, it was given to us from our parents in different ways, and I hope we have enough of a dream, enough of a vision to be able to make sure that the one time that we pass through this life, we pass through it with no regrets knowing that we’ve done our best to make a difference.
I don’t know what your lifestyle might be right now, whether it’s working for you or not, but for me I think there’s a lot of things that I’m glad I left behind. A lot of those things didn’t get me anywhere. A lot of those things I see today that people are involved with, I don’t see those people getting anywhere in life, or contributing to oranga in their whānau or communities, whether it’s themselves individually, their whānau, their hapū or their communities. It just ain’t happening for them! Either you’re tika or your teka, that it! You can’t be doing both, you’ll fall into a role of being one or the other. So which one are you going to be? Which one do you want to be? Do you want to be tika or do you want to be a teka? That will also apply to your family as well. Do you want to show them a good way or a bad way? It’s up to you, but you know I can see what the outcome will be, whichever way you choose, there will be an outcome, there always is an outcome, so it’s your choice, don’t wait for the crisis to hit. Because when the crisis hits sometimes your decisions you make aren’t very good decisions. They may even be the wrong decision. So don’t wait for it, you know it’s good to make your change and I think the change is going to be up to you. I can say whatever I want to say but the change is going to be yours. I know that, because I had to make the change and it’s all about being true to yourself! A real you in everything you do in life. I know there’ll be a lot of pressure. However, be true to your family, true to yourself, true to everybody and why I say this is I mentioned earlier ‘ko wai au’. No hea koe. You come from a line of tupuna, you come from generations and generations, and you carry a name from each of those people. Now you can carry that name true or you can carry it the other way. So for me, I know I’ll see all those tupuna one day and they’ll ask me did you carry my name true, truly? So it’s up to you again if you want to. It’s about respecting the names of those tupuna… you can’t get out of it. It’s just something you’re going to have live with and die with. You can either lift it up or hold it up or you can also put it under your feet and walk all over it. So it’s your call entirely. For me I know what I have to do, I’ve got to lift up that name, I’ve got to hold it high. Because people can see you, not only the living, but also the dead, and they know exactly what you’re doing or what you’re not doing. Na reira e hoa ma, ma te Atua e tiaki, e manaaki ia koutou katoa i roto i tenei Ao hurihuri, na reira tena ra tatou katoa."
Tāne Māori, well just personally, you know, I’m not going to pump this Karaitiana message, but I just pray that you understand my reasons for saying that I just know for me personally the answer is Jesus Christ. But in saying that, everyone has choices, and so you have to choose your own huarahi. For me the biggest key of inspiration that was given to me by this kaumatua and is really important, especially to us Tane/males as husbands, was just really listen to your partner, listen to her. That was the biggest key this fellah told me, listen to her. And [I said] ‘I do listen to her’. But he said again to me, ‘I’m trying to tell you – really listen to her’. Yeah, what he was really saying was that, developing good communication was the key to addressing the ills that befall couples and families. I believe that has really helped me and I hope it helps you too.

Well brothers, I would just like to say, that we’re getting older and a lot of us have been through the abuse, and I am no longer a victim. There are systems that are both working and not working for people. However I would just like to say at this time we’ve got to be more upfront, in other words tika, speak what is right. For me, it’s so important to help support and to be there for my family – for my wife, our children and our four mokopuna. I don’t always get it right, but I sure want the best for them. Again, we need to continue to speak up, like we’ve done here, to speak to the next generation about other ways, other than what is violating. I have been saying to my family that I could die today and so I have been thinking, ‘What is it that I could do, this day, to make a difference?’ Never mind tomorrow, what is it that the Lord Jesus would want me to do on this day. So I encourage you to be strong for your families, supportive, caring, loving and at times challenging and remember about forgiveness.
Kia ora koutou katoa. Just like yourselves, I’m a man who wanted to be a good father, a good husband, and there were times when it got tough because of the many stresses and strains as we tried to earn a living to make things work for our families. But the most important thing I say to you all is, love your kids. And we should all want the best for our kids and also the best for our wives. Our mana grows if we can just keep working on it. I know for me the Lord Jesus has helped to bring me the knowledge and the information of how to love people, how to love my wife, how to love my kids, and I’m sure it can work with everyone too. So don’t have any regrets, we can do better as we love our kids and we love our families.

Ka nui te mihi atu ki a koutou e hoa ma, Nga Tane o Taitokerau. All I can say is that our whanau do require our wairua and mana as tane in the home. But we have to make sure that our wairua and mana not only bears the burdens of our whanau, but also inspires them to higher heights in a safe and loving environment. That type of wairua and mana requires a commitment on our part as tane in the home to promote an environment built on honour of our wahine, love for our children, trust reciprocated, respect for humanity, a drive for excellence, strengthening our inner-selves, being creative and developmental by nature and upholding a sense of deity/ideology. As the eldest of eight brothers and two sisters, my father displayed a wonderful, peaceful, yet firm and stable legacy of positive service in our home, and that continues even today.
Because of my own experiences of coping with the aftermath of being a sexual abuse survivor, it was much easier to lash out for self-preservation, and that didn’t stop when I entered into a partnership to begin a whanau. Playing sports quelled parts of that aggression, or should I say re-directed it legally into smashing opposition players. But, what really moved me on was having both wonderful support from my companion, along with knowing that I had to change. I had to take action by acting out the thought of wanting to change. Actually doing things to shift my thinking required engaging with tane who also believed in doing things step by step, line upon line, precept by precept.

That is what I want to leave with you. We need to know that we can change. We then have to construct the thinking to support that change (and that can only happen in sharing with others) and then practise, or walk the talk. It’s no use healing, learning, practising and strengthening in a vacuum. The real healing involves service back to others.
Part Four: Nga Manu Tioriori – Wāhine Māori in Taitokerau Speak Out

Nga Manu Tioriori scripts the korero of Wāhine Māori in the journey of their partners to become violence-free. One of the most inspirational aspects of including Wāhine Māori commentaries in this project is that their voices give greater affirmation to learning moments provided by their partners about becoming Safe Tāne Māori. They describe a ‘step by step’ progression that led to the emancipation of their tane from continuing violent behaviour in their home. As whanau ‘insiders’; they socially constructed, thoughtfully reflected, observed, heard and lived through transformative works and changing ideologies by their Tāne Māori and other whanau members.

These Wāhine Māori engaged in varying levels of resistance to challenge the violence they were experiencing. Their korero reflects the enormous damage inflicted on them and their children and the time required for healing to take place. Living the change is important for all members of a whanau exposed to abuse, alongside an understanding that abusers may take time to change behaviours, while family members exposed to violence need time in order to trust that change has actually occurred. Changed behaviour does not mean perpetrator entitlement to an ongoing relationship with the survivors of their violence. Hope in behaviour change can often place Wāhine Māori and children at further risk; hence the importance of time, physical distance and respect for [the] boundaries survivors and their whanau wish to maintain.
Wahine Maori feedback about their historical connections with abusive Tane Maori collectively suggests that their partners’ past experiences of family violence became their ‘lot in life’. According to the whakaaro of the majority of Tane Maori that ‘pass it on’, their deepest fears were realised as violence moved with them into their own homes. It became a generational problem as children watched and learned about abuse. On the one hand they often blamed their own mothers as the cause of conflict, whilst on the other, they justified their own actions with the rationale that ‘it’s not my fault I’m like this, it’s because of what my father did’.

Furthermore, as there were no apparent consequences for abusive role models, the next generation took very little responsibility for their abusive actions. Violent behavioural tendencies and illogical thinking patterns in Tane Maori were noticed by Wahine Maori partners:

“…[he] was straight up aggressive, just got a bee in his bonnet and couldn’t get off the boat, just lost control and everyone suffered. It was hard to see the kids scared, and a lot of my choices were made on the basis of making sure that [he] didn’t hurt the kids. For example, I’d do what he said or the kids got a crack. His eyes would go black and he went off into his own place. It was a place where me or the kids couldn’t get into until he was ready to let us in.”

“…he promised he’d never hit me, but he did… he said he’d never do it again and he did… I just couldn’t trust him and my love for him turned to fear… and then I began to despise him.”

“…you know before it was ‘this is how it’s done, bang, bang, bang. [You either listen to me or you get a hiding].”

“…[the kids] were too young to see what he did to me. But they actually saw what I looked like to them and it took years of talking with them to get the story straight. But that was the life that I had too. That was the life that I saw with my mum and dad. Even when [my husband] and I met, I was sixteen and I wanted to get out [of home]. I wanted somebody who would love me. And I thought he did at the beginning. But that all changed with the abuse. [and the abuse lasted a long time]… nobody stopped it. Everybody knew that it was happening but nobody intervened.”
Feedback from Wāhine Māori expresses a pattern of belief that change was desired, for their tane and themselves, that it caused a range of feelings from fear to anger, that actions always speak louder than words, that new whanau traditions emerged and that ‘working things out’ needed to be done by both parties:

“I got frightened because before he made the change he got more violent. The last incident was when he threatened to kill me… [Strange but the words he used] were a lot more devastating than any physical punch or kick could ever be… I also needed to know how to break the cycle ‘cos the way I knew how to argue with him was ignore him for a week… that’s how my parents argued. I was happy that he wanted to make a change because he was a little time bomb… Just happy that he thought there needed to be a change.

“Anyway [regarding] that incident, it was… for me a realisation that in terms of making the decision to [change]… I actually had the power in this to change [violence in the home], and that really, [it was] my acceptance of the violence that continued it… my non-acceptance of it is my power to stop it… So it was a sudden realisation that I didn’t have to accept this anymore… it changed from that time. I think it actually didn’t happen overnight in terms of the violence stopping. It was about him working out better ways really. And that was a gradual process that meant walking out and doing all sorts of other things… he had to relearn… how to deal with things. So it didn’t all happen overnight.

“I didn’t believe him that he had really changed. Actually I was quite angry when he said he had… it felt really hard to understand how somebody could be forgiven for [abusing] somebody else [me] for that long. And I thought how easy it was for him to just get out of it. I actually reverted to taking over the violence and stuff… I didn’t want him praying for me… then just one day I snapped. And I got his gun out of the cupboard. And he was on the floor praying with our kids and I stuck the gun to his head and told him if he didn’t stop I was going to blow him away. And then my kids were begging me for his life. And when the kids started doing that (‘cos usually it was the other way round… but this time when the kids were screaming at me), I just sort of dropped the gun and ran out of the house.

“I just couldn’t work out what was happening to me. I thought I was losing my mind. I just went away… while I was away I thought about what was happening. And it took me a long time to realise, and I had a whole year of torturing him and punishing him like that and then I realised, wow, over that one year he never hit me, and I thought Oh hey! He had changed.’ But [because] I was still dealing with my anger and hurts… I wasn’t willing to look at that development… I rung him up… and I just said to him that I want to come home and I want what he had. I wasn’t sure what it was but I wanted what you had’. Yeah, so he came down and picked me up and that’s when our journey started together. It wasn’t easy after that but I realised he had changed. He had given up the drugs, he had given up the parties, [he had given up the violence].
"Yeah, it was a change I was looking for... I was an alcoholic... and that was my life, it was just, 'Yeeha, yeeha' you know... partying and... [once he] had become a Christian and started to change his life, I thought 'Yeah, there's got to be more to life than what I'm doing, but hey, I'm having a good time'... I can honestly say I enjoyed what I was doing but [there] came a point where it was just like, 'No, I need to change, I want to change for my kids'... as the saying goes, 'You are who you hang out with'... [our older children noticed the differences] in the way their younger siblings were brought up... well [its been a whole new learning curve], we’ve made the changes, just learning [new things] as we go.

“...what he has on his side is that he doesn’t believe in that old adage that ‘a leopard can’t change its spots,’ [he believes] that no matter what age you are, you can always change and so he’s always strived to do that, to make changes in his personality or the way he does things for the better. He goes quiet... I go the other way, I have to talk about it... it has to come out with me, but he goes very quiet, [he withdraws] and he’s a thinker, so he... mulls on it, and sometimes he mulls on it too long... it can tend to over exaggerate in your mind if you go over things too much. You know, I guess that’s what I’m for, if he needs me as a sounding board, [to help him] rethink again... before he acts.”

This desire to change abusive patterns was something that needed to happen because the violent behaviour endangered all the whanau. When their male partners were confronted with the possibility of losing what they had, breakthrough changes were sometimes immediate, for others it was a gradual step-by-step process.
Section Three: Oranga Whanau

Nga Manu Tiorori contains the collective wisdom of Wāhine Māori on oranga whanau. In unison, wahine Maori, were supportive of their tanes’ actions and activities to elevate whanau wellness and wellbeing. The tenor of their answers to critical questions about oranga whanau also endorsed the centricity of humanistic values such as love, trust, honesty and holistic wellbeing, that often meant establishing new family traditions:

“He never went back to drugs and drinking and so I decided to do the same…we began to love each other, love our children and role model a life style built on our faith.”

“…you know I looked at him, [and] thought yeah he’s changing and gave him a bit of time [I was] check[ing] him out [to see if this was real]… and I [also] knew in myself that I would change [too], you know I would become… different… but it’s a time thing… we can look out at the world, we can look out at our [wider] whanau or the society, but it starts in your own home… and we needed to change… how can we go out there and help others… if our life’s a mess… it’s an opportunity to share from our hearts and to let others know that there is a better way – and we can do it together. It comes back to loving each other… accepting each other… and realising that there are people out there who have love and are willing to help others.”

“That there are a number of role models out there to help us improve our relationships as a couple and with our children. And it’s up to us to find those people and put them in our lives. Treat others how you would like to be treated. Spend good quality time with each other as a couple, and spend quality time with your children. Make sure you provide opportunities to talk to each other and discuss the hard issues. Make sure you recognise the teaching moments for yourself, your partner and your children and wider family. [My partner] has maintained the gathering of whanau and taken time to teach his siblings and their children how to take time to talk with each other, play with each other and have whanau hui. He’s also introduced this to my whanau… who are still getting used to it [now].”

“There is a bit of patience… in how we approach our children now… there is forgiveness still going on and the older children have reserved [their] judgment on the changes… we talk more.”

“We are very conscious [of] making sure that our children are not put into any environment that might result in abuse… we spend time in counsel with our children [some] who are adults now, especially if it involves issues of concern… it is a tradition.”
Key observations emerged from nga Tamati Tioriori about Safe Tāne Māori:

1. They are fallible, but can strengthen their resolve to change as they develop;
2. They demonstrate empathy and are comfortable with talking about their feelings;
3. They discovered better ways to deal with anger;
4. They were active participants in facilitating space for healing loved ones affected by abuse;
5. They accepted culpability for their actions and thinking.

Here are their thoughts on this kaupapa of Safe Tāne Māori:

“When [I was] spoken to [by one of the Te Mata o Nga Tane members about whether or not my tane was safe] I really wanted to know [why I was being asked that]… because I felt in some ways that… as a whanau [we’ve still] got a long way to go yet, in terms of dealing with the violence. [While it might] not be fists anymore, there’s still violence around us that we need to deal with. [It now involves working on] our children’s attitude towards us. [But my husband has definitely] made a commitment to change. It doesn’t make him perfect but he’s [made] a change in how he behaves and [in] how he acts in situations… my first response was not so much that he wasn’t safe, but that we’re not there in terms of being a model that you could promote saying that this person has done it, that he’s cracked it.”

“He’s a lot more conscious of what’s going on, what’s going on around him and the expectations [people] have on him. He’s always accountable for his actions [now]. There’s a time and a place for everything, and that was his time, back then, to figure out who he was and how to deal with [being violent]. I was happy that he could develop research skills in an area that he was familiar with. And I was nervous about the type of people he was going to meet… but yes he is to me… a Safe Tāne Māori.”

“Yes he’s a Safe Tāne Māori. Well he’s definitely trustworthy and a safe person to be with… (also a) very protective person, and as far as [I’m concerned] you’ve chosen a good subject. [He is] an honourable man and a good father, definitely. I think too what he has on his side is that he doesn’t believe in that old adage that ‘a leopard can’t change its spots’; that no matter what age you are you can always change and so he’s strived to do that… to make changes in his personality or the way he does things for the better. And often that’s modelled on other people he’s seen… he’s definitely not what you would call an impatient man. He has a very high tolerance level… He [puts] himself in other people’s shoes often and sees their point of view. That is often why people that he’s associated with love him so much [and] endear themselves to him… because he accepts them for who they are, and doesn’t in any way try to demean [them].”
“Yeah [he's a ‘Safe Tāne Māori’]. [Our younger children see] the love… in their father [but we're] having to work on our [older] kids a lot more. Because [they were brought up with violence]… they have choices now themselves… [and the] both of us have spoken to them… [explaining that] we [have] done wrong things in their lives… that's all we knew right there and then… [and] that past is what they're holding… [I've explained to them] that when raising a family… you sort of know in the back of your mind that this isn't really how it [should be] done… that this isn't good… but you continue to do it… because it's a habit you've seen [but that has to change].”

“I'm all for [my tane] doing the research… he is a ‘Safe Tāne Māori’… because I know what [and where] he's come from [and even] if it helps one other family I'm all for that… It hasn't been an easy journey for both of us. I'm really proud of him because most husbands would have walked out on their wives if [they] were doing what I was doing… [not just for a week but] he stuck with me for a whole year. It proved that he really did love me.”

“His ahua is approachable now… put others before himself [in other words he practises selflessness]… I feel safe leaving the kids with him, knowing that they'd be safe and looked after [while in his care]. He's [now] more open to [talk about things] when he gets angry and [is] aware of the signs… [Furthermore, he] looks for [healthier] alternative outlets for that [anger]. His own ahua or demeanor is calm and he's prepared to talk about [things] when he's angry.”
Wāhine Māori comment on aspirations and legacies shared and add some of their own. Raising intimate building blocks of human relationships out of the tattered ruins of violence-devastated papakainga is a journey best done with inner whanau support. Wāhine Māori partners of Tāne Māori participating in the research gave that perspective. Wāhine Māori contributions vivify the depth of feelings expressed by their Tāne Māori partners:

“My aspiration is that we continue to spend quality time with each other as a couple. That we enjoy watching our younger children grow into adults along with the rest of our children... that as a family, we continue to have an eternal perspective on things. This means that I want to be with my family now and in the next life. Even through all of that abuse I trusted [him] that he would provide me and the children with a good life. And that has happened. It was hard stuff, the violence, but I just put it away to the back. It’s not something that I liked to share with others, but I think that occurred, because of my upbringing. We were taught to keep secrets because what was more important was what other people thought of you so you didn’t share things like that. Even now its still not easy to share, but I’ve found that the load can be lightened if I do, and movement forward can be made. And that’s what I want for me, my husband, our children and the wider whanau.”

“My aspirations for my whanau are based on a belief that we can create opportunities to share from our hearts and let our whanau know that there is another way, a better way of dealing with conflict and violence. That we can do it together and that it is based on good communication with each other. It really does come back to loving each other, just as we are and accepting each other. In reality, it is also about knowing that there are other people out there that want to, and can help as well. Central to healing is the love and as my husband said, it is also our faith in Jesus. That has changed our life totally. It’s a walking thing, not just talking, but walking the talk, and there is a practical side in knowing that there are other people out there who love you too and want to help.”

“I want to be a role model for my kids. I don’t want them to have that experience of being in a violent abusive relationship that I experienced, ever. My eldest daughter has been in such a relationship and she knows I’m not happy about that. However, her response to me is ‘mum you can’t talk ‘cos you put up with it for seven years,’ but I said to her, ‘Yeah, but your dad changed and never ever went back to doing those things ever again. He never went back to drinking... he never went back to the drugs or the hitting.’ And that’s what she believed for her man too. That if her dad could make the necessary changes from being abusive to non-abusive so likewise she feels her own partner could do it too. I really want our children to have a better life. Because we’re Christians, that’s the life I want my children to have. That’s the legacy I want to leave for them, that I am remembered by my loved ones for being an example as a mother and a grandmother for my mokopuna.”
The symbolic closure of this pukorero has been left for Wāhine Māori to whakamana. There are many voices missing here. It was not the intention in this research project, to capture all the hurt, sadness, sorrow, abuse and pain Tāne Māori have inflicted on loved ones. The primary purpose was to explore the nature and interface of transformative practice and emancipatory thinking to change the Tāne Māori culture of whānau abuse. These Wāhine Māori comments add further understanding to that end. They also model a process of healing that is cognisant of both individual responsibility and inclusive whānau accountability for change and healing.

Here are some of my thoughts for the participants in this research and Tāne Māori in general. I’m reminded of what my father-in-law said when my husband and I got married – and which definitely continues to apply even today. That I was a pearl of great price, in other words someone of great worth. This gave me the courage and commitment to be in a relationship like theirs that has lasted thus far for over 50 years. My in-laws have role modelled love, respect, honesty, trustworthiness in their relationship. I want my relationship with their son to be just like that. That means he has to do his part and I have to do mine.

I would like to say to Tāne Māori that it’s not until you come together with your partner and really find out about each other that progress can be made. In my situation we came from two completely different backgrounds. You know when we met [we] brought together those two worlds then the conflict began – ‘No I do it this way,’ ‘No it’s done this other way’ – so we had to learn to get along and to compromise. We are still learning even today to get along. We learn forever. It’s meant communicating and listening to each other. And what I’ve got out of this is that it’s done one step at a time.

To you Tāne Māori, I just want to say that it can destroy a family, the violence, but there is a way to escape and it’s all about making the right choices. It doesn’t matter what we’ve come from, or what the Tāne Māori may have come from, it’s how we shape it for the future. We become positive role models for our children. If you really love your Wāhine Māori and your children then you’d treasure them. You wouldn’t need to beat them to submission. You would love them and be willing to do anything for them just to please them. My hope is that you will show proper respect at all times and treat them well.
"Tāne Māori, I want to say that it is important listening to other men’s stories. The telling becomes a process of self-awareness. These stories trigger things for us. These things could be for good or might contain things that aren’t too good. You need to check out those many roads that make up your own korero concerning the experiences with violence and safe practices. You have to be prepared to go down these pathways. It takes time to unravel. We shouldn’t place too many restrictions on those telling their stories. Let them tell it in the way they will tell it. Let them find their words.

What I want to say to Tāne Māori is get back to your spiritual roots. From that base, all those things that make a good human being have their beginning. Those values and attributes of respect, kindness and love can then flow onto those who you love, your children, your partner and your family. To continue that development, it then becomes important to know who your role models are and keep them close to you.

To the Tāne Māori who read this report, I’d like to give encouragement to you for being where you all are at now… versus where you came from. There are still many other Tāne Māori who are stuck in the same thing, while you’ve broken away from there and obviously learnt from it and you’re doing something about it, helping others to stop being violent. I just want to say that life is a lot happier for me now that I’m not in that situation as a person, as a partner, as a whanau and I’m sure you are also feeling much better too."
Part Five: He Mihi Whakamutunga

I have seen the boulder lifted from the back of the tribe. I have heard their singing voices. I have felt their hands like the wind on the grass. Stroking my cheek when it seemed all hope has gone – James K. Baxter.

(O’Reilly, 2006: 1)

This James K. Baxter quote reflects how I feel coming to the end of this research journey. The overall purpose of this research was to contribute to the body of knowledge for indigenous violence prevention and early intervention strategies. This research has diverged from traditional family violence research, in that it has attempted to find pathways of healing and prevention out of the inhumane quagmire of destructive human relational engagements, rather than explore reasons why Tāne Māori violently abuse their loved ones.

The major objectives which have driven this research are:

1. To explore how Maori Tāne Māori become and remain free of whānau violence;
2. To document Maori men’s aspirations for whānau oranga.

Fulfilling the objectives of this research project has enabled pukorero from Te Mata o Nga Tāne about becoming and remaining violence-free, provided depth from a Tāne Māori perspective on oranga whānau, created a profile of Safe Tāne Māori, and explored the development of legacy typologies under the kaupapa of Tāne Māori aspirations for whānau oranga.

It has been a pleasure to engage collaboratively with Tāne Māori from Taitokerau in the construction and framing of this objective-driven research endeavor. Several landmark decisions were made in collaboration with Amokura and Te Mata o Nga Tāne Māori o Taitokerau, such as setting down our own ethical patterns and observing a kaupapa Maori and active research methodology throughout the entire research process.

Part One of this report critically engaged with local and international literature on violence prevention. The literature review also provided an overview of whānau wellbeing and healing specific to Maori, and analysed frameworks particular to Maori.

Part Two described and justified the utilisation of Kaupapa Maori and active participation research methodologies, and provided an overview of choices made regarding research design, direction, ethics and framing. Part Two also contextualised the project by describing the reference group and participants.

Part Three presented the findings of the pukorero shared by participants. This data was analysed according to the particular world view of the principle researcher, a process described by Cram (2005) as researcher effect. That the world view of the principle researcher impacts on the analysis of the findings, does not detract from the fact that Tāne Māori in this research project willingly put forward their pukorero and whakaaro to be scrutinized, debated and built on for the benefit of our whānau in promoting violence-free, safe and stable indigenous home environments in Aotearoa.
The report identifies factors associated with the maintenance of violent behaviours. The analysis of data collected also identified themes related to the transformative journey experienced by Tāne Māori and their whanau, and provides signposts for those seeking to embark on their own journey of change.

This research is offered back to our whanau, hapu, and iwi of Taitokerau for discussion and debate in the hope that it may provide a precedent for transformative, emancipatory action in whanau oranga to occur within our rohe. Other iwi throughout Aotearoa are also invited to add their contributions to the discussion in order to broaden and deepen our national understanding around factors that might initiate and maintain non-violent families, driven by Tāne Māori. This research and subsequent discussion may also benefit the indigenous peoples of Te Ao Hurihuri in the search for truth in dealing with the debilitating tentacles of whanau violence.

It is a genuine koha which holds, amongst other things, in-depth korero about transforming illogical thinking, tools and discussions to enable Tāne Māori to engage in transformative practices to enhance whanau health and wellbeing. This research is concerned with emphasising, acknowledging and creating a lifestyle, a legacy of whanau health and wellbeing that can potentially be a normal part of any Tāne Māori psyche. This research is closed with the insightful words of one of our respected kuia:

This research is for the people who are going to be working for our Tāne Māori and for every parent to have, so that they can start looking at the ways of parenting of boys to men. Knowing that these young Tāne Māori will be influenced by what they see and what they do. Things will impact on them externally from the community and end up in their homes. It’s going to be good for Tāne Māori themselves so that they can be socialised to stand up in groups and negotiate about how to improve themselves and their whanau. To get out and use the systems, to give them an opportunity to self determine and not be locked into deficit thinking. It does mean that they can negate the negative and get on with the positives (Hana Tukukino, 2007).


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