He körari, he kete, he körero

Moana Eruera

He uri tënei no Te Tai Tokerau, no Ngäpuhi nui tonu.
Ko Moana Eruera ahau e mihi atu nei, e tangi atu ki a koutou, tënä koutou, tënä koutou, tënä koutou katoa.

Weaving together traditional Mäori knowledge from the past
with our current practice realities of the present
as a guide for the provision of tangata whenua supervision for the future.

Körari as it is known in Te Tai Tokerau, commonly called flax or harakeke, is an important natural resource our tüpuna used for a range of purposes. Körari contains healing qualities and one of its practical uses both traditionally and today is weaving, and in particular weaving kete. Kete are symbolic in our whakapapa stories about the pursuit and application of knowledge and the tikanga used for weaving contain important stories, principles and practices that can guide us in our mahi and our lives.

Introduction

He Körero Körari is a tangata whenua supervision framework that uses the analogy of weaving a kete as a guide for developing responsive supervision for tangata whenua. It supports kaiärahi when constructing their supervision philosophy, principles and practices for working with Mäori supervisees towards 'best practice' with whänau Mäori. This article, He körari, he kete, he körero builds on the framework. 'He körari' is the natural resource or your innate attributes and skills, 'he kete' is your supervision practice made up of strands of your knowledge, experiences, values and skills woven together to form a safe, competent and responsive supervision process. 'He körero' enables Mäori practitioners to openly share and contribute their stories so that the kaiärahi can facilitate a process for them to reflect, learn, develop and seek support to enhance practice.

The He Körero Körari framework, developed from a tangata whenua research project completed in Te Tai Tokerau in 2005, combined information from kaumätua and kuia, kaiärahi Mäori (Maori supervisors), and kaitiaki Mäori (Mäori supervisees) with literature. Initially it was created with a focus on Kaupapa Mäori supervision, specifically by Mäori for Mäori working with whänau Mäori. Since that time the framework has been trialed with Mäori in a range of practice contexts, including the design and delivery of a training package and the presentation of the framework at various supervision hui, conferences and forums. This initial emphasis on Mäori was intentional to support validation of Mäori supervision approaches and encourage kaiärahi Mäori to develop and be confident in the use of our own processes when supervising Mäori supervisees. However since then there have been requests for supervision approaches that support Tauiwi supervising Mäori practitioners. The He Körero Körari framework has therefore been used to support development and thinking around supervision for Mäori regardless of the ethnicity of supervisors.

This article provides an overview of the He Kōrero Kōrari supervision framework and shares examples of its application in a range of different fields of practice including: whānau violence prevention, statutory work, whānau ora and iwi social services within Te Tai Tokerau. It is a tribute to all those who have challenged the boundaries for tangata whenua inclusion and participation in social work and supervision within Aotearoa in the pursuit of our own Māori approaches and frameworks for practice.

Tangata whenua and supervision

The maintenance of well-being for Māori social and community workers to achieve effective work with whānau Māori is challenging, impacted by a broad range of factors. The processes used to support this work, such as supervision, are critical for the safe, competent and accountable delivery of services to whānau.

With the increase in the development of Māori frameworks, whānau ora policies, whānau-centred approaches and the delivery of iwi social services, the practice of supervision to support these processes is imperative. The issues Māori practitioners face when working with our own people are multifaceted, whether we are located within a statutory, community or iwi organisation. Examples of these issues may include: meeting the cultural needs of whānau Māori engaged with mainstream organisations and practice models, provision of effective services for Māori who are at varied and diverse stages in their cultural development, and practitioners achieving a balance between the expectations of their paid employment and the expectations and collective responsibilities of our Māori communities. The interface between Māori practitioner cultural and clinical interventions, professional and personal accountabilities, collective and individual obligations, and other issues must be navigated well. Resolution of these issues can be challenging and often result in ethical dilemmas, cultural tensions and compromises of one's own cultural values and beliefs. As such many Māori practitioners who are committed to improving the 'ora' of whānau they work with may compromise their own 'oranga' or wellness if not fully supported through effective supervision. Although as Māori we are diverse in our thinking and experiences, a tangata whenua supervision framework with foundation principles can provide a guide to support kaiārahi in their practice context. It can assist to facilitate a process for the practitioner in coming to terms with these realities in order to find a place of personal and professional satisfaction in their practice.

Constructing a tangata whenua identity for supervision in Aotearoa
Supervision has developed extensively over the past 10 years striving to form a unique identity within the Aotearoa context. These developments include: indigenous and cultural supervision frameworks, professional standards, research and writing, and an increase in the use of supervision across social, health and education sectors. The importance of tangata whenua frameworks for supervision are critical in this development to support 'best practices' when working with Māori.

Tangata whenua of Aotearoa, alongside other indigenous and minority groups throughout the world, continue to progress the development of our own cultural frameworks and models of practice. Tangata whenua frameworks founded on cultural knowledge, values, principles, beliefs and customary practices contribute to Māori development, self-determination and improved wellbeing for whānau Māori. These frameworks directly influence best

practice and cultural competence by ensuring that practitioners can articulate and evidence how cultural constructs guide and inform their professional practice.

The increase in the development and practice of supervision frameworks by Māori practitioners is encouraging and contributes to the progress of 'best practices' for whānau. However, we must continue to challenge ourselves to gather the stories and examples of change to support evidence of the effectiveness of Kaupapa Māori supervision.

Definitions

An important part of developing a tangata whenua identity for supervision in Aotearoa is contributing to the debates and discourse of defining and describing supervision principles and practices from a Māori worldview. Within the social and community work context there are broad and varied understandings about the terms Kaupapa Māori supervision, cultural supervision, bicultural supervision and others. For the purposes of this article Kaupapa Māori has been defined as: 'an agreed supervision relationship by Māori for Māori with the purpose of enabling the supervisee to achieve safe and accountable professional practice, cultural development and self-care according to the philosophy, principles and practices derived from a Māori worldview' (Eruera, 2005, p. 64). There are also many perspectives about kupu Māori used to describe supervision terms. Evidence gathered through the Te Tai Tokerau supervision research project showed that the most common kupu used for supervisor at that time was 'kaiārahi' and 'kaitiaki' for supervisee, therefore these terms have been adopted for this writing. However, this may be different for other rohe and Māori practitioners are encouraged to explore and use 'te reo ö te kainga' or kupu relevant to their own iwi within their supervision practices.

As Māori our diversity often reflects iwi uniqueness through mātauranga, tikanga and reo from our own whakapapa and rohe. However, existing Māori models and frameworks demonstrate clearly some common understandings around core principles, values and beliefs that guide our work albeit expressed in a variety of ways within practice. Therefore it is important that Māori supervision practitioners have the opportunity and forums to continue to explore and progress these developments towards supervision for Māori.

Carroll (2000:12) draws the distinction between a 'philosophy of supervision' which focuses on the 'being of people' and the meaning supervision has for us as an ongoing extension of our lives, and 'functional supervision' which he describes as applied techniques, strategies and methods. This article focuses on these two concepts as follows:

i) *He Körero Körari* – a tangata whenua framework including 'philosophy for supervision' which identifies and describes how kaupapa Māori principles inform supervision practice.
ii) *Te Whiriwhiringa* – tangata whenua 'functional supervision' approaches provide an overview of Kaupapa Māori supervision constructs in a range of fields of practice.

Wähanga 1

He Körero Körari (A tangata whenua framework for supervision)

He Körero Körari – Weaving occurs in many cultures, however, raranga is the process that belongs to Māori using our unique knowledge, practices and skills to ensure preservation

of the process within our culture. Although based on traditional beliefs and customary practices raranga has evolved within our modern context with the use of new materials, dyes and design to meet the needs of contemporary society.

I liken this process to Kaupapa Māori supervision. Supervision is a process used throughout the world as a social work imperative for best practice, however Kaupapa Māori supervision is specific to Māori and is developing its own identity within supervision in Aotearoa. The weaving of this supervision kete starts in Te Ao Māori which provides the foundation, guides the process and holds the rest of the strands in place in order to achieve a successful outcome.

Mātauranga Māori (Kaupapa Māori supervision knowledge base)

He Kōrero Kōrari – The raranga artform has a cultural knowledge base of its own. This includes knowledge of Kōrari, raranga processes, cultural processes to ensure Kōrari preservation and safety, acknowledgement of experiences of the weaver, whānau legacies and many others. However, to demonstrate understanding of this knowledge it must be applied to the practice of weaving to produce the kete as an outcome.

Similarly Kaupapa Māori supervision has a specific and valid knowledge base, grounded in traditional Māori values, principles and customary practices combined with technical knowledge and skills to meet the contemporary needs of tangata whenua social workers within their organisations and the profession. Cultural knowledge may include 'te reo me ōna tikanga,' the dynamics of whānau, local history, access to kaumātua and kuia, whakapapa, the impacts of colonisation on whānau Māori, waiata and many others. The accumulation of cultural knowledge is a developmental journey and the effects of colonisation are such that it cannot be assumed that all 'kaiārahi' Māori are confident in this knowledge. Tangata whenua are diverse in cultural knowledge and it is important to discuss cultural knowledge and development when negotiating expectations for supervision.

Whakapapa (inter-relatedness of atua, tangata and whenua relationships within supervision)

He Kōrero Kōrari – The raranga process has a whakapapa that demonstrates the connections through whakapapa which link spiritual, natural and human dimensions; that is, the whakapapa of creation (wairua/atua), the whakapapa of the Kōrari (whenua) and the whakapapa of the weaver (tangata).

Whakapapa as a construct connects spiritual, physical and environmental realms. Ruwhiu (2009) highlights the importance of awareness of this interrelatedness when working with Māori. All Māori have whakapapa and a whakapapa analysis honours diversity and difference (Kruger, et al., 2004). Within the supervision context knowing how to engage, maintain and facilitate exploration of the spiritual, physical and environmental spheres with the supervisee themselves and in their practice with whānau Māori is fundamental to a Kaupapa Māori approach.

Tikanga (Kaupapa Māori supervision processes and protocols)

He Kōrero Kōrari – There are cultural processes and protocols within the gathering and use of Kōrari, which must be adhered to, that ensure and guide the safe and successful practice of weaving a kete. Tikanga are used when cutting the Kōrari such as karakia, methods of conservation such as not cutting the Kōrari when it is raining as it may damage the plant and cutting only the outer shoots so the baby shoots will continue to grow.

Tikanga may be described as the way we practise what we believe in as Māori, therefore, it is founded on core Māori principles and values. Tikanga constructs processes and parameters for ethical and healthy behaviours within a cultural context and reflects them in practical ways. Kaupapa Māori supervision establishes tikanga often expressed through customary practices to ensure a meaningful and safe encounter within the supervision session. In order to do so Kaupapa kaiārahi Māori must be clear about their principles for supervision practice and then facilitate their application within the process.

Mohiotanga (Kaupapa Māori kaiārahi experiences and knowing)

He Kōrero Kōrari – The successful completion and quality of a kete involves a combination of natural abilities, skills and learning obtained through our lived experiences.

Royal (2005) states that, 'mohiotanga can be viewed as 'internalised or embodied knowing', one that does not require an exchange (of knowledge) to be present in one's consciousness." Kaupapa Māori supervision is influenced by the cultural experiences and knowing of the kaiārahi and how these contribute to the understanding and integration of cultural knowledge and practices into their facilitation of supervision. For example, this may include exploring how cultural roles and responsibilities such as kaipōwhiri (also known as kaikaranga) may inform supervision practice.

Pukenga (Kaupapa Māori supervision skills and attributes)

He Kōrero Kōrari – Raranga as an art form requires skills, some which are formed from personal attributes and others which can be learned and practised in order to develop competence. As raranga evolves, new skills may be required to meet the demands of a modern context such as different patterns, designs and dyes used to achieve the required outcomes.

There are a broad range of skills required to implement Kaupapa Māori supervision. Alongside the skills used by all supervisors, there are those cultural skills which may include: competence in reo Māori, facilitate connectedness of atua, tangata and whenua, the ability to frame concepts and facilitate thinking within a Māori worldview, guide and apply tikanga and other such skills.

Summary

Weaving together the strands that form tangata whenua supervision frameworks is an ongoing process of development for kaiārahi Māori. They are not prescriptive or definitive but challenge kaiārahi Māori to continue progressing our own cultural supervision practices as an imperative to improved 'oranga' for Māori practitioners and best practice for whānau Māori using social and community work services.

Wahanga 2

Te Whiriwhiringa (Tangata whenua 'functional supervision' approaches)

The He Kōrero Kōrari framework has been used to support development of Kaupapa Māori supervision in a range of practice settings. The following provides four short summaries that evidence and give insights into developments in Kaupapa Māori supervision approaches. The summary includes the supervision context, whainga – or supervision goal, tikanga – or supervision process used and painga – or supervision developments achieved.

1. Iwi social services

Kaupapa Mäori Supervision in this context was provided to support Iwi social services team leaders to facilitate supervision that embeds their Mäori practice models into their work with whänau Mäori. This provider has a commitment to the promotion and implementation of Mäori models as best practice for working with whänau Mäori. As such they trained all of their staff in the Dynamics of Whanaungatanga[1] (DOW) model as well as the Mauri Ora[2] model for addressing whänau violence and want to ensure that supervision reinforces the models.

Whainga (supervision goal) – to develop and facilitate accountable, safe and effective supervision as a process to lead and embed Mäori practice models within their teams.

Tikanga (supervision process) – individual external supervision was provided for 1.5 hours per month with each of the team leaders to explore, trial and reflect upon Kaupapa Mäori supervision practices.

Painga (supervision developments) – a supervision tool was developed based on the DOW practice wheel which supported exploration of kaimahi Mäori use of DOW within their work.

2. Whänau Ora service provider

This Mäori service provider is the lead organisation for a whänau ora collective. After developing their whänau ora service delivery approach and outcome measures they recognised supervision as critical to support implementation of whänau ora practice across the organisation.

Whainga (supervision goal) – to develop a supervision approach that supports practitioners across disciplines within their organisation with the implementation of whänau ora practice.

Tikanga (supervision process) – they undertook two kaupapa Mäori supervision wänanga to facilitate the development of whänau-centred practice supervision within the organisation.

Painga (supervision developments) – kaiärahi completed the wananga with deepened understandings of the whänau ora principles for their service provider collective, identified how these principles could guide their supervision practice and provided examples of applications they would trial.

3. Whänau Violence Prevention Wänanga

Kaupapa Mäori supervision was used to support Mäori practitioners from a range of disciplines undertaking a one year kaupapa Mäori whänau violence prevention qualification. It was developed as part of an iwi strategy to reduce and prevent whanau violence and enhance 'Oranga Whänau'.

Whainga (supervision goal) – to support the integration of kaupapa Mäori learning into practice, facilitate reflection and evidence its application and understanding with whänau Mäori.

---

[1]   The Dynamics of Whanaungatanga is a cultural framework that provides understandings on concepts and principles of whanaungatanga to enhance personal skills and actions on how to maintain Whänaungatanga, Tapu and Mana (Tate, 2010).

[2]   Mauri Ora is a Kaupapa Mäori wellbeing framework to guide the analysis and practice of whänau violence prevention. Developed by Mäori practitioners from across Aotearoa it uses Mäori cultural values, beliefs and practices to preventing and addressing violence (Kruger, et al., 2004).

Tikanga (supervision process) – group-facilitated supervision sessions were held with small groups of up to six akonga for a three hour period each month for one year.

Painga (supervision developments) – these supervision sessions increased and promoted supervision across sectors and disciplines, modeled a kaupapa Mäori group supervision process and many of the practitioners then implemented this process within their employing organisations.

4. Government agency

Kaupapa Mäori supervision was established to support Ministry of Social Development Work and Income family violence co-ordinators.

Whainga (supervision goal) – to support the application of a Kaupapa Mäori whänau violence prevention framework to guide practice in an agency setting working with whänau Mäori.

Tikanga (supervision process) – kaupapa Mäori-facilitated group supervision was set up for two hours per month based on mauri ora cultural imperatives of whakapapa, tikanga, wairua, tapu, mauri and mana.

Painga (supervision developments) – increased confidence in the use of kaupapa Mäori frameworks (for supervision and working with whänau violence) within a government agency setting.

Summary

The four scenarios outlined above were committed to the development and application of Kaupapa Mäori supervision to support Mäori practitioners working with whänau Mäori in different practice contexts. All aimed to use supervision as a resource to embed Mäori principles into practice and improve the integration of Mäori models and approaches. Further, they had a desire to increase the 'oranga' of Mäori practitioners so they in turn could increase positive outcomes for whänau Mäori engaged in their services. A range of different forms of supervision were used to achieve this including group, individual and external Kaupapa Mäori supervision. The supervision framework was also underpinned and aligned to the values of the Mäori practice model used by the organisation, for example, DOW, Mauri Ora or others. Although these supervision approaches may not be published these scenarios evidence the active development and use of Kaupapa Mäori supervision within current social and community work practice.

Conclusion

He Körero Körari is a Kaupapa Mäori supervision framework where the principal context takes place within Mäori culture. That is, kaiärahi, kaitiaki and whänau are all Mäori engaged in a professional relationship through an organisation. It is a framework where the supervision philosophy and functional process is grounded in a Mäori worldview and asserts the validity and self-determination of Mäori practices as a pathway towards Mäori development and wellbeing.

References

Carroll, M. (2000). *The spirituality of supervision*. Supervision Conference Proceedings: from rhetoric to reality, pp. 11-20.

Eruera, M. (2005). *He Körero Körari – weaving the past into the present for the future*. Masters thesis, Massey University. Palmerston North.

Kruger, T., Pitman, M., Grennell, D., McDonald, T., Mariu, D., Pomare, A., Mita, T., Maihi, M., Lawson-Te Aho, K. (2004). *Transforming whänau violence – A conceptual framework*. Wellington: Ministry of Mäori Affairs.

Royal, C. (2005). *Exploring indigenous knowledge*. Retrieved from www.charlesroyal.com/assets/exploringindigenousknowledge.pdf.

Ruwhiu, L. (2009). *Social work contexts and practice*, pp. 107-120 (2nd ed.). Australia: Oxford University Press.

Tate, H. (2002). *Maori theology handout*. Auckland: St John's Theological College.

Tate, H. (2010). *Towards some foundations of a systematic Mäori theology:He tirohanga anganui kiätahi kaupapa höhonu mö te whakapono Mäori*. Doctoral thesis. Melbourne College of Divinity, Melbourne.

Te Hiku o te Ika Trust. (1996). *Dynamics of whänaungatanga training handbook*. Auckland: Te Hiku o te Ika Trust.

Walsh-Tapiata, W. Webster, J. (2004). Do you have a supervision plan? *Te Kömako: Social Work Review, VII XVI*(2):15-19.

Wepa, D. (2004). *Cultural safety in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Auckland: Pearson Education.