He Whare Takata: Are wāhine Māori visible in Oranga Tamariki practice guidance?

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: The gauge of a society is how it responds to women and children and, in settler colonial nations, how it responds to the Indigenous women and children. This includes how society upholds the rights and responsibilities of women's self-determination of body rights and reproductive Justice. Reproductive justice in the settler colonial environment of Aotearoa[1] is tightly tied to the experiences of wāhine Māori[2] and our lived realities across the colonial project. To give full rights and responsibilities to wāhine as holders of whakapapa, birthing practices, and keepers of knowledge, we must be willing to assess and critique society and hold colonial systems to account.

APPROACH: This article follows on from the companion literature analysis article "He Whare Takata: Wāhine Māori reproductive justice in the child protection system", which provides a detailed description of pre- and post-colonial *her*story, providing the reader with an extensive storying of wāhine as leaders. Both articles accept a mana[3] wāhine foundational position that asserts the rakatirataka (leadership and self-determination) of wāhine and the inherent rights of wāhine as '*he whare takata*[4]', the house of humanity.

CONCLUSIONS: Drawing on the groundwork laid in the companion article, this analysis examines the Oranga Tamariki[5] (OT) practice and evidence centres, specifically auditing content produced following the "Hawkes Bay Uplift"[6] for evidence of a shift of practice that incorporates wāhine knowing, being and doing holding to the foundation of '*he whare takata*'.

Keywords: Mana[7] wāhine; Indigenous; settler colonialism; reproductive justice; child protection

In this article I pose the question "Are wāhine reproductive justice rights as understood as *'he whare takata'* visible in the child protection system in Aotearoa?" This is a question that we would expect Oranga Tamariki to be reflectively asking themselves and actively seeking to address if they are not shifting practice towards social justice equity.

While the companion article, "He whare takata: Wāhine Māori reproductive justice

in the child protection system", provides the reader with a full background of the Aotearoa context and wāhine experience as it relates to reproductive justice, a brief outline of key assertions is provided here (Cleaver, 2023). I encourage readers new to this topic area to seek out the full article for the context and explanation of wāhine experiences with the child protection system.

"He whare takata: Wāhine Māori reproductive justice in the child protection system" outlines divergent understandings and approaches to family / whānau[8] mauriora[9] (wellbeing), the mana wāhine (wāhine knowledges and authority) knowing and a Western colonial narrative (Cleaver, 2023).

Mana Wāhine Knowing and the colonial project

In a mana wāhine knowing, we hold rakatirataka in our whakapapa[10] which connects us to the pūrākau (stories) of Papatūānuku, Hineahuone, Mahuika and Hinetītama to name a few (Ihimaera & Hereaka, 2019; Murphy, 2013). The pūrākau of Hinetītama principally links wāhine to the rights and responsibilities of being *'he whare takata'*, the house of humanity (Mikaere, 2017; Murphy, 2013). This set the way in which wāhine were supported as leaders and rights holders within Māori societies. The infringements on wāhine following non-Māori arrival to our shores were implemented through carefully crafted colonial tools, practised around the world on Indigenous populations in the colonial agenda efforts to take land and power (Blackstock et al., 2020; Blackstock et al., 2023; Krakouer et al., 2023). Indigenous communities, including the Māori experience are effectively brought to submission by subjugating Indigenous women and separating them from traditional systems of gender fluidity, equity, and reproductive rights (Atkinson, 2002).

In Aotearoa New Zealand this was attempted through: ignoring wāhine and pēpi (baby) wellbeing in Māori communities; refusal to allow wāhine participation in any decision-making until the 1970s; denying wāhine access to education and therefore professional roles of care and support; legislation stripping wāhine of responsibilities to land; imposing colonial constructions of family and gender roles; eugenic and assimilation practices, including forced adoption; and a child protection system that starting taking Māori children in bulk until 2019 (Else, 1993; Pihama, 2005; Ramsden, 2002; Richardson, 2004; Smith, 2000; Tikao, 2020; Walter, 2017; Wanhalla, 2015).

In defiance of these tactics, wāhine have remained consistently firm in the rights and responsibilities conferred to us through whakapapa. Examples of this resistance are found in the work of wāhine midwives, Ria Tikini and Mere Harper and more recently Jean Te Huia, Naomi Simmonds, Ngahuia Murphy and Kelly Tikao; the work by Māori Women's Welfare League (MWWL), including Whina Cooper and Aroha Reriti-Crofts; the delivery of Maatua Whāngai, creating Whānau Ora and the creating of hapū and hāpori based kaupapa Māori social services; and in all the unwavering continued work by wāhine who practise mana wāhine through whānau, at hapū level and in our iwi and communities (Else, 1993; Manchester, 2020; Murphy, 2013; Simmonds, 2014, 2017; Tikao, 2020). These wāhine are too many to name but set the path back and forward and prove the failure of the colonial project and that we have nothing to lose that has not already been taken and remain here resistant and in refusal of elimination.

The Hawkes Bay Uplift and following challenges to the state

In 2019, *Newsroom* exposed practice in Oranga Tamariki by filming the attempted uplift of a newborn baby from a young Māori mumma at Hawkes Bay Hospital. The media exposure created a ground swell of support for change across Aotearoa and

culminated in a number of key reports critiquing the state and recommending significant changes; *Te Kuku o te Manawa* (Office of the Children's Commissioner); *Ko Te Wā Whakawhiti: It's time for change: A Māori inquiry into Oranga Tamariki* (Whānau ora Commissioning Agency); and *He Pāharakeke, He Rito Whakakīkinga Whāruarua Oranga Tamariki Urgent Inquiry* (The Waitangi Tribunal) (Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency, 2020); The Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2020a, 2020b; The Waitangi Tribunal, 2021).

These reports offer the state and Oranga Tamariki insight into the lived reality of wāhine in forced interaction with Oranga Tamariki. They present many recommendations that include: devolution to Māori, acknowledging that the state has infringed into the kaik[a] (village) for too long; centring wāhine and *'he whare takata'*; and coordinated responses across government that address the foundations of bias and socio-economic harm has led to mokopuna requiring care and protection (Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency, 2020); The Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2020a, 2020b; The Waitangi Tribunal, 2021).

It is connecting across the foundation of childrearing based on *'he whare takata'*, mana wāhine and a Māori world view, the *her*story of lived colonial harm and report recommendations post-2019 that this audit of Oranga Tamariki is situated. My expectation is that Oranga Tamariki quickly accepted the expert evidence presented to them and with a measure of immediacy prioritised practice developments across the practice centre and research priorities in the evidence centre. These should demonstrate growing awareness of mana wāhine, of 'he whare takata' understandings and practice and research that makes visible wāhine. Both the practice and evidence centres should also show a change towards engaging with, and upholding, Kaupapa Māori services as a first step and alongside the key goal of devolution.

Methodology

Epistemologically, Mana Wāhine Theory is the bringing forward of a wāhine analysis, centring our 'complex lived realities' in relationship to our pūrākau creation narratives, intergenerational knowledge transference, the colonial context and wāhine knowing, being and doing (Pihama, 2005, 2020). At an epistemological level, this asserts that wāhine knowledge drawn across the above environments is our foundation of understanding the world. Like many Indigenous ways of knowing, epistemology, ontology, and methodology often overlap or conflate together as the way we see the world and live in the world is not separable to how we understand the world (Wilson, 2020). All of this is true for Mana Wāhine Theory which holds our truths of understanding reality while also how we understand our being and our doing. Mana Wāhine Theory is used across the methodology for the analysis of Oranga Tamariki documents. It centres me as a wāhine and brings with me my tupuna wāhine (ancestors) and their guidance and experiences.

Method

Through a mana wāhine theoretical lens, document reviews, data analysis and content evaluations were completed on Oranga Tamariki (OT) literature and practice documents between 2019 and 2023. Oranga Tamariki is the name of the current child protection system in Aotearoa New Zealand and provides the roles of investigator, interventionist, co-ordinator, caregiver provider and in foster system services. These were analysed for evidence of wāhine visibility, prioritisation, and knowledge across both the OT research and practice centres. A content analysis process was undertaken through a systematic review of all the OT practice centre and evidence centre documents and information. Keywords of *wāhine, women, woman* and *mother* were chosen to elicit social work focus on wāhine. A meta-analysis was then completed to draw out any practice indicators or themes where

wāhine were acknowledged and supported in their roles as *'he whare tangata'*. Once the initial analysis was complete, I needed to go back through the documents when it became clear that *whānau*, *family* and, to a lesser extent, *hapū* and *iwi* were being used in place of wāhine, woman/en or mother. A second analysis was completed to demonstrate the comparison in visibility between the concept of family and/or whānau, hapū and iwi and wāhine Māori.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was adopted in the meta-analysis as it foundationally focuses on the role discourse takes in the re(production) of resistance to dominant power and control systems (Van Dijk, 1993). Van Dijk (1993) advocates the use of CDA as an analysis technique to look microscopically at text, talk and communication. A microscopic content analysis was completed on the final documents included in the sample, where text messaging and text were scrutinised for evidence of narratives centring mana wāhine, *'he whare takata'* or wāhine as more than vessels. Mana Wāhine Theory and CDA have a natural alignment in the quest for reconfiguration of power and control and the naturalising of knowledge that sits outside of western 'normal' frames. Intentional use of both Mana Wāhine Theory and CDA seeks to disrupt the reproduction of western hegemonic practice or maintenance of racialised gender inequity. This centres and normalises Māori wāhine knowledge and evaluating OT practice environments against this legitimate pre-colonial and post-colonially constructed norm.

Mana wāhine and 'he whare takata' visibility in Oranga Tamariki practice guidance

This analysis looked for evidence and practice centre resources that encouraged child protection workers to engage, assess and partner with wāhine, whānau and communities in ways that support power sharing, transformation, and the

focus on mana wāhine as *'he whare takata'*, wāhine reproductive justice. Without a visible demonstration of wāhine through practice and research, the reinforcement of colonial constructions of wāhine as vessels, lesser, undeserving and to blame are likely reproduced in social work practice. Remembering that this space is contested space, expected to be devolved to Māori, but in the interim, work must be done to reduce harm.

Recognising the rights of wāhine, white supremist colonial herstories, the mana wāhine claim and UNDRIP and te Tiriti rights frameworks as the foundation, the following should be expected of the state child protection system.

1. Oranga Tamariki should be demonstrating internal knowledge of wāhine herstories, mana wāhine foundations.

2. The practice and evidence centre should show narratives and information on intergenerational colonial trauma, *'he whare takata'*, mana wāhine as practice and evidence of practice that seeks to care for wāhine who have been marginalised and oppressed.

3. Visible should be a confirmation of practice shifts towards wāhine continued role in parenting.

4. There should be clear signalling of the path forward to partnering with kaupapa Māori services that hold *'he whare takata'* at the centre of practice. This must include the pathway towards total devolution as the ultimate goal and interim steps to mitigate the continued harm done in the transition period.

Oranga Tamariki evidence and practice centre analysis

Table 1 outlines the initial document and website scan across the practice and evidence

Table 1. Oranga Tamariki Document Analysis

Oranga Tamariki document source.	Included no. Initial Analysis	Final no. analysed	Includes woman/en/ mother in text	Includes wāhine/ whāea or mama in text
Evidence Centre Reports	36	25	13	6
Practice centre whole of site	8	6	4	5

centres of OT. The final documents analysed were 25 on the evidence centre and six webpages on the practice centre.

The 25 OT evidence centre reports published between 2019 and June 2023 were analysed based on criteria of relevance to early assessment, entry to care, in care or exit from care. The reports needed to have a focus on parenting or parental relationships. Reports not analysed were discarded due to an emphasis solely on physical needs, mental health services, sexuality or they were community programmes not delivered by OT.

The OT practice centre is the online open access tool utilised for social work practitioners. The centre holds key guidance and information for social workers both inside the organisation and externally. Six practice centre web pages were chosen and analysed based on the inclusion of the keyword wāhine through a keyword search. Nine pages were initially identified and subsequently reduced to five after discarding overlapping evidence centre documents or web domains items. One additional page, *Breastfeeding–caring for and nurturing pēpi,* was added due to its relevance to '*he whare takata'.*

The figures below show the occurrences of words across the documents examined. Wāhine did not feature strongly across either the practice centre or evidence centre in this basic word-occurrence analysis. Parent/s, whānau and family/ies were significantly more visible, demonstrating the clear focus on the concept of a whānau/ family unit across both sites of practice information.

The secondary analysis included a nuanced evaluation of the content of each document and website focusing on interpreting the key story, messaging, and framing of the

Table 2 and Table 3. Practice and Evidence Centres
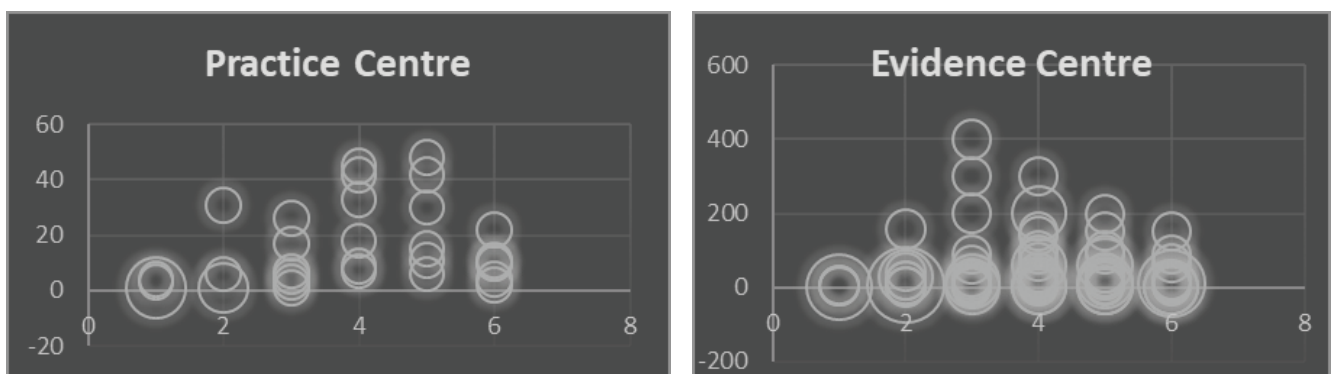
Notes: Horizontal: Word/s counted. **1.-** Wāhine/ whāea; **2.-** Woman/en/ mother; **3**.- Parent/; **4.-** Whānau; **5**. Family/ies; **6**.- "whānau, hapā and iwi". *Vertical*: Number of word occurrences in each document."
Each circle represents one article or website, while large circles represent more than one document between 2 and 4.

documents and webpages. There was a strong correlation between the occurrence of the words wāhine, women and mother and intentionally preferencing the relationship between wāhine and mokopuna.

One document, "Te Ao Kōhatu" mentioned wāhine a total of five times and woman/en 27 times and conversely utilised whānau 206 times, family/ies 198 times and parents 27 times. "Te Ao Kōhatu" was the clearest document to evidence a te Ao Māori worldview and dedication to challenging the nuclear family model (Dobbs, 2021). In "Te Ao Kōhatu", wāhine were introduced in their relationship to '*he whare takata*' as child bearers, connected to their important role in relation to whakapapa, drawing on the work of Jenkins and Harte (2011) centring a Māori understanding of whānau. This document was the only document that adequately included a Māori concept of wāhine, though wāhine was predominately encompassed into whānau throughout the article.

Three other reports are worth specifically mentioning, evidencing beginning understandings of '*he whare takata*'. The two "Family Violence and Sexual Violence Evidence" briefs reference '*he whare tangata*' in relation to sexual violence, though did not include any depth of understanding (Oranga Tamariki, 2020a). "Understanding Māori Perspectives, Tamariki and rangatahi who are victims of sexual violence or display harmful sexual behaviour" did include an important narrative on the harm impacts for tīpuna (ancestors) and future generations (Oranga Tamariki, 2020a).

The report "Subsequent Children Evidence Brief" (2020), while not including mention of wāhine, was the most comprehensive inclusion of women as mothers and drew on some excellent overseas work by Broadhurst et al. (2017) and national research from Boulton et al. (2018). This report was the only report analysed where woman/en outnumbered whānau, family or parents in keyword mentions. The clear centring on women and mothers resulted in a

thorough gender analysis with excellent evidence of positive outcomes when women are provided adequate supports (Allen & Clarke, 2020). Conversely, while conflating of wāhine, women and mother to whānau could be assessed as implicitly including wāhine perspectives, it equally could be argued that encompassing wāhine into whānau or family renders our rights and responsibilities invisible. Encompassment, as an extension of assimilation tools has been well-practised across settler colonial countries as a tool of subjugation and evidenced across the Kāi Tahu experience (Matahaere-Atariki, 1997). The intentional signalling of women evident in "Subsequent children evidence brief" (Allen & Clarke, 2020) directs practice towards engaging with women and a gender analysis.

"Making sense of being in care, adopted, or whāngai: Perspectives of rangatahi, young people and those who are raising them" (Potter & Urbannova, 2021) raised the significance of the intrinsic link between wāhine and mokopuna as '*he whare takata*' with rakatahi and young people talking about their 'mums' in over 100 mentions. There was some alignment in this document with Māori understandings of whāngai, including Māori whānau caregivers being more open to children in care knowing their story and framing a child's relationship to caregivers and their birth parents in terms of growing whānau (Potter & Urbannova, 2021). The visibility of 'mum' as the focus, "why can't I be with mum?" and "mum is unwell" risks wāhine being the sole parent considered responsible for entry into care if not analysed with a focus on embedded paternalism (Potter & Urbannova, 2021, p. 20). This exemplifies the complexities of how research and reports need to ensure the wider understanding of societal impacts and normalised traditional alternative care systems. In doing this, we ensure there is space left for wāhine to move from vessel, blamed mother or broken to practice that upholds both wāhine and mokopuna and the links between.

Of concern was the report, "Factors associated with the disparities experienced by tamariki Māori" (Oranga Tamariki,2020b). The report avoids any analysis of systemic bias, racism, and colonisation, providing statistics and a simplistic analysis connected to rudimentary understandings of poverty. An example is the use of micro whānau experiences or parental income, decile ratings, mental health, correction involvement and reports of concerns as the base of investigating the connection to disparity (Oranga Tamariki, 2020b). This should contain and feature the Māori experience of 183 years of colonisation, the consequential impact across ministerial policies and practices including, but not confined to, the Natives School Act, 1867; The Public Works Act, 1964 and The Marriage Act, 1955 (Smith, 2000; Tinirau et al., 2021; Walter, 2017).

All other reports analysed across the evidence centre lacked any particular focus on wāhine involving no aspects of research prioritisation of wāhine/mokopuna relationships, intergenerational whakapapa trauma or system culpability. The expertise of kaupapa Māori services was also missing across all the reports in any detail or directive that would encourage social workers to seek out expertise external to OT.

The six pages on the practice centre mentioning wāhine ranged from one to four occurrences. These references were in relation to cultural practice, being hapu (pregnant) and gender diversity. The terms *woman/en* were also not well reflected across the practice centre with only four pages picking up minimal mention of women, with the exception of the page on breastfeeding which includes 'mothers' 29 times.

Across the practice centre, *family, whānau, parent/s* are widely and interchangeably used throughout documents. These words appear intentionally chosen while *wāhine, woman, women* or *mother* appear as discarded options. An example of intention can be found on the page '*Strengthening our response to unborn and newborn pēpi*' which mentions wāhine three times, woman once, mother four times but cites family 30 times, parents 26 times, whānau 40 times and hapū 22 times. Other relevant pages, including *Coercively controlling violence* and *Attachments: Tuituia domain,* followed this pattern on minimal inclusion of wāhine or women and high use of the familiar groupings of family, parents, whānau or hapū. The practice centre is the key available resource for OT practitioners, community professionals and the child protection client base as a site of practice information. It is concerning that, across the practice centre, social workers, allied professionals and service users can not see any indication of centring wāhine.

Analysis and findings

Whānau, hapū and iwi were very visible across the practice and evidence centres exhibiting a definite shift towards te Tiriti compliance and attempts to understand a Māori worldview. However, the visibility of wāhine or even women across the practice centre and evidence centre was minimal, even in Māori framed reports. Spivak (1999) identified women positioned as the subaltern, when we are spoken *for*, spoken *about* but rarely allowed voice ourselves. The assessment of evidence and practice centre literature delivers a perfect example of Spivak's (1999) critique of paternal systems that makes women invisible.

The child protection system is not responsible for the axis of subjugation of wāhine that has systematically stripped us of our rakatirataka and impacted on our wellbeing and ability to hold the responsibilities conferred generationally since Hine-nui-te-po, as *'he whare takata'*. However, it does continue to contribute to the ongoing subjugation and upholds the foundations laid to deny wāhine rights and responsibilities. This is the colonial legacy held by Indigenous women across settler colonial nations and has occurred

in a carefully constructed reframing and dehumanising effort over hundreds of years, in Aotearoa over 200 years. The continuation of the status quo and the lack of resistance of state social work to advocate and engage in substantial change processes that shift the oppressive legacy, even when provided multiple templates suggests ongoing complicity and a desire to hold up the broken system.

(Re)producing oppressive practice on wāhine, mokopuna, whānau and the whenua

A key theme across *her*story, the multiple reports on the child protection system and the review of OT completed for this article is systemic reproduction of oppressive practice performed on wāhine, mokopuna, whānau and the whenua. Analysis of the practice and evidence centres did illustrate beginning steps towards a change of focus and bringing forward a Māori world view. However, this did not include pūrākau wāhine, exploring and challenging the power imbalances that underlie and frame wāhine as the problem and centre paternalistic practice. To end the cycle of (re)producing oppressive practice there must be inclusion of *her*story and validation of mana wāhine as a practice methodology. To meet the following challenges, mana wāhine must be the foundation.

Erasure as a colonial tool: Wāhine encompassment into whānau

The latest iteration of erasing wāhine from our own stories as *'he whare takata'* in the child protection system is not surprising but the cleverly oiled machine of white supremacy[11], guarding its nest. Erasing wāhine and replacing this with whānau, at worst, is intentional subjugation and, at best, unthoughtful encompassment. The use of whānau as an inclusive term for wāhine in a Māori world view relies on practitioners understanding our wāhine atua narratives, a *her*story of subjugation

and the tools and skills to actively centre *'he whare takata'*. Without this understanding whānau encompasses wāhine narratives and ensures practitioners can choose who they engage, thinking they are whānau centred and upholding the rights of Māori. Without upholding the rights of wāhine and ensuring social work has an intentional focus on reproductive justice, where we connect the macro *her*story to the micro experience, we will continue colonial complicity. Reproductive Justice ensures an equity of opportunity to parent.

Practice centre as a monocultural site- siloing mātauraka Māori

The practice centre exhibits small steps towards embedded mātauraka Māori across practice guidelines and recommendations. The web pages generally relied on the term whānau with minimal to no inclusion of mātauraka Māori, while on the odd Māori-specific pages there is a total focus on Māori ways of knowing, being and doing—but not on wāhine Māori ways of knowing, being and doing. This gives the experience of a fragmented practice centre that siloes the Māori world view and Māori knowledge. The lack of wāhine, except for the repeated short blurb on *'he whare takata'* supports the statement that wāhine have been particularly rendered invisible on the webpages of the practice centre. Balancing the importance of mana wāhine with the risks of essentialising motherhood, resulting in mother blaming requires bringing forth the full *her*story of wāhine Māori from pre- to post-colonial contemporary realities. This practice centre focus on the continuing colonial impacts, Western hegemony and white supremist systems would enable their social workers insights and understandings of the macro issues impacting on the micro lived experiences. The key element is mana wāhine theory and practice which centres wāhine experience, resistance and rakatirataka, denying and suffocating any leaning towards mother blaming.

Balancing internal and external transformation

The challenge for OT to fund Māori hapū, iwi and hāpori and step aside remains. This is not what Moana Maniapoto-Jackson calls "browning up the workforce" but trusting Māori knowledge and expertise and stepping aside, while Māori are enabled to get on with recovery (personal communication). With a *He Puapua* roadmap (discussed in Cleaver, 2023) that provides a te Tiriti based government partnership approach we should see a reducing state and increasing hapū response (Charters et al., 2019). This would include rethinking what key roles OT should continue to provide and what is beyond their ability to transform. In a measured approach to transformation, I acknowledge the need of OT to develop and grow their staff cultural capacity which requires Māori kaimahi (workers) leading and developing what this looks like. The conflict and tension here is that the reports and evidence state that wāhine are best served and supported by our Kaupapa Māori organisations and that requires our Māori social workers to be available in these spaces—not as trainers to support the renovating of the white supremacist system.

Wāhine, mokopuna, whānau, hapū and iwi

We can all agree that whānau and hapū provide the strength and support and their role in child protection is essential. Whānau, hapū and iwi approaches as understood by the Crown need to incorporate mana wāhine in what is a plus-plus approach. The need to connect child centred practice, whānau, hapū and iwi structures and mana wāhine together is obvious and would ensure a focus on intergenerational wellbeing. This includes positioning our wāhine rakatira across decision making processes and enabled to develop mana wāhine responses. We as wāhine should be at the tables and it is totally time for the patriarchy, including our own, to take a step back.

Recommendations

Practice recommendation: Social workers cannot wait for the state system to catch up and need to lead their own development and build knowledge of mana wāhine and our *her*stories.

Practice recommendation: As social workers, we need to centre wāhine in our practice, while ensuring that we have understood and resist the axis of subjugation that defaults to blaming women.

Practice recommendation: Oranga Tamariki requires expertise to transform the practice and evidence centre research and practice tools. The decision of if this is contrary to Māori needs is a discussion for Māori to lead.

Practice recommendation: Devolution and transformation remains unresolved. Committing to *He Puapua* and te Tiriti o Waitangi, including the Waitangi Tribunal recommendations is a starting point.

Practice recommendation: Policy and practice leaders must bring wāhine leaders into the transformation process and collaborate on supporting the devolution and building of Kaupapa Māori capacity and capability.

Conclusion

Social work practice holds a theoretical framework that includes meso and macro social justice responsibilities if you are practising in the community or for the state. This obligation to address injustice across individual experiences, organisational contexts and policy and practice that is inevitably socially constructed with strong, paternalistic, colonial, systemic foundations is a demonstration of our commitment to two peoples living together.

The reproductive injustice intergenerationally perpetrated on wāhine requires social work to reflect on our complicity and commit to restoring mana

wāhine as *'he whare takata'*. Across the child protection system, a re-focus on wāhine as the holders of future ancestors needs to be included alongside the rhetoric of whānau-centred practice, understanding that mana wāhine is inclusive of a paramountcy of the child position. Whānau-centred and mana wāhine are both essential elements of flourishing and thriving communities where mokopuna experience the world as *'taku kuru pounamu'*—our most precious treasures.

To do this we will need the evidence and practice centre to prioritise mana wāhine and *'he whare takata'* with a focus of growing practitioner knowledge. This will need to be connected to a roadmap towards devolution where the end game is no mokopuna Māori in state care.

Endnotes

[1] Aotearoa is used as one traditional name for Aotearoa.

[2] Wāhine Māori will be referred to as wāhine from hereon. This term is inclusive of our tākatapui Māori in line with our traditional ways and acknowledged acceptance of gender fluidity and self-identification. Non-Māori wāhine will be referred to as woman/en.

[3] Pere definition of mana "psychic influence, control, prestige, power, vested and acquired authority and influence, being influential or binding over others, and that quality of a person that others know she or he is".

[4] Kāi Tahu dialect is used throughout the document. This replaces 'ng' with a 'k'.

[5] The Aotearoa, New Zealand child protection system.

[6] The Hawkes Bay uplift refers to the media exposure of a Māori baby removal from a wāhine in hospital in 2019.

[7] Pere definition of mana "psychic influence, control, prestige, power, vested and acquired authority and influence, being influential or binding over others, and that quality of a person that others know she or he is".

[8] Whānau, hapū and iwi refer to Māori family and societal structures: Whānau-wide family networks; hapū–a collection of whānau with close shared ancestors; iwi–a wider collection of hapū with shared ancestors.

[9] Mauriora refers to the holistic wellbeing of a person, connected to culture, language, knowledge transmission, healthy environment, and their mental and physical wellbeing.

[10] Whakapapa is defined as our relationships to animate, inanimate, living, and past, to each other and the environment. It includes genealogy that is both human and non-human.

[11] White Supremacy is defined in the work by Atawhai o te Ao and incorporates capitalism, the patriarchy and embedded structural systems that normalise and prioritise the knowledge, practice and customs of the Anglo man.

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