

Weaving together knowledge for wellbeing

Trauma informed approaches

Recognising, understanding and responding to trauma in an informed way leads to positive outcomes for people and whānau in Aotearoa

What you do every day makes a difference



Trauma is common

It is important to recognise that many people experience, and continue to experience, trauma in their lives

Trauma is the lasting adverse effects on a person's or collective's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual wellbeing, caused by events, circumstances or intergenerational historical traumatic experiences. (Adapted from SAMHSA, 2012)

For every 10 people, including children, trauma potentially impacts:

Dorsey et al., 2012; Skar et al., 2019; Walsh et al., 2019; Te Pou, 2018.



5 people in the general population



7 Māori people



8 people in prison



9 people who have accessed mental health and addiction services

The impact of trauma is influenced by past experiences and culture

Culture is central to people's identity. It influences how we relate to others, make sense of events, and heal. Culture plays an integral role in how we respond to trauma and support. When working across cultures different from your own, it is essential to be aware that trauma may manifest differently for people with different cultural worldviews.

Responding to trauma for Māori people contributes to better outcomes

Māori people experience trauma related to colonisation, racism and discrimination, negative stereotyping and experience greater rates of violence, poverty, and health related impacts. Effects of colonisation include severed ties with whakapapa, separation from language, and loss of cultural identity. The impacts of these have been passed down between generations, continuing the cycle of trauma. Understanding the healing power of cultural connection and Māori models of health and wellbeing will contribute to better outcomes for Māori whānau.

Responding to trauma for Pasifika peoples contributes to better outcomes

Pasifika peoples experience trauma related to their experiences of immigration, blending of two cultures, and loss of cultural identity. Establishing relationships and trust before addressing trauma is necessary to ensure partnership and healing with families. Before working with Pasifika peoples and their families it is important to enhance your knowledge, skills and confidence in this area.

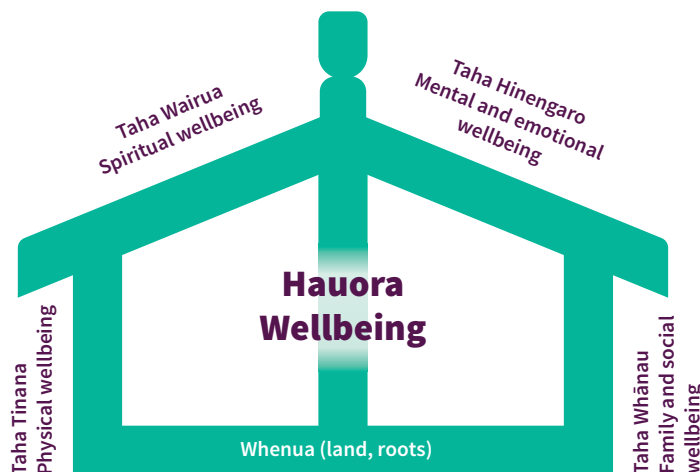
Many other community groups have also experienced high levels of trauma

Migrants and refugees have often experienced significant trauma related to war and conflict in their countries and communities, sometimes over generations. This can include more extreme trauma and dislocation from their families, communities and culture, as well as racism and discrimination in their new environment. Other population groups such as people in the rainbow community experience trauma related to stigma and discrimination. It is important to ensure these groups have equitable access to services.

Trauma potentially impacts all aspects of wellbeing for people, whānau and communities

Thoughts, behaviours, feelings, spiritual beliefs, relationships and physical health may reflect experiences of trauma

Te Whare Tapa Whā, which is based on the four interconnected aspects of wellbeing, provides a Māori perspective on health and offers a broad concept of wellbeing for everyone.



Durie, 1985

People's wellbeing depends on all aspects being in balance. When people experience trauma, this can impact all four aspects of their wellbeing.

Event	Experience	Effects
<p>Traumatic events can include experiencing or witnessing physical, emotional or sexual abuse; a serious incident; or losing a whānau member.</p> <p>A traumatic event can be one-off or ongoing. Multiple or ongoing traumatic events can have cumulative effects.</p> <p>Adverse events experienced in childhood can have impacts into adulthood.</p> <p>Historical events such as colonisation and migration are important to recognise and consider in the New Zealand context.</p>	<p>The impact of trauma is not the same for everyone. Having support and resources can help mitigate the potential risks and negative impacts.</p> <p>Protective factors include strong whānau relationships, access to meaningful help, and a safe environment.</p> <p>Risk factors can include multiple trauma exposures, poor health, or an unsafe environment.</p> <p>How a person experiences trauma and what meaning it has for them is heavily influenced by their culture.</p> <p>Trauma isn't just experienced by individual people. Trauma can be experienced by whānau and communities as well.</p>	<p>Trauma experienced earlier in life or trauma that is cumulative or ongoing is more likely to have adverse impacts.</p> <p>Children's development and functioning is particularly vulnerable to the impact of trauma.</p> <p>Trauma can have multiple effects, and affects everyone differently. However, ongoing impacts from trauma are not inevitable.</p> <p>It may not be obvious that someone has experienced trauma. The effects are often internalised and without the context of trauma, people's behaviour may be misunderstood.</p> <p>Effects of trauma depend on the resources of people, whānau and communities at that time.</p> <p>The effects of past and present trauma events can be passed down between generations.</p>

Supporting the strengths of people, whānau and communities inspires hope and the ability to heal from the effects of trauma

Trauma informed approaches focus on recognising and validating the trauma experiences of people and their potential to heal despite these events. This approach emphasises people's strengths and supports rather than focussing primarily on the negative outcomes or problems associated with trauma. Healing will happen in people's own time.

What you do every day can make a difference

Often the small things make the biggest difference

Working in a trauma informed way requires a shift in thinking from “*what is wrong with you*” to “*what happened to you and your whānau*”. The small things help to fill people’s kete of strengths.

People need to feel safe and empowered, and have their voices heard. Safety is particularly important for young people.

“A stable and secure relationship base for tamariki is critical to ensure wellbeing, mental health and development of resilience in the face of trauma. The way we engage with and support whānau is critical in helping them provide a stable base for tamariki.” - *Werry Workforce Whāraurau*

Creating a safe and empowering environment is supported by working in collaboration with people and whānau, peer support, and drawing on the healing value of traditional cultural connections.

“It wasn’t until I got the chance for some talk therapy with a skilled and very kind therapist that I felt safe enough to talk about what had happened to me. The relief was indescribable, I’d carried it alone for all those years... It wasn’t an instant cure, but it was the start of healing and my soul started to lighten.” - *Person accessing services*

Taking a cultural approach re-centres cultural identity as a central feature to wellbeing and recovery, and enhances protective factors, strengths and resiliency.

“A Māori view of health is holistic and centred on the collective rather than on the health and wellbeing of the individual alone. Cultural recovery – regaining language, heritage, custom, community - is important. Whānau need access to their traditional practices for healing.” - *Te Rau Ora*

“Pacific cultures are inherently collective and relational with a holistic perspective of well-being where cognitive, emotional, spiritual, physical, environmental and relational dimensions of the self are required to be in harmony for holistic well-being. The conceptualisation of balanced relationships and Pasifika values underpins many models of Pasifika wellbeing.” - *Le Va*

Values that promote a trauma informed approach

Let’s get real supports working in a trauma informed way. The values promote working together with people and whānau to build strengths and hope. Paying attention to the values which drive our practice is an important first step to working in a trauma informed way.



Let’s get real values Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui & Ministry of Health, 2018

Respect

Hope

Wellbeing

Manaaki

Partnership

Whanaungatanga

Working in a trauma informed way means weaving together knowledge, understanding and responses

This includes people, culture, systems and organisations

Being trauma informed requires a multi-level approach. Everyone in an organisation needs to understand the impact of trauma on themselves, people, whānau and other staff.

Systems and processes

Policy and processes that promote trauma informed approaches, values and attitudes

Identification of strategies for the integration of trauma informed approaches across the health and social sector

Adequate resourcing and flexibility that allows staff the time needed to support people and whānau with experiences of trauma

Position descriptions which highlight the need to work in a trauma informed way

Increase the peer workforce including both peer advisor and peer support roles

Processes that support screening for childhood trauma

Ensure outcomes data is collected to measure improvements in wellbeing, and equity of outcomes for Māori and Pasifika peoples

Implement quality improvement processes to identify areas for improvement

Organisations

Model and demonstrate leadership for building an organisational culture that reflects trauma informed values and approaches

Service design is informed by iwi to reflect Māori aspirations

Trauma informed approaches must involve assertive and innovative methods to eliminate racist behaviours

Identify actions that can retraumatise people, such as seclusion and restraint, and identify how these can be eliminated

Specific targeted strategies are needed to reduce the higher rates of restrictive practice use for Māori and Pasifika peoples

Support the development of trauma informed champions to lead and promote trauma informed approaches

Resource professional development opportunities including compulsory cultural competency programmes for all staff

Recognise that staff may have experienced trauma in their own lives, and working with people who have experienced trauma can have an impact on their wellbeing

Provide coaching and supervision to all staff

Implement workplace wellness programmes which create a culture that supports self-care

Create welcoming and safe environments for both staff and people who access services

Embed *Let's get real* and *Real Skills Plus CAMHS* (child and adolescent mental health services) into services

Utilise the Engaging Pasifika programme to develop skills and knowledge when working with Pasifika peoples

Workforce

Engage in opportunities to develop knowledge and skills to work in a trauma informed way

Develop engagement skills and cultural competency for working with Māori and Pasifika peoples

Engage in the coaching, supervision and mentoring processes

Develop self-care plans to support one's own wellbeing

Demonstrate a strengths-based approach in practice

Collect outcomes data to monitor people's progress and inform care plans

Involve whānau in the process of support and treatment

Recognise that practices such as seclusion and restraint can be retraumatizing for people

Actively use trauma informed approaches when planning treatment for people to avoid the use of restrictive practices such as seclusion

Further information

Te Rau Ora is New Zealand's indigenous Māori organisation providing a range of local and national programmes to improve Māori health. (www.terauora.com).

- McClintock, K., Haereroa, M., Brown, T., & Baker, M. (2018). *Kia hora te marino: Trauma-informed care for Māori*. Wellington: Te Rau Ora.
- Pihama, L., Smith, L., Evans-Campbell, T., Kohu-Morgan, H., Cameron, N., Mataki, T., Te Nana, R., & Southey, K. (2017). Investigating Māori approaches to trauma informed care. *Journal of Indigenous Wellbeing*, 2(3).

Le Va supports Pasifika families and communities to unleash their full potential and have the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes. (www.leva.co.nz).

- *Engaging Pasifika cultural competency program*.

Werry Workforce Whāraurau is the national centre for infant, child, youth and whānau mental health and addiction workforce development. (www.werryworkforce.org).

- Werry Workforce Whāraurau. (2017). *Development of a training programme in trauma-informed care for caregivers and frontline workers working with young people*. Unpublished report.

International sources

SAMSHA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative. (2014). *SAMSHA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

National Centre for Trauma informed Care. (2019). *TASH*. Available at <https://tash.org/nctic/>

- Kelly, W. (2017). *Trauma-informed care: Toward a practice framework in the care and protection and youth justice context in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Unpublished report.
- Werry Workforce Whāraurau e-module training of trauma-informed care (2019).

Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui is the national centre of evidence-based workforce development for the mental health, addiction and disability sectors in New Zealand. (www.tepou.co.nz).

- Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui. (2018). *Trauma-Informed Care: Literature Scan*. Hamilton: Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui.
- Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui & Ministry of Health. (2018). *Let's get real: Real Skills for working with people and whānau with mental health and addiction needs*. Auckland: Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui.

Matua Raki is the national addiction workforce programme within Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui.

