

Kaumātua mana motuhake: kaumātua managing life-transitions through tuakana-teina/peer-education

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Background

People face significant transition points as they age, such as loss of independent living, loss of a spouse and changing health conditions. Successfully navigating these transitions depends on being able to manage emotional and socio-economic factors, as well as service systems, while often being reliant on family or whānau. Historically however, kaumātua have faced a dominant society that has failed to realise their full potential as they age. Yet, for Māori, kaumātua are “carriers of culture, anchors for families, models for lifestyle, bridges to the future, guardians of heritage and role models for younger generations.” Kaumātua mana motuhake is invested in upholding kaumātua tino rangatiratanga (independence and autonomy) via high-quality Māori research that will lead to better life outcomes for kaumātua and their whānau.

Objectives

This seeks to address the mana motuhake of kaumātua (older Māori aged 55 or older), through a ‘tuakana-teina’ peer-educator model where kaumātua work with other kaumātua in relation to signif-

icant life-transitions. The project investigates the health outcomes of a ‘tuakana-teina’ peer-educator model in relation to wellness, social connectedness, life enhancement, independence and significant life-transitions.

Methods

The research comprises two stages: training of kaumātua who will then serve as tuakana (peer educators) for other kaumātua (teina/peers). The research design is a pre- and post-test, clustered randomised staggered design with Tuatahi (intervention) and Tuarua (control) groups. Tuatahi participate in the training programme initially, while Tuarua participate in subsequent training. The capacity of tuakana is assessed at three stages: pre-test, post-intervention for the Tuatahi group and post-intervention of the Tuarua group. After training, each tuakana will talk with each teina at least three times to address relevant life-transitions of their teina. Teina will also complete three evaluations at the same stages as the tuakana. The research design enables a rigorous comparison of the training while ensuring that all teina receive the intervention.

Findings

The outcome of the research is a manualised intervention bringing a strength-based, holistic and cultural approach to meet social and health needs of kaumātua and their whānau.

Conclusion

We engage stakeholders throughout the research process with the aim of scaling up the intervention, provided it demonstrates efficacy and cost-effectiveness.

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