

EVIDENCE CENTRE TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA

New Zealand Government

Development of the mana-enhancing paradigm for practice



The Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre works to build the evidence base that helps us better understand wellbeing and what works to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people and their whānau.

Email: research@ot.govt.nz

Authors: Mereana Wi-Kaitaia, Leland Ruwhiu, Moana Eruera (Te Tira Hapai

Māori, Professional Practice Group, Oranga Tamariki).

Published: October 2021

ISBN: 978-0-9951060-6-2

Citation guidance:

This report can be referenced as Wi-Kaitaia, M., Ruwhiu, L., Eruera, M. (2021). *Development of the mana-enhancing paradigm for practice*. Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children.

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Preamble



Social work in Aotearoa was founded on western universal theories and approaches for working with children, their families and communities. Over the past 40 years, tangata whenua have claimed space within this discourse for the inclusion of Māori conceptual frameworks of wellbeing as valid, professional, and most effective for Māori. This paper summarises the development and components of a manaenhancing paradigm for practice. The purpose is to inform a statutory social work practice paradigm shift for Oranga Tamariki from a western to a Māori-centred practice position. It draws from academic discourse, oral narratives and research relating to Te Ao Māori and social work. This paper does not focus on manaenhancing applied practices but the development over the past 40 years of the overarching components of a mana-enhancing paradigm to inform practice.

Claiming space for Te Ao Māori knowledge 1975-1989

Colonisation in Aotearoa significantly impacted on the control of authority and knowledge (Mignolo, 2011) resulting in immense inequities and disadvantage for Māori. Loss of cultural identity, isolated and fragmented family systems, weakened traditional mechanisms for support, loss of land, language and self-determination increased the likelihood of whānau dysfunction. Poverty, unemployment and poor housing, coupled with systemic and racial bias within the state child welfare system contribute to the over-representation of Māori (Dobbs, 2015). Western institutions in Aotearoa subjugated Te Ao Māori knowledge, severely undermining it as a 'belief system' and 'myths and legends' (Orbell, 1995; Stewart & Mika, 2016; Dumbrill & Green, 2008) while European theories, narratives and frameworks dominated most spaces.

Mana-enhancing practice was influenced by a plethora of international, national and indigenous voices including Pilger (1989), Munford & Nash (1994), Marsden (1975) and Pere (1991). Notions of self-determination and the attack against institutional racism found within the ethos of radical social work and Mana Motuhake activism through this period in Aotearoa were reinforced by the intellectual works of Fanon (1952, 1961) Freire (1968) and Sivanandan (1982). Additionally, anti-discriminatory advocates, both Māori and tauiwi, inside the social work, public policy and education sectors had a significant influence on its creation to improve outcomes for Māori including Bradley (1995), Shirley (1979), and Tennant (1994). A culmination of these stimuli created the platform for the reclamation of Te Ao Māori visibly within healing and social work theoretical paradigms in Aotearoa.

Momentum in Māori development and activism grew strongly in this period, as parallel activities and services started to appear. The 1975 Hīkoi led by Dame Whina Cooper achieved the Treaty of Waitangi Act and the occupation of Bastion Point in 1977 contributed to the Ōrākei Claim. In the 1980s, Kura Kaupapa Māori total immersion Māori language schooling was launched, and the Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act 1985 allowed investigation of claims as far back as 1840. Iwi development programmes such as Whakatupuranga Rua Mano of Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toa and Te Ātiawa aimed to improve and preserve education, marae and Te Reo Māori, while urban marae like Ngā Hau E Whā in Christchurch and Hoani Waititi





in Auckland ensured cultural continuity during a time of increased urbanisation of Māori (Walker, 2011; Walker, 2004). An example of parallel social work development at this time saw the first Aotearoa Association of Social Work Tangata Whenua caucus formed in 1986, operating under a bicultural partnership framework.

Another significant shift was the reintroduction of Te Ao Māori healing and restorative concepts into health and education. Te Wheke (1982), Te Whare Tapa Whā (1984) and Ngā Pou Mana (1988) were among the first Māori models which paved the way for development in social work and other professional sectors of New Zealand society (Ihimaera, 2004, p. 45). Additionally, the milestone report Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū (1986) signaled the need for culturally-responsive practice approaches incorporating the values, cultures, and beliefs of Māori (Department of Social Welfare, 1988).

The creation of mana-enhancing practice 1990-1999

Māori and tauiwi authors continued to write about key Māori values, ethical principles and concepts during the 1990s. In parallel, Te Ao Māori principles began to visibly emerge within social work through the efforts of Māori writers and publications such as Te Kōmako.¹ Te Awekotuku (1991) outlined key responsibilities researchers have to Māori people, including 'Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata' (do not trample over the mana of people) and 'manaaki ki te tangata' (share, host others and be generous). Although some did not specifically mention 'mana-enhancing practice', you can see it was what they were describing. For example, Rangihau (1992) explained that manaakitanga is about showing concern for your neighbour, concern for them as a person and therefore sharing the things of the community. Bradley (1995) showed that understanding the ideologically and culturally dynamic nature of whānau Māori is important when engaging with them through mana-enhancing methodologies. Ruwhiu was amongst these renowned Māori writers and the first to describe the paradigm and components of mana-enhancing practice.

The importance of whānau-based healing, the power of cultural narratives and recognising the different ways Māori and tauiwi relate to the world were some of the key aspects brought to the forefront (Ruwhiu, 1994). Through identifying his own principles, which included Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the blueprint for Māori and tauiwi relations, and knowledge of the consequences of colonial subjugation on Māori communities, Ruwhiu showed the importance of social workers knowing the principles guiding their practice. In addition, he advocated the point of Māori practitioners working from their own cultural base lines as informed practitioners in their own right (Ruwhiu, 1995).

Responding to the werowero placed by Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū, a major shift during this period was when Māori social workers began applying Te Ao Māori concepts and values to their theories, frameworks and methodologies for working effectively with whānau Māori. For example, the awhioawhio framework (Dreadon, 1997) was developed for supervision that advocated for linking, strengthening and empowering

¹ Each year, one issue of the Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work journal is published as Te Kōmako, focusing on tangata whenua social work. The inaugural issue of Te Kōmako was published in 1995. See: Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work, *Journal History*, <u>anzswjournal.nz/anzsw/about/history</u>.



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whānau, hapu, iwi. The poutama design represented the reclamation of decision making by Māori.

Mana-enhancing practice was promoted as an approach which combines techniques for engagement that enhances rather than strips Māori people's experiences from their cultural realities or contexts (Ruwhiu, 1999, p. 53). The founding premise of mana enhancing practice reinforces the holistic relational aspects of this paradigm not only to people as in many western paradigms, but to spiritual and environmental factors. This requires a belief and deep understanding of mana described as the 'cultural adhesive' which binds the three dimensions of human, spirit and nature that all cultural worldviews are built upon (Ruwhiu, 1999, p. 448).

Development of mana-enhancing principles and values 2000-2009

Into the millennium, various authors added to the development of mana-enhancing practice, especially regarding its principles and values. Walsh-Tapiata (2000) called attention to the importance of social work in Aotearoa to 'look at things differently, informed by our past but not limited by it (...) that means looking at ourselves, our beliefs and attitudes' (2000, p. 12).

Mana-enhancing practice was further described as requiring methods which ensured those interrelations between people, the gods and nature were beneficial to all. The reciprocity is that as people heal themselves, those who are supporting them also experience 'mana enhancement' (Ruwhiu, 2001, p. 61). In this period, the Māori Taskforce on Whānau Violence prepared a report for Tariana Tūria on the Mauri Ora framework, which progressed into the Mauri Ora Project. The Mauri Ora framework focused on empowering whānau, hapū and iwi by demystifying illusions, removing opportunities for the practice of whānau violence and replacing those with alternative behaviours and ways of understanding (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2004).

The renewing possibilities of Āta were added to the discourse which highlighted its potential to shape and guide understandings of relationships and wellbeing. Constituents of Āta ensure appropriate levels of respect, especially important when relating to those who have been dominated, damaged and controlled in some way (Pohatu, 2003).

Aroha was also explored in relation to mana-enhancing practice during this period. Aroha is directly linked to tika, manaakitanga and mana. It is non-judgemental and acknowledges people's ability to develop, learn and pick themselves up where they have made mistakes (Ihimaera, 2004). The wellbeing concepts of wairuatanga, whakapapa, tikanga/kawa and mana in healing and restoration were highlighted as important for social workers to understand (Ruwhiu, 2009). Parallel development of Māori driven social work as displayed within the Tangata Whenua Caucus of ANZASW, the Māori workforce development in social services such as Te Ngaru Learning Systems (Huata, 1997), Dynamics of Whanaungatanga (Tate & Paparoa, 1986; Tate, 2010) and lived experiences of being active in whānau, hapū and iwi development reinforced the mana-enhancing practice paradigm shift.





Mana-enhancing practice is not the same as strengths-based practice as its origins emerge out of Māori ways of doing, thinking, and feeling (Ruwhiu & Ruwhiu, 2005). It is a way of engaging with others that cares for the spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual dimensions of a person (Royal, 2006).

Interchangeability and applicability of wellbeing principles 2010-2020

A key step in the past decade was how people began building onto mana-enhancing practice descriptions showing the breadth of its applicability and the interchangeable nature of sets of Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles within this paradigm. Pohatu (2011) highlighted components of mauri which may be considered for understanding Māori wellbeing. These included different states and sites of the body (both internal and external) where imbalances could be identified and the bodies of knowledge associated with those sites used to promote and advance mauri ora (life, wellness).

Eruera (2015) highlighted the interrelatedness between the concepts of tapu and mana in the healing and restorative processes. Furthermore, manaakitanga provides the context, meaning and positioning for bringing about reciprocal relationships that enhance mana (Welsh-Sauni, 2018). Since mana is enhanced through the act of manaakitanga, it can be considered culturally responsive when combined with the relevant engagement skills (King, 2017). A key development to note within this decade was that that all foundational Te Ao Māori principles of wellbeing (different combinations for different purposes) can be applied to mana-enhancing practice.

Mana-enhancing practice's universal applicability is evidenced within the health and education sectors. Te Whare Tapa Whā was originally focused on the need to consider the whole person when engaging with Māori in mental health services (Ihimaera, 2004), however it has since showed relevance to a variety of people from different cultures with any health issue, and across a range of disciplines and workplaces. Huriwai & Baker (2016) concluded that it is important for practitioners to recognise how the core concepts and values within mana-enhancing practice are universally applicable to the care, support and respect of all people. Manuel (2010) showed that mana-enhancing practice is applicable to any group of people in a teaching setting, and at the very least, the mana of all people must remain intact. Walker (2012) also promoted this idea, pointing out that mana-enhancing practice involved listening and acknowledging all voices, whether you agree or not.

Mana-enhancing practice facilitates the development of protective constructs to address trauma, abuse, risk, protection, safety, growth, healing and states of wellbeing. Moreover, it requires that social workers reflect on the therapeutic relationship and the elements that build this relationship. Time must be taken to understand a client's position within their whānau and community, and to make connections to both place (where people come from and where they are currently located) and to people (who they are connected to and the significant whakapapa links). These connections provide a strong foundation upon which successful work will be built (Munford & Sanders, 2011).

In terms of current application, mana-enhancing practice is weaved through Justina Webster's Tōu Ake Mana practice framework, developed within the youth transition





space. Tōu Ake Mana is based on the notion that everyone has mana and focuses on how practitioners work with vulnerable young Māori in the restoration and maintenance of mana. The application of the mana-enhancing paradigm for working effectively with tamariki Māori, including those with lived experiences of disability, is an area of further development.

Conclusion

A Mana-enhancing paradigm for practice has been developed and enriched over the past 40 years by Māori lived experiences, Māori practitioners and academics through a variety of practice, research and writings. There were also contributions from tauiwi bicultural advocates who recognised its importance within the Aotearoa New Zealand context. It was influenced by revolutionary material produced by international, national and indigenous writers over four decades (1952-1989). The Mana-enhancing paradigm for practice has five core components set out in the next section which speaks to its set of professional values and principles. These values, being the foundation that mana-enhancing practice was built and developed through, represent action, recognition and empowerment.



Core components of mana-enhancing practice



The following core components of Mana-enhancing practice outline key obligations for all Oranga Tamariki staff to implement:

Te Ao Māori is valuable knowledge

Understanding that indigenous world views and concepts are valuable, relational and restorative, provides the foundation for mana-enhancing practice. Te Ao Māori has fashioned ways for Māori to live life by (Pohatu, 2008) and has values, protocols and processes which were designed to safeguard wellbeing. Māori worldviews are diverse, distinctive and different to western worldviews. However, shared values and beliefs can be overtly identified.

The significance of history

Recognise and enact the historical relationships and obligations between Māori and tauiwi especially within context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The impact of colonisation resulted in high levels of socio-economic disparity and loss for Māori. Contemporary social work in Aotearoa works through these inequities, aiming to strengthen the conditions and cultural foundations that whānau require (Dobbs, 2015). The notions of self-determination, partnership, and indigenous rights that underpin contemporary culturally responsive social work practice can be traced back to the essence and spirit of Te Tiriti.

Valuing narratives as cultural identity

Recognise the importance of cultural narratives within social work promoters of Māori identity and healing. Oral traditions, whakapapa and whānau narratives weave together knowledge and histories which are key factors of Māori identity. These factors promote both individual and collective wellbeing, and influence Māori ways of knowing.

Māori concepts of wellbeing

Gain a deeper understanding of all foundational Te Ao Māori wellbeing concepts. Mana-enhancing practice identifies tapū, mauri and oranga as central principles of wellbeing that are irrevocably connected to each other in assessing trauma and wellbeing. It uses these to assist in maintaining, restoring and strengthening resilience, and protecting the health and wellbeing of tamariki. The application of all foundational Te Ao Māori concepts uses appropriate knowledge, skills and engagement approaches.

Principled practice

Understanding the importance of knowing one's own principles guiding their practice and acknowledging their role in someone else's wellbeing or healing journey. This means deliberate focus on the factors that construct, maintain and enhance therapeutic relationships and practices.



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