Creating space for Māori voices in HIV prevention

The launch of **Get Comfortable with Protection**, a new national HIV combination prevention campaign for whānau Māori, is an important moment for HIV prevention in Aotearoa.

For Rukua ki te rētōtanga o te wai, the campaign connects strongly with the kaupapa at the heart of our research: creating spaces where Māori can talk openly about HIV prevention, sexual health and wellbeing, and where our experiences and stories can help shape better responses for Māori.

Our kaupapa resonates strongly with Get Comfortable with Protection. The campaign creates another space for kōrero, encouraging whānau-centred conversations about protection, testing and sexual wellbeing. Importantly, findings from the PrEP pilot project helped inform the development of Get Comfortable with Protection, carrying Māori voices and lived experiences from research into a national HIV prevention campaign.

Rukua and the campaign are different initiatives, but they share something important: a recognition that Māori voices need to be heard.

Rukua creates space to listen deeply to those experiences. The campaign helps bring conversations about HIV prevention into more visible, everyday spaces. Together, they contribute to an important shift: from talking about Māori to creating opportunities for Māori to speak, share and help shape what HIV prevention can look like for us.

For Rukua, that means listening first, recognising the knowledge held within lived experience, and ensuring Māori stories can contribute to meaningful change.

Our voices matter. Our experiences matter. And when Māori stories are heard, they can help shape HIV prevention that better reflects our lives, our whānau and our aspirations for hauora.

Click here to: Explore Get Comfortable with Protection on the Health New Zealand website