

Ki Te Ao Mārama: Understanding trauma-informed approaches & pathways to healing | Workshop 1 | 11 March 2026

Session two: Understanding trauma-informed approaches from a Māori perspective | Questions and answers

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Question / discussion topic / theme	Response
Building capability of non-Māori practitioners (hoa haere) – safely and sustainably - How can Māori practitioners support non-Māori ‘hoa haere’ to feel confident and capable, while acknowledging the extra burden on Māori practitioners and not always “flying the tino rangatiratanga flag”? - When encouraging ‘hoa haere’, some feel disheartened or deterred after trying – how do we keep them safe and still lift capability?	Do not: - Isolate or compare the ‘progress’ of individuals – we all have gaps to work on, celebrate that. - Take personal responsibility for others’ learning journeys unless that is your professional designation and expertise. - Treat confidence as the same thing as competence – encourage reflection, humility, self-awareness. Do: - Collect and share practical resources and inspiring information we come across, e.g. waiata, articles, webinars, workshops or courses. - Wherever possible, recommend cultural resources delivered by members of the learner’s own ethnic or cultural community. - Encourage access to courageous cultural conversations, supervision and/or coaching; nurture and maintain psychological safety to gift and receive feedback; consider feedback as a taonga or koha for personal or professional growth and improvement.
Pūrākau clarity – Tāne and Tangaroa in the pūrākau presented by Hine - Brief explanation of Tāne and Tangaroa in the pūrākau of Rūaumoko as told by Hine. - Further clarification: Tangaroa “see a need, fill a need” (supporting Mama with resources for pēpi), versus Tāne recognising pēpi needed to stay with Mama and be nurtured – what’s the difference between their roles within their whānau?	Tāne held a co-ordinator and strategic role in the case study mother and organising the whānau to hui, hearing out the different opinions and ideas within the whānau, assessing risk for baby Ruaumoko to be greater if without his mother, and taking strategic action. Tangaroa understood and could empathise with, the range of opinions. He also recognised the impact Ruaumoko’s distress was having on their mother, Papatūānuku, and acted to bring immediate relief to her situation, thereby indirectly creating more stability for the child, Ruaumoko.

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Kupu: mauri, meaning, and whakapapa - Does the mauri of the kupu tie into meaning as well as the literal meaning (including cumulative use across spaces and places)? - When using these kupu, is it part of practice to explore meanings with whaiora, or are whaiora typically already aware? - Request for a breakdown/meaning of the kupu again (as an attachment after training). - Learning the whakapapa of the kupu inspires confident use; appreciation for sharing these kupu to support reo reclamation.	Every kupu offers its own mauri dynamic energy, whakapapa journey, and wānanga philosophical discourse. A skilled practitioner will be able to notice tohu signs that demonstrate that whānau can recognise, understand or respond to those kupu. They can also incorporate these kupu into the wānanga explorative discourse with whānau to arrive at a shared understanding of the whānau challenge, experience.
Kupu: mauri, meaning, and whakapapa Please explain epigenetics.	Epigenetics is the study of how life experiences, environments, and systemic stressors can influence how our DNA functions without changing the genetic code itself. It helps us understand how a parent's or community's environment – such as historical trauma, structural bias, or toxic stress – can affect biology. In this way, epigenetics shows that healing environments can support biological healing. Mātauranga Māori uses concepts such as whakapapa genealogical connections, wairua metaphysical source, and mauri dynamic energy to explain how social and emotional environments can directly shape the biological wellbeing of mokopuna. These recurring processes may transmit intergenerational harm or healing, reinforcing the importance of early intervention and prevention.
Practice foundations and positionality (Pākehā/tangata Tiriti)	Supporting young people through emotional, psychological, or mental distress requires practitioners to understand both the young person's cultural view of wellbeing and the individual and social experiences that have shaped their distress. Engaging young people or their whānau in wānanga, including using te reo Māori or another language to explore issues safely, requires explicit training to maintain cultural fidelity.

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• Desire to adopt trauma responses through a Māori lens as a Pākehā practitioner - how to begin in a culturally safe, non tokenistic way? • Does it start with correct language/meaning while centring young Māori clients as experts? (Excited but also a bit scared.) • Exploring positionality as tangata Tiriti/Pākehā. • What do we mean by “checking our bias for risk”? • How would you question your bias if you feel a cultural practice is causing harm?	Wānanga with young people and whānau prioritises open dialogue and shared vision. Ideally, it is co-facilitated, with practitioners reflecting openly and supporting young people and whānau to identify options that help them move toward their own vision. Our brains often respond automatically and very quickly, drawing on past experiences that may seem similar but may not be relevant to the whānau we are supporting or the issues they are facing. “Checking our bias for risk” means deliberately examining our assumptions and default responses so we do not rely on outdated or irrelevant information that could unintentionally cause harm, disadvantage, or lower regard for whānau. One effective way to explore whether bias is shaping our view that a cultural practice is harmful is to use a robust, evidence-based framework within safe clinical-cultural supervision. As an initial reflection, it can also help to ask whether we would respond differently if the situation were reversed, or if another cultural group were involved.
Wānanga, workshops, and what’s online • Hine mentioned a workshop/wānanga called something “Māia?” – can that be shared? • Are these principles a collection that Hine and Stacey developed themselves?	Hine and Stacey presented a collection of indigenous practice-based approaches commonly used to address trauma in te ao māori. Hine also recommended the Mahi a Atua approach. For more information on the Mahi a Atua training discussed with Hine, follow this link: https://www.mahiaatua.com/training/
Reo Māori vocabulary	• Ohorere – fright, shock, panic • Pāmamae – painful • Ngaukino – internal biting, gnawing • Awangawanga – uneasy mind, disturbed, worried, anxious concern • Whakamā – shame, withdrawn • Momori – desperation, despair • Kahu-pō – shrouded in darkness

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Early manuscript, karakia, waiata terms from Dr Tākirangi Smith's research	• Rau-patu – rau = multiplier; patu = strike/blow/wound • Patu-ngākau – ngākau = (internal gut system) seat/locus of emotion, soul; patu = wounded/struck • Ngākau pō-uri – heavy or dark heart; offended, distressed, sadness; pō + uri = night/darkness/sad • Pō-uri nui – great grief
Māori healing-centred principles	Hine and Stacey offered these practice-based, indigenous principles to support a restorative approach to understanding the impact of trauma with whānau. Primarily, trauma breaches tapu and mana thereby impacting mauri. Those three fundamental and inextricably linked aspects of human wellbeing are outlined below, along with three more key concepts of a restorative māori practice – he pātūwatawata, wānanga, and hononga. When skilfully deployed in: • Tapu presents sanctity, especially in childhood development, and the need to respect and reinforce boundaries in the pursuit and protection of wellbeing. • Mana presents inherent dignity and agency. Mana is threatened when the tapu is not observed and slowly restored when it is. • Mauri is a dynamic energy or life force whose vitality indicates a healthy entity and ecosystem. A child's mauri will show signs of stress when their tapu is breached or their mana is diminished. • The pātūwatawata is literally the fortified spaces of a village. When a child or whānau sense of safety is breached we must help them understand and rebuild necessary safeguards to protect their privacy and restore spaces where they can be vulnerable to grow without feeling exposed. • The wānanga is a collaborative, skilfully co-facilitated space for whānau to safely explore shared knowledge and expertise, to address challenging beliefs and to co-design a path forward that holds the tapu, mana and mauri of the whānau foremost. • Hononga reinforces connection as a core survival need and enabler of wellbeing.