ministry for **Women**
minitatanga mō ngā
Wāhine

Wāhine Māori, Wāhine Ora, Wāhine Kaha:

preventing violence against Māori women

Author: *Ministry for Women*
February 2015

Disclaimer:

Published by:

Ahakoa he iti he pounamu

Although it is small, it is greenstone

Contents

Executive Summary

Primary prevention of violence against women is an approach that seeks to stop violence against women before it occurs in the first place. It is an internationally emerging field of practice with a growing evidence base about what works. However, research on how it is understood and how effective it is in diverse cultural contexts is limited.

This paper introduces an indigenous perspective to the international knowledge base for primary prevention of violence against women by exploring what Māori women believe to be protective factors for being safe from violence. A 'two house model' is used to analyse the worldviews of the research participants.

Māori women are twice as likely to experience violence as other New Zealand women and as Māori females are a relatively youthful sector of the New Zealand population ensuring the safety of Māori women and girls is key to the advancement of New Zealand women and girls.

Whānau has been identified as a protective factor for some women, yet for others it can potentially be a risk factor. Education, employment and positive association with an identity as Māori are supporting factors for well being but not to the extent that they prevent violence from occuring. Clarity of gender roles and responsibilities is important for good relationships within whānau, hapū and iwi and whether traditional or contemporary roles are prescribed to, the sense of understanding one's place, whether men or women, is crucial.

The types of primary prevention initiatives that are seen to be working have common characteristics that are holistic and inclusive by nature. They are designed 'locally', are strengths-based and steeped in the values of the communities for which they are designed. Effective initiatives require sound training and support for service providers, robust evaluation and prevention and quality awareness campaigns.

This research will provide the practical basis for service providers and policy makers who to develop approaches that will accomodate the specific perspectives and needs of Māori women and their whānau.

Introduction

"Safe, healthy and strong Māori women are change agents for their whānau, hapori, hapū and iwi"

This paper contributes to the New Zealand knowledge base about prevention of violence against women by ensuring that policy makers' and practitioners' understandings and approaches to primary prevention are meaningful for Māori women.

Prevention activities are commonly depicted as operating at three overlapping levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary prevention activities aim to prevent violence before it occurs, and are focused on populations or target groups, promoting non-violent and respectful behaviour. Secondary prevention activities aim to respond to the immediate needs of victims after incidents of violence. Tertiary prevention activities aim to provide support for the long-term recovery and safety of victims, and to strengthen ways in which perpetrators are held to account, treated and monitored.

Secondary and tertiary prevention activities are more common than primary prevention activities. However, with a growing international evidence base about promising practice in primary prevention, interest in these types of activities is increasing. This paper focuses on primary prevention of violence against Māori women. Māori women are twice as likely to experience violence as other women and as Māori females are a relatively youthful sector of the New Zealand population ensuring the safety of Māori women and girls is key to the advancement of New Zealand women and girls.

This paper introduces a number of Māori women's experiences to the international knowledge base for primary prevention of violence against women. While primary prevention is an emerging practice with a growing evidence base about what works, how it is observed, used or how effective it is in non-western contexts is less understood.

Purpose

"Whānau provides preventative layers for women and children"

The purpose of this paper is to assist agencies that work in New Zealand's family violence sector to recognise and respond to the expectations that Māori women have for themselves and for their whānau in terms of living violence-free lives. While it provides new insight, this research did not begin on a blank canvas. Importantly, it builds on an existing knowledge base and long-standing efforts across the family violence sector to reduce and prevent family violence in Māori homes. Māori have been very clear about the issue of family violence, and the solutions. This paper adds to that body of knowledge and practice by giving rise to the voice of Māori

women and service providers while also recognising the important contributions made by Māori men and whānau.

This research has whakapapa: an origin, a line of descent and connections with other entities. Its origins are in the Ministry for Women's (the Ministry) work on increasing women's safety from violence. The key impetus for this research was the Ministry's 2013 report *Current thinking on primary prevention of violence against women,* which acknowledged that primary prevention must be articulated and applied in a way that is meaningful to Māori. This research also supports Government's previous work for and with Māori, for example, *E Tu Whānau Programme of Action for Addressing Family Violence 2013 to 2018* by reinforcing and contributing further to this knowledge base.

There is clear conceptual alignment between the key messages from Māori and the key themes in primary prevention literature as shown in the table below.

Table One: Conceptual alignment between primary prevention and Māori views on family violence

Primary prevention denotes …	Māori have told Government …
Violence against women is not inevitable	Family violence is not traditional
Violence against women is preventable	Prevention and early intervention is important
Interventions are population based not individual focussed	Whānau, hapū and iwi remain permanent, core units, of Māori existence
The value of strengths based approaches	Being Māori is not the problem, it's the solution
Strengthening protective factors	Whānau have the solutions within

Scope

The focus of this paper is primary prevention of violence against Māori women. This encompasses all forms of men's violence against their female Māori partners as well as sexual violence in non-intimate relationships. It provides a high level overview of the factors that Māori women, service providers, men and whānau see as important in ensuring that Māori women are safe from violence throughout their lives. It also provides a high level overview of primary prevention initiatives in New Zealand that Māori women, service providers, men and whānau see as promising. Further work

needs to be done on evaluating the effectiveness of primary prevention initiatives - not just those identified by Māori but all primary prevention initiatives.

Literature Review

This is exploratory research. Previous literature on understanding primary prevention for Māori women is limited therefore this research provides an early contribution. International literature promotes high level, successful primary prevention initiatives, which work across multiple levels and contexts rather than just focussing on individuals. For example, the socio-ecological model (public health approach) acknowledges individuals within the broader context of their families, communities and societies. The Māori concepts of whānau, hapū and iwi also acknowledge individuals as part of wider contexts. At a more specific level, successful primary prevention initiatives are:

- strong on fostering networks and partnerships
- well-resourced, tailored to the audience and comprehensive
- equipped to deal with disclosure of violence
- promote healthy behaviours and challenge cultural norms
- promote victim empathy, not blaming
- include males as part of the solution

As discussed further in this report, many of these characteristics have been identified by research participants as effective or at least desirable.

Method and Analysis

This paper summarises the key themes that emerged from 11 hui (meetings) across four regions: Auckland, Hamilton Wellington and Christchurch. These hui were held in 2013 and facilitated by the Ministry and the Ministry of Social Development. Research participants included women and men who were representatives from Māori social service providers, iwi organisations and whānau.

Data were analysed against the following research objectives:

- to identify what Māori women and service providers think are the key determinants of Māori women's safety
- to explore service providers' level awareness and understanding the concept of primary prevention of violence against women
- to explore the extent to which service providers are developing and/or delivering services that promote primary prevention of violence against Māori women
- to the extent possible, identify good practice in primary prevention that is already occurring among providers and that could be shared
- to provide an evidence base to inform Government policy and service provider practice.

The research team drew on 'Ngā whare e rua: a two house model' (Jackson and Poananga, 2001) as the framework for analysis. This model acknowledges that there are two world views that exist in New Zealand society, one Māori and the other non- Māori as represented below.

Figure One: Ngā whare e rua: a two-house model

The first house, on the left, represents collectivism as its inhabitants are defined as groups (iwi, hapū and whānau) rather than individuals. This house is built upon a foundation of guardianship and responsibility, for the land, the water, the resources and the people. The second house by contrast, represents individualism as its inhabitants are defined by an individual, a master. This house is built upon a foundation of rights – political, economic, legal and social.

The research findings show that research participants, most of whom were Māori, can 'dwell' in both houses simultaneously, move from one to the other depending on context, choice and necessity, or remain in one house. In any case, 'household membership' is fluid, making participants' perspectives diverse and rich. Research participants' own words and thoughts are used throughout the report.

Structure

This report is structured in three main parts. The first part analyses the key themes that emerged throughout the 11 hui about the factors that keep Māori women from ever becoming victims of violence. The second part of this report identifies primary prevention initiatives that Māori women, service providers, men and whānau see as promising for ensuring Māori women's safety from violence. The third part of this report brings together what we have heard from Māori women, service providers, men and whānau, and what agencies in the New Zealand family violence sector can do to tie this into their policy and practice.

Understanding Primary Prevention

The challenge of intergenerational violence

The concept of primary prevention posed a challenge for some research participants who acknowledged that intergenerational violence amongst whānau and families adds a layer of complexity to understanding how to prevent violence for Māori women.

"Can we really say that there is such a thing as primary prevention? Is anyone ever really completely free from violence? If it's happened or is happening around you - in your whānau, community or society, are any of us really free from it?"

The concept of whakapapa (kinship) denotes that past, present and future generations are intrinsically interconnected to one another to the extent that violence and its impacts can be carried from one generation to the next and beyond. For example, for those who are not direct victims of violence, the impacts of violence on members of their whānau, present or past, may still be very real.

"I have never been subjected to violence personally but I feel the impact of the violence that my grandmother experienced. I know my grandmother loves us but she was scarred from the violence she experienced from my grandfather and it left her bitter and unable to be affectionate in the way that you see other grandmothers being affectionate"

This understanding of primary prevention is holistic. It acknowledges that individuals are connected to, and impacted by, wider entities. It aligns with a socio-ecological view of violence, and a Māori cultural view that understands violence as having a collective impact on whānau, hapū and iwi. While these views do not align tightly to the definition of primary prevention as we understand it as a mainstream, western concept in the current literature, it does not dismiss the legitimacy of primary prevention. Rather, it shows that there are different ways, for example, different cultural contexts, in which primary prevention can be viewed and interpreted. This research opens up the possibility of primary prevention to be understood in these different contexts and to be articulated in a way that is meaningful to diverse cultures. The following sections of this paper demonstrate this.

Whānau can be both a protective and risk factor for violence

Whānau is the most common theme to have emerged in the research. The traditional structure of the whānau and its significance for women's safety and wellbeing is described by Mikaere (1994).

"The whānau was a woman's primary source of support. Her "marriage" did not entail a transferral of property from her father to her spouse. She remained a part of the whānau. Even if she went to live with her husband's whānau, she remained a part of

her whānau, to whom her in-laws were responsible for her well-being. They were to ensure that she was well-treated and to support her."

In most instances, whānau is defined as an extended kinship-based unit with clear responsibilities and obligations for all who are part of it.

"Everyone has a role to play in the whānau, and interdependence is sought over independence. It's about doing things together and for each other"

"In my whānau, it's also my job to raise my girls. That's not just up to my darling, it's my job too and all fathers should play a role in raising their kids"

Te Puni Kōkiri (2005) defines whānau as also being a collective of people who share a common purpose. Some research participants drew on this concept of whānau also.

"I have a whānau that I am related to but I also refer to the people I work with as whānau too because we're all on the same kaupapa and we spend so much time together doing what is important to us"

Whānau was the most sharply debated concept in terms of whether it is a unit in which women are safe from, or at risk of, family violence. Some research participants described whānau as a protective factor.

"I am nothing without my whānau and my reo (Māori language). It keeps me nourished, safe and it makes me who I am today, warts and all."

"My whole family looks out for us girls. They'll never let anything bad happen to us. My cousins are like brothers to us. We all grew up together and we're really tight."

"Whānau provides preventative layers for women and children."

Other research participants described whānau as a risk factor.

"Home is the most unsafe place for many women. Some women are safer on the street."

"That's why family violence is called family violence. You're not safe with your famliy and far too many women and children are unsafe among their whānau."

Some research participants reflected on situations where women had deliberately reduced or diminished links with their whānau, whether the entire collective or certain individuals, in order to escape from family violence. These instances were not only in relation to women who had chosen to leave an abusive relationship. Some women had relinquished whānau ties because they saw whānau as remiss for failing to recognise and intervene in violent situations.

"Some whānau still choose to ignore violence in their homes and communities."

Some research participants reflected on how service providers can become whānau for some women. They also spoke about their deliberate acts of establishing other whānau-type relationships and networks, referred to by Metge (1995) as 'kaupapa whanau' to substitute the whānau they had 'left'.

"You don't get to choose your whānau but you can unchoose them – I did."

The erosion of the traditional whānau structure is seen by some research participants as problematic.

"Māori women were the cornerstone of whanau."

Some research participants also view the whānau unit as having been disempowered over time and thereby dispossessed of its ability to fulfil the function of ensuring wellbeing.

"Whānau know what is best. Māori have always known what is best for them. Whānau need to be reinstated with the power to decide for them what works."

"Whānau have the solutions within."

The concept of whānau is a clear example of a population-based, strengths-based, protective factor for violence against women. The challenge here is to simultaneously manage the risk factor that has also been identified by research participants.

Research findings show that whānau membership is fluid with some research participants feeling comfortable to establish themselves in whānau structures that do not require kinship status. It is clear from the findings that whānau comes with a set of expectations and duties that in some women's experiences are not always met, for instance, the expectation and duty to keep women safe. The research findings also show that there is a call for a renewed recognition of the traditional whānau structure, a message that echoes the key messages from Māori in the *E Tu Whānau Programme of Action for Addressing Family Violence 2013 to 2018*. Mikaere (1994) writes:

"The challenge for Māori, women and men, is to rediscover and reassert tikanga Māori within our own whānau, and to understand that an existence where men have power and authority over women and children is not in accordance with tikanga Māori. Such an existence stems instead from an ancient common law tradition which has been imposed upon us, a tradition with which we have no affinity and which we have every reason to reject."

Education supports women to be independent

Education is important to Māori women. Particpants clearly link education and women's safety from violence. To understand the significance of this relationship , it is first important to note that education is defined by research participants as both formal and informal modes of learning.

Education was recognised as a structured learning process undertaken within New Zealand's education system, for instance, attending school and undertaking tertiary study to obtain qualifications such as National Certificate in Educational Attainment (NCEA), certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

"Education is key. If parents are not getting their kids off to school each day, they are dong their kids a disservice. How are they going to get on in life without education?"

Education was also seen as a process of acquiring knowledge, both academic and cultural, outside New Zealand's education system. Some examples of this include traditional, cultural knowledge passed through generations, such as knowledge of whakapapa (kinship and relationships between people and their environments), and practical skills acquired through participation in cultural events such as tangihanga (funeral) on the marae.

"Education is not just about going to kura (school) and then university to get a degree. It's about knowing who you are and where you come from. No point in having a flash degree if you don't know where you come from."

The distinction between formal and informal education demonstrates the *Nga whare e rua: a two house model*. Some participants recognising foremost the value of knowledge from whānau, hapū and iwi while others recognising foremost the value of Government structures that exist for the acquisition of knowledge – for instance, schools. There was consensus amongst the group that using education to enhance Māori women's positive cultural identity was significant. This gave rise to discussion about the importance of ensuring Māori women have a positive identity as Māori as it was believed to be a protective factor. This is discussed later in this report.

All research participants agreed that education, whether formal or informal, is important not only for Māori women but also for their children.

"My goals in life are first, to educate my kids, then pay my mortgage and then travel."

"If all I do as a parent is feed, clothe, shelter and educate my kids, I'm happy."

Education is described as a tool of empowerment rather than a primary prevention approach. However, because education is described as a factor that creates opportunity and economic and social independance, it can be seen as an important

requisite to women's safety. The notion that education is a concept that is far wider than a formal education and has links with cultural identity means that there is further scope to understand the intersect between education and culture, and how formal education that embraces culture might be valuable in primary prevention approaches.

Employment supports women's access to the economy

Much of the discussion about education was linked strongly to employment outcomes.

"Education means that you have more chance of getting a job in later life. And, having a job, means that you can look after yourself and your family."

"My cousins who stayed at school and then went to University have better jobs and therefore can do the things that they want to."

It is here that a link begins to emerge for some research participants between education and women's safety from violence. A common line of reasoning was that education (whether formal or informal) enhances employment opportunities for women. Employment then avails freedom of choice and independence, which gives women power in a relationship to decide, should she not feel safe in that relationship, whether she wants to 'stay' or 'leave'.

"My job made it easy for me to say "No more". Even though he was not cruel – he didn't hit me – he made all of the decisions. Where we went on holiday. What school our kids would go to. Where we lived. We're still together but I have more say now."

"Having an income means you know you have a life beyond the relationship you're in."

"Economic independence, adequate income and education all act as a buffer against violence."

"Education provides Māori women with confidence, builds resilience and provide them with the means to leave potentially violent relationships."

Education and employment were not always seen as protective factors against violence for Māori women.

"You can be educated, professional and high profile. Your partner can be all those things too. It doesn't mean to say that he won't hit you."

Such feedback aligns with the premise that family violence affects everyone and can occur in any community regardless of social, professional, socio-economic and ethnic status.

Education and employment are important for Māori women and their families but do not necessarily prevent violence from occuring. To this end, education and employment can be seen as supportive rather than protective factors for women.

Matauranga Māori is a starting point for some Māori women

Matauranga Māori is a modern term for a body of knowledge that was brought to New Zealand by Polynesian ancestors of present-day Māori (Smith, 1990). Many research participants saw matauranga Māori as a starting point for understanding contemporary social issues including family violence and what it takes to prevent it.

"Violence and 'prevention' occured in traditional Māori society. None of that is new. But, what is new is how it's deterred or discouraged from happening, how it's dealt with if it does happen."

"Domestic violence, when it did happen, was named, talked about openly and dealt with swiftly. There were no surprises about what would happen to you if you were found to be violent. Everyone knew the "he" (crime) and everyone knew the consequences, and no one put up with it."

When research participants were asked to share their thoughts on what kept Māori women safe from ever becoming victims of violence, matauranga Māori was also a common reference point.

"Men who know the importance of a woman's role, for example childbearing and the housing of mankind in the whare tangata (womb), they know how sacred women are."

Matauranga Māori, though the starting point, was not always the end point in understanding what primary prevention might mean for Māori women. Participants acknowledged matauranga Māori has not been passed down through every generation in some whānau. In some cases, the interpretation of matauranga Māori had evolved.

"Tikanga (Māori etiquette) is not inflexible, it has evolved."

"It's alright if you know who you are and you know Māori tikanga and history but what if you don't? Or what if it doesn't apply anymore in modern society. Then, you have to go with mainstream solutions."

The concepts of tapu (sacred), wairua (spirituality) and mana (prestige) were key points of reference when research particpants considered what kept Māori women safe from ever becoming victims of violence.

"Tapu is lore. It controls behaviour. It determines consequence too."

"When you are aware of the importance of wairua, and everyone has wairua, you are aware of the impact of what you do – not just to a physical person – but to wairua, not just the wairua of that person, but that of their whānau, hapū and iwi."

"Mana enhancing actions keep women safe from becoming victims of violence. When people feel good about themselves, they project that. When people feel their mana is being transgressed, and they don't have the skills to cope with that, ensuring support is crucial."

Like whānau, matauranga Māori can be seen as a strengths-based, protective factor against violence, which aligns with current understandings of primary prevention.

Māori identity is important but not a key protective factor for all

Māori identity was a significant key theme throughout the discussions on matauranga Māori. As with previous themes, the idea that Māori identity is a protective factor that keeps women safe from violence, is debatable.

There were diverse views amongst particpants on what constituted Māori identity. Some viewed Māori identity as an outcome of their Māori ancestry.

"I am Māori but I don't speak Māori. It doesn't make me any less Māori than someone who does"

"If Māori is in your whakapapa then you are Māori. It doesn't matter 'how much' Māori you are. You are just Māori"

"Identity goes back to whakapapa"

"Mauri or life force was gifted through my DNA"

Others viewed their ability to speak te reo Māori and connect with their marae and Māori cultural practices as a defining part of being Māori.

"I started taking te reo Māori classes and now I really feel as if I can value that part of who I am. I could never express it before so it didn't seem real.

"Kapa haka makes me feel so alive and the one place where I can unashamedly and unapologetically be who I am – Māori."

However, the value placed on these aspects of 'being Māori' varied when it came to discussing the significance of identity and whakapapa (kinship) in relation to preventing violence against women. Some research participants believe that these are protective factors:

"You know who you are so you feel strong in that and responsible to your whānau so you don't want to hurt them."

"Tane tupono, a man who stands in his own truth is a man who knows the importance of women ... "

"When you know your history, how life used to be, your whakapapa, identity … you have something to live by."

Other participants believe strongly that a sense of Māori identity has little to do with behaviour.

"I have stood up at marae and turned my back on leaders on the paepae, and refused to face them because of their behaviour. The fact that they hold positions on the paepae is a disgrace and makes no difference to their judgement."

"There are men who know who they are and are strong in their identity, but are still perpetrators of violence."

Perspectives varied with regard to the link between women being strong in their Māori identity and their level of vulnerability to violence. Some research participants saw Māori identity as a protective factor.

"Knowing who you are gives you self worth, that you are not likely to let be taken away from you."

Other research participants did not see Māori identity as a powerful influencer of behaviour.

"Domestic violence has no boundaries. It can happen to anyone. Rich. Poor. Māori. Non-Māori. And it doesn't matter 'how Māori' you think you are."

"Being Māori and knowing it doesn't stop him from raising a hand when he is angry"

Gender Roles and Responsibilities

A clear and consistent understanding of gender roles and responsibilities is crucial in understanding relationships between men and women and therefore the harmony that exists when families live in a violence free state. Mikaere (1994) acknowledges that the roles of men and women in traditional Māori society can be understood only in the context of a Māori world perspective. This was a view that was shared clearly by most research participants.

"When you look at relationships, like those between women and men, through a Māori lens, it's only then that you understand and appreciate that equality does exist between men and women."

"Men and women in Māori society are just as important as one another. The tasks they perform are different but of equal value to whānau, iwi and hapū."

These research participants spoke from the first house (Māori world view) in the *Nga whare e rua: a two house model* where complementarity, collectivism and interdependence are highly valued. There were other views that may be seen to be derived from a non-Māori world view or the second house of the *Nga whare e rua: a two house model* where power, individualism and ownership are key features.

"Women are powerful and they should exert that if they need to. If women can be educated, have jobs and create their own opportunities, they don't need men."

Regardless of which perspective research participants spoke from, there was consensus that women are more likely to be safe from violence when everyone in the whānau and community understands and agrees on each other's roles and responsibilities, or rights and obligations, however they may be defined.

The following sections look at the role of men and women to help understand the gender paradigm in Māori culture.

The role of tane (men)

> *"Women are safe when they are among both men and women who stand in their own truth: tane tupono, wāhine tupono"*

Participants had a different view on the role of tane and their impact on keeping Māori women safe from violence. Some research particpants believed that Māori men are 'out of touch' with their role within the whānau and that this is a risk factor for women's safety.

"Māori men do not know their role. They feel lost in a world of high expectations where you have to 'man up' to everything. When they cannot, they take it out on their wife and kids. Not all the time but it only takes one time for a woman to feel unsafe."

"The role of men in the whānau has disappeared."

Others believed that women could be more generous in their learning and understanding of the role of tane in the whānau.

"Women do not realise the significance of the traditional male role."

"The man's role needs to be equally valued by women."

Equally there was a certain expectation by and of Māori men that they should take a stronger role in caregiving and child rearing.

"Women do everything for the whānau and there is no reason why men cannot step up to the plate and do some of it. It's not like traditional time where men had to hunt and gather. Men are at home more now."

With regard to men raising girls, this was seen by one male participant as influential to ensuring his daughters made 'good' decisions about their future partners.

"I am hands-on with the upbringing of my girls. I have four girls and I am their 'benchmark'. If they get partners that are not treating them the way that I do, with love, care and kindness, they will know and hopefully make a good choice."

Research participants also spoke of the crucial role of fathers in ensuring their sons grew to respect women.

"Teach your sons to treat women well."

"I see it at taiaha wānanga. The men care for their sons, cook for them. There is a softness and kindness in the men. The men are tanetoa (strong men) but you can see the caring side, not just the warrior."

In summary, the role of tane in the whānau was not consistently agreed upon. However, there is agreement that the role of tane whether as fathers or partners is important in keeping women safe from violence. Engaging men and boys in discussions about violence prevention is also seen as an important factor for keeping women safe from becoming victims of violence.

The role of wāhine (women)

Discussion about the role of wāhine in ensuring women's safety, was laden with references to purakau (Māori legends). The value of purakau in research participant understandings of the traditional role of women and how it shapes the contemporary role, is very clear.

"In Māori mythology, who were the powerful beings? They were women. Hine-ahu-one, the first woman. Hine-titama who then became Hine-nui-te-pō, the personification of death. Mahuika, the fire Goddess. Among these are nurturers, providers and leaders. Māori women today continue to be all of these things."

Many research participants recognised that the role of Māori women is different, more dynamic (though no more important) than the role of women in previous generations.

"My mother and grandmother had the privilege of raising us full time and serving their communities. That was their life. I have the privilege of having a full time job, while raising my kids. Things have changed but the contributions we make as women are still equally important."

Some research participants went further to link the role of Māori women today as working parents as a protective factor because as discussed in a previous section, employment and income creates opportunity and choice.

"Women don't need to compromise themselves as much when they are earning an income."

It is here that research participants recognised the potential of safe, well and strong Māori women.

"When Māori are safe, they lead their families onto great things because when they change their future, they change the future of their whānau and sometimes their communities."

The role of Māori women has been seen in a traditional light, in the present day context and as change agency for the future. It is this sense of strong expectation that drives many of the research participants to learn more about primary prevention of violence against women. Māori women expect to be safe, and they expect to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those that they love.

Primary Prevention in Māori Communities

Whakawhanaungatanga

Whakawhanaungatanga is the act of people making personal connections with one another. Research participants were very clear about the long-standing ideals of this concept.

"Māori have been doing primary prevention for a long time. We just call it, whanaungatanga (being together), tikanga (the correct way to do something), manaaki (care and respect), aroha (love) and things like that. It's not a programme or plan. It's a way of life"

There were some specific examples of more structured activities that research participants saw as being primary prevention in approach. These included whānau days, parenting classes, education in healthy relationships including school based programmes in kura kaupapa Māori.

What is working?

Research participants identified a range of programmes that they saw as successful primary prevention initiatives in Māori communities. The key components of these initiatives were that they were:

- developed and designed principally by those in the communities in which they were being implemented
- focussed heavily on positive relationships within families, extended families and communities
- strengths-based, that is, building on what families and communities do well rather than what they are not doing enough of
- led by those who are part of the community
- have a component of Māori culture, for example, kapa haka, te reo Māori
- in line with the existing values and principles of the communities in which they are implemented
- not necessarily Government-funded
- sustained and ongoing rather than one-off programmes.

Research participants, though acknowledging primary prenvetion as an emerging field in international literature, did not necessarily see the above components as new or ground-breaking. Rather, research participants recognised many of these types of initiatives and practices as steeped in Māori cultural values.

What is hindering progress?

In general, participants are concerned about the level of resourcing it takes to provide services, the level of understanding and skill it takes to deliver services effectively, and the level of funding it takes to make services, and therefore outcomes, sustainable.

With specific regard to primary prevention of violence initiatives for Māori women, research participants consider evidence to be important but not at the cost of action.

"We can't afford to wait until we know everything. We are never going to know everything. We need to do something. Take action. Give it our best guess at the time. Our women are worth it. Our children are worth it."

Some participants were very aware of the challenges that arise in evaluating primary prevention initiatives.

"How do you measure the impact of something that hasn't happened?"

"You have to make safety your starting point, and any thing less than that, regardless of how bad it is, is not good enough."

In addition, participants believed that training and support for service providers, effective evaluation of these and prevention/public awareness campaigns are needed in order to better promote primary prevention of violence against Māori women.

Conclusion

This report demonstrates the diversity of interpretation and opinion on what it takes to keep Māori women safe from ever becoming victims of violence. However, we know that there are some key themes. We know that whānau is a protective factor for some where as for others, it is a risk factor. Education, employment and Māori identity are supporting factors for well being but not to the extent that they prevent violence from occuring. Clarity of gender roles and responsibilities are important for good relationships within whānau, hapū and iwi and whether traditional or contemporary roles are prescribed to, the sense of understanding one's place, whether men or women, is crucial.

The diversity of experience among research participants has meant that research insights in this report can be located in a number of places within 'Ngā whare e rua: a two house model' framework. This is not to say that research participants necessarily subscribe to either one of the houses. Rather, it indicates diverse and dynamic participants' experiences are. Importantly, it shows that Māori women have more than one voice though they are united on many issues.

As a document to inform future practice, this report shows that there are community-based approaches that operate on the premise that safe communities are nourished by healthy families and whānau. We know that service providers understand what they need in order to further develop primary prevention initiatives.

This research will provide the practical basis for service providers and policy makers who to develop approaches that will accomodate the specific perspectives and needs of Māori women and their whānau.

REFERENCES

Jackson, Moana, and Poananga, Atareta. (2001). The Two House Model. Wellington.

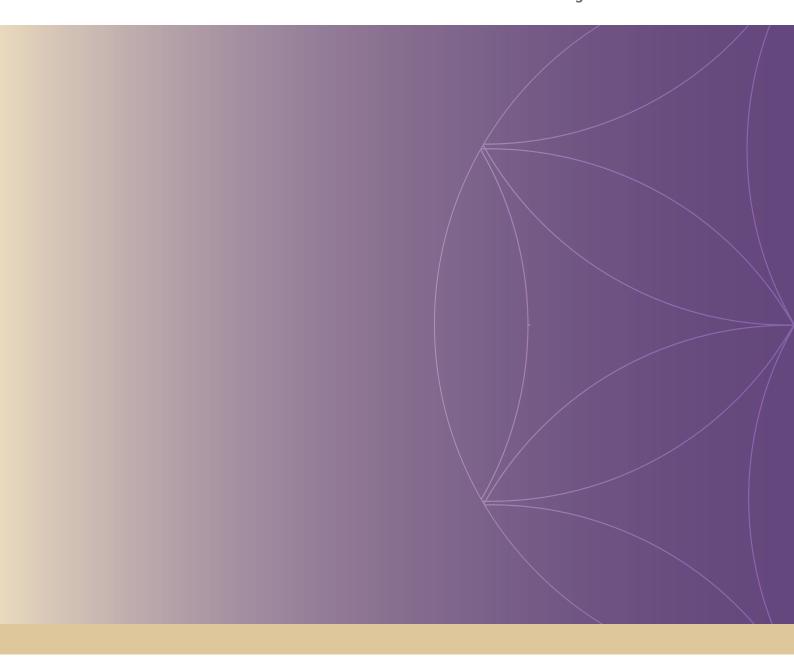Metge, Joan. (1995). *New Growth from Old: The Whānau in the Modern World.*

Mikaere, Professor Annie. (1994). *Māori Women: caught in the contradictions of a colonised reality.*
http://www.waikato.ac.nz/law/research/waikato_law_review/volume_2_1994/7

Smith, Graham. (1990). *Research Issues Related to Māori Education*, paper presented to NZARE Special Interest Conference, Massey University, reprinted in 1992, The Issue of Research and Māori, Research Unit for Māori Education, The University of Auckland.

Te Puni Kōkiri (2008). *Tiaki Tinana: A case study about creating conversations about sexual violence.* Wellington.