Chapter 12

KUA TUPU TE PĀ HARAKEKE

DEVELOPING HEALTHY *WHĀNAU* RELATIONSHIPS

Leonie Pihama and Ngaropi Diane Cameron

A. Opening with *Pēpeha*

Ko Taranaki te maunga	Taranaki is the ancestral mountain
Ko Waitara te awa	Waitara is the river
Ko Ngā Tai o Rehua tōku moana	Ngā Tai o Rehua is the ocean
Ko Tokomaru te waka	Tokomaru is the canoe
Ko Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Māhanga, Ngā Māhanga ā Tairi ōku iwi	My tribal groups are Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Māhanga ā Tairi, Ngāti Māhanga
Ko Ngāti Rāhiri tōku hapū	My subtribe is Ngāti Rāhiri
Ko Leonie Pihama tōku ingoa.	My name is Leonie Pihama
Ko Taranaki te maunga	Taranaki is the ancestral mountain
Ko Urenui te awa	Urenui is the river
Ko Ngā Tai o Rehua te moana	Ngā Tai o Rehua is the ocean
Ko Tokomaru me Takitimu ngā waka	The canoes are Tokomaru and Takitimu
Ko Ngāti Mutunga me Ngāti Kahungunu naā iwi	My tribal groups are Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Kahungunu
Ko Kaitangata me Ngāti Pahauwera ōku hapū	My subtribes are Kaitangata and Ngāti Pahauwera
Ko Raumati te whānau	Raumati is my extended family
Ko Ngaropi Cameron tōku ingoa	My name is Ngaropi Cameron

We have opened this chapter with our *pēpeha*. Pēpeha are ways through which our people introduce ourselves. These vary from tribe to tribe. The essence of pēpeha is that it links us to our tribes and all associated with it—our mountains, our rivers, our canoes, our ancestral lines. It links us to each other. It places us, as *Māori*, within a wider collective consciousness and set of relationships. It is important to highlight that the term Māori is a term that brings us together as Peoples. It is a term that our people have chosen to use as a means of unifying ourselves in the wake of the arrival of our colonizers. Prior to colonization all identification was done through our *whānau* (extended family structure), *hapū* (group of whānau connected though common ancestor/sub-groupings of *iwi*) or iwi (nations connected through common ancestor). Māori means to be "normal" or "pure," a fitting term for an Indigenous People. We have, however, also been active in maintaining our hapū and iwi identities, and it is through pēpeha that we can culturally share that identity with one another. Our people have been doing this for generations. And in spite of colonization seeking to undermine our cultural identity, many of us continue to do this.

Locating ourselves in relation to our natural world, our relations, and our lands is important to Māori. It acknowledges and affirms our cultural connections. It reminds us of our cultural obligations to one another, to the land, and all our relations who live with us on our lands. It recognizes the many generations that have come before us and gives those around us an ability to place ourselves within the Māori world. That is also important.

Often when our people recite their pēpeha in a gathering, you will hear responses within the group that indicate a close relationship. People will respond *kia ora whanaunga*, "Greetings relation," to make us aware of the connection. Through this process we link to people whom we may never have met before. We link on an ancestral level. We link on a spiritual level. We link on a tribal level. These connections keep our relationships, our collectivity, our language, and our knowledge alive. And they remind us we are responsible for one another and for all we live alongside of on *Papatūānuku*, this great Mother Earth.

This knowledge has been passed down to us from our *tupuna*, our ancestors. It is exactly the knowledge and protocols that our colonizers sought to deny us. The systematic and unrelenting attacks on our language and culture have been deliberate. They are acts of denying our identity as *Tāngata Whenua* (People of the Land). For Māori, the suppression of our language and culture was key to the denial of Māori knowledge that enabled healthy relationships. As is the case on Great Turtle Island, violent attacks upon our language and culture aligned with acts of war and murder of our people. The importation of guns, alcohol, and the Bible brought about significant societal changes both within and between tribes.

B. Retaining Our Identity

The struggle to retain our identity as Indigenous Peoples is a part of a wider struggle to decolonize. Colonization has violently forced ways of being upon our communities that have changed our lives in ways that our ancestors could never have imagined. In our context within *Aotearoa* (referred to in colonial terms as New Zealand), Māori have been struggling for the past two hundred years to find ways to maintain those cultural protocols, language, and practices that enable us to hold our place as Indigenous on our own lands. The experience of family violence within our communities is a symptom of historical acts of genocide and ethnocide upon our Peoples.

ACTIVITY:

Are there particular ways that your People/nation introduce themselves or express their identity that affirm an Indigenous identity?

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C. *Pūrākau*: Traditional Stories as Guidance

This is the story of Niwareka and Mataora, two well-known ancestors in Māori tradition who brought to our people the arts of *moko* (Māori tattoo forms) and *tāniko* (a decorative form of weaving). This story, as is the case with Indigenous traditional stories, provides insights and messages for our people today.

Niwareka lived in Rarohenga (the underworld). She chose to go to the world above, to Te Ao Mārama (the world of light) to live amongst those *tangata* (human beings) who live in this world. In the world of light Niwareka partnered with Mataora. Mataora was abusive to her and in response Niwareka returned to Rarohenga to be amongst her people who did not agree to such behavior. Mataora followed Niwareka and after overcoming many trials and challenges he came across her father, Uetonga, who was a great carver of moko. Mataora wore the painted markings of the human world on his face, but in his encounter with Uetonga he was told that the markings of Rarohenga were permanent, and in time Uetonga began to place permanent moko on the face of Mataora. During that time Niwareka became aware of the presence of Mataora in the underworld and went to

find him. Mataora spoke with Uetonga of his desire for Niwareka to return with him to the earthly world. Uetonga questioned the act of abuse, stating that, like temporary moko, that was not the way of their people. Mataora pleaded with Niwareka to return with him and, in doing so, agreed that by wearing the permanent moko of Uetonga he would take to his people both moko and the challenge to stop any abuse amongst his people. Niwareka agreed to return and she took the art form of tāniko weaving back to the World of Light to share with the people above.

This chapter is about relationships. It is about how our ancestors have passed to us knowledge about what is and is not acceptable amongst our people. It is also about how traditional ways and stories, in their many forms, provide us with guidance in this contemporary world as we live on our own lands that have been colonized by others. It is argued that there is a need to draw from traditional knowledge as a source of healing contemporary issues.

There is a growing focus on drawing upon traditional knowledge to support the revitalization of our language and culture. This has been difficult to achieve given the impact of colonial beliefs and practices upon our people. The denial of *te reo Māori*

(Māori language) through the imposition of English and the native schooling system has had a huge impact on being able to access knowledge. The attack on our language was part of a sustained process by which to advance the assimilation of colonial ways of being. Many of our people have been forced to live on tribal lands that are not theirs in order to find jobs and feed their families.

Colonization undermined Māori cohesion and relationships through acts that stole our lands and individualized the little that remained. The impact of the historical trauma associated with colonial oppression upon generations of our people is clearly evident. This chapter focuses on how we can draw upon traditional knowledge as healing in a contemporary context.

As Indigenous Peoples we have many ways in which our cultural practices inform us about many forms of relationships: family relationships, friendships, and intimate relationships. The story of Niwareka and Mataora, for example, is often recited as the genealogy of the beginnings of permanent moko to our people. It is generally referred to as "the story of Mataora." The bringing of tāniko as a weaving form, an art form, by Niwareka is rarely mentioned. The underpinning message of dealing with issues of abuse is often not even considered or is glossed over. There are many ways that meanings and teachings from traditional stories have been influenced by colonization, including the processes through which Indigenous languages are translated and the influence of colonial gender relations that privileged the place of men as the primary transmitters of our stories.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has argued that

Di Grennell, a long-term worker in the area of family violence, has highlighted the importance of traditional knowledge to healing in her work:

Drawing on the wisdom of our tupuna (ancestors) and traditions is not to return us to a mythic past or golden age—our people have always adapted to new circumstances and experimented with new technology. Rather it is to understand and be guided by the symbols, values, and principles that can enhance our capacity to live together peacefully as whānau and communities. Our capacity for resilience as an Indigenous People is fed and nourished by our language, traditional practices, and oral traditions.

Indigenous People have for some time critiqued the ways in which our histories have been told from the perspective of the colonizer. This concern over the representation of Indigenous Peoples by our colonizers is held by many Indigenous Peoples around the world. Vine Deloria Jr. wrote that "for most of the five centuries…whites have had unrestricted power to describe Indians in any way they chose." What this means is that we must be vigilant in the telling of our own stories in ways that are grounded within our own cultural frameworks. It is also clear to Indigenous Peoples that the translation and interpretation of our stories through the colonizers' language can create both understandings and misunderstandings—the story of Niwareka and Mataora is often the victim of both. Dominant understandings of this story have tended to lean to the belief that Mataora is the central figure in the story and that he journeyed to bring to us the art of moko. Where that may be the case, it is clear that the art of moko came from the family of Niwareka, and that her actions contributed hugely to how moko came to be a part of our cultural practices and protocols in the Māori world. More importantly, however, is that this story clearly highlights her refusal to stay in a situation where she had experienced abuse, and that once was enough for her to leave Mataora immediately. As Indigenous Peoples we must be constantly aware of the ongoing obsession by our colonizers to translate and interpret our stories as if the only characters that count are the men. The danger of such colonial interpretations is that the roles of our women and of our female ancestors are dismissed and key messages

about our people and our relationships are made invisible. Consequently, Māori women have had to fight for many years for our ancestral women to be more visible.

Although this particular story gives us a way of understanding the gifting of permanent moko and tāniko to our people, it is much more than that. One central lesson that is often missed is the critical role of Niwareka in this story. She is central to the messages that our ancestors have passed through this story, although her role is rarely acknowledged. Sadly, the marginalization of Māori women within our traditional stories is not uncommon. Colonial ethnographers and anthropologists actively denied the role of our women. They subjugated Māori women's roles in line with their own sexist and misogynistic belief systems and ideologies that deemed women as both inferior and property. These ideologies pervade both the interpretation of our histories and our roles, even to the extent of determining what stories were even considered worthy of being recorded. In many interpretations of this story, Niwareka is marginalized to solely "the daughter of" Uetonga or "the wife of" Mataora. She is not seen as an active, powerful ancestral woman who made a clear decision to leave an unhealthy relationship and return to her people. As such, the often neglected interpretation of this story is that it challenges abuse. In particular it is a story that challenges male to female violence. It challenges such abuse through the act of Niwareka removing herself from that situation and returning to her people.

D. Teachings about Relationships

Stories like that of the relationship of Niwareka and Mataora appear throughout our tribal histories as ways of providing us with understandings and guidance about relationships. They are stories that tell of what is, and what is not, acceptable within our whānau, our extended families. The story of Niwareka and Mataora is one that tells us that abuse is not acceptable. There is a clear message that abuse must be challenged. It is a story that provides insight into the traditional belief that historically whānau and hapū were expected to be safe spaces for Māori women and children. It is, therefore, a story that reminds us that we must take collective responsibility for such actions.

The return of Niwareka to her people tells us that the response to individual acts of violence or abuse must also be a collective response. Such a belief is grounded in our collective relationships, roles, obligations, and accountability. Therefore any acts of abuse were dealt with collectively as a form of intervention that worked to ensure that repeat incidents of violence did not occur. The response was both immediate and collective. Such a notion affirms that as individuals we are a part of a wider collective within our Indigenous worlds. That has always been the way of our ancestors. It is a cultural belief and practice that is documented throughout our stories. It is a value that has been handed down through generations of our people. It is also a value that was actively attacked through colonization.

ACTIVITY:

What are some examples of traditional stories within your community and tribe that talk about relationships and how we relate to one another?

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For the past twenty years we have been honored to work alongside our people as a researcher (Leonie) and a service provider (Ngaropi) on projects that have both a decolonizing and transformative intent. This work came more closely together in the evaluation of the programs offered by Tū Tama Wahine O Taranaki, the organization headed by Ngaropi. The programs are grounded in the belief that in order to make change in the area of domestic violence for Māori there must be a *Kaupapa Māori* approach.

Kaupapa Māori, in general terms, refers to Māori philosophies, Māori approaches, and Māori ways of being. These are defined and controlled by Māori. Inherent to Kaupapa Māori theory, methodology, and practice is the notion of Māori as self-determining. Kaupapa Māori is a culturally defined approach that enables us as Indigenous Peoples to draw upon our own language and protocols to develop and operate a wide range of services and initiatives within our communities. It is not a singular approach, as tribal-specific ways of being and tribal dialects provide us with a multitude of possibilities, but rather a cultural and political framework that advances Māori aspirations and desires for our own people. In this regard, many Māori practitioners, counselors, and healers in the area of domestic, family, and sexual violence have worked to develop both prevention and intervention strategies that align with a Kaupapa Māori approach. Part of that process has been to challenge the notion that such violence impacts only the individual, and recognize that it impacts the entire whānau, the entire extended family unit.

Whānau is the building block of Māori society. It consists of at least three generations who live together as an extended family and ensures the inclusion of grandparent generations in the lives of Māori children. The term *whānau* relates to both "extended family" and "birth." The plural meaning of the word highlights its significance in a society that was, and is, reliant upon future generations. Whānau enables the raising of children by many adults. The parent generation is only one group caring for and raising our children. There have always been many adults present in the lives of Māori children, especially elders, the grandparent generation.

The term *whānau* as "birth" also exists within the context of a wider cultural belief system concerning our relationship as people to Papatūānuku (Mother Earth.) The land for our people is known as *whenua,* which is also the word for afterbirth. When a child is born, the cultural process for our people is to return the afterbirth to the earth; it is buried within the Earth Mother. It connects us to our land. The whenua (afterbirth) is returned to the whenua (the earth). As noted in the opening of this chapter, we stressed the cultural means by which we as tribal people within the Māori Nation link to our tribal areas, to our mountains, our rivers, our lands. The practice of returning the afterbirth to the earth is yet another cultural practice that affirms those connections and affirms our collective relationships. Such is the centrality of whānau within Māori society. Whānau is about collective responsibility for the well-being of generations present and future. It is also the place where issues and problems could be addressed and resolved. This is highlighted in the story of the healing of the relationship of Niwareka and Mataora.

The story of Niwareka returning to her people is a story of returning to whānau after being insulted by her partner. The story of Mataora taking the journey to Rarohenga and seeking the return of Niwareka is a story about his accountability to her people. It was within the whānau that the abuse of Niwareka was discussed, with the resolution being intervention and future prevention. The return of Niwareka to her whānau was an act of transformation in their lives through collective responsibility. Mataora was called to task for his actions, not by Niwareka as an individual, but by her whānau as a collective. This is highlighted by moko expert Mark Kōpua:

It is said that as Mataora journeyed through Rarohenga seeking Niwareka he came upon Uetonga, his wife's father, preparing to place a moko on the face of a man. It was here that the terms of Mataora's acceptance were discussed. However the final decision was made by Niwareka. It is said that upon hearing

Mataora's song of lament and love for her that she knew he would not mistreat her by speaking poorly of her again, and so she allowed Mataora to not only receive a moko himself but to learn the art of tāmoko for the overworld.

Māori society, like many Indigenous societies, has clear *tikanga* (traditional protocols and lore) indicating that collective well-being is central. Our stories, our protocols, our cultural ways, and our original instructions all highlight that our relations and relationships are interwoven not only between human beings but with all living things. This does not deny the

individuals their place, but rather highlights that we are all relations, and as such are a part of a much wider collective. Our survival and well-being are dependent upon balanced relationships, roles, obligations, and accountabilities. Our survival as Peoples is also about ensuring the well-being of future generations. In order for that to be possible, specific ways of relating needed to be grounded in an understanding of the well-being of the collective, which in Māori terms means the well-being of whānau (extended family), hapū (subtribal groupings), and iwi (tribal groupings).

ACTIVITY:

What are the social structures for your People/nation? And how do those structures help to provide ways of protecting the collective well-being of your People?

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Another example of such relationships is the term *mokopuna*, which is used for grandchild. Mokopuna can be broken down into two terms: *moko* and *puna*. Moko, as highlighted in the story of Niwareka and Mataora, relates to traditional tattoo forms and in this case can be seen as children being a representation of their ancestors. The term *puna* relates to a "spring" or "fountain." A mokopuna is then a spring or image of our ancestors; it is a living representation of those who have come before. The relationship between past,

present, and future is embodied within that term and as such within that child. Elder and healer Rangimarie Pere states: *He taonga te mokopuna, ka noho mai hoki te mokopuna hei puna mo te tipuna ka whakaaro tātou ka noho mai te mokopuna hei tā moko mō te tipuna, he tino taonga rā tōna. He mokopuna rā tātou, he mokopuna anō hoki ngā tipuna.* (A grandchild is very precious, a fountain for ancestral knowledge and an everlasting reflection of those who have gone before. We are all grandchildren, as are our ancestors.)

This concept alone indicates the sanctity of children. Children are the embodiment of all past and future generations, and as such, to hurt a child, hit a child, or abuse a child is to hurt, hit, and abuse all past and future generations that link to that child. Acts of abuse and violence towards Indigenous children are then acts of abuse and violence upon all of our ancestors past and all those yet to be born. That is the extent of such violence. That is what our language, culture, and stories remind us.

Clearly then, family violence, in Māori terms, is not only about the abuse of a partner or another family member. Such acts of abuse are considered to be acts of violence against both the ancestors and future generations. To abuse a whānau member is an act of abuse against the entire whānau, it is an act of abuse against our past, present, and future relations. That was how our ancestors understood acts of abuse. To know that is to also understand the sacredness of whānau within Māori society. What is clear is that such knowledge and practices have been denied and marginalized through colonization. This has occurred in many of the violent processes through which colonizing forces have attacked Indigenous Peoples. One consequence of such colonial violence is seen in the huge impact that colonization has had on how we now see and practice relationships.

ACTIVITY:

What are the words or terms within your language that relate to family, children, grandchildren?

Family_____

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Children_____

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Grandchildren _____

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How do those terms position children within your People/nation?

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The impact of family violence upon whānau cannot be understated. The Second Māori Taskforce on Whānau Violence noted:

> Whānau Violence is understood by this Taskforce to be an epidemic because of the magnitude and serious nature of it for whānau, hapū and iwi and the way in which it is collectively spread and maintained. Whānau violence is intergenerational and directly impacts on *whakapapa* (genealogical links). It has taken several generations of learned behavior and practice to entrench whānau violence as the most devastating and debilitating of social practices. It will take time for whānau violence to be unlearned.

For over twenty years there has been a growing understanding about the underlying causes of such violence. The definition of whānau violence by the taskforce highlights that such violence happens not only within our whānau, but is perpetuated upon us by the state. That adds another layer of structural analysis to the issue of family or domestic violence. Such a definition brings to the discussion the wider issues of colonization, oppression, injustice, racism, and the many acts of violence of colonial states upon Indigenous Peoples.

The struggle to bring an end to whānau violence for Māori people is a part of a wider struggle of decolonization and self-determination. In order to fully understand the origins of the epidemic of violence within our whānau we must engage directly with the ways in which colonization itself has altered and disrupted fundamental relationships amongst our people. For example, in a cultural framework that recognizes and honors our *kaumātua* (elders), how can there be growing incidences of elder abuse within our families? It is clear that the denial of key knowledge and practices through colonization has had a significant impact on how we see ourselves and one another in a contemporary context. Understanding the link between colonial- and state-imposed violence and whānau violence is critical. The two are intertwined. Colonization and oppression are based upon beliefs that colonizers possess a cultural and racial superiority. Those beliefs provide the justification for acts of genocide and ethnocide upon Indigenous Peoples.

For those working towards healing within whānau, it has become clear that a critical part of our call for self-determination, for sovereignty, for control over being Māori is the reclamation and maintenance of healthy relationships. That is the essence of this chapter.

E. Traditional Māori Society and Views on Family Violence

It is important to note that acts of violence within Māori society did exist. Intertribal disputes and wars occurred prior to colonization within a particular cultural framework and context, and included ways of resolution. They were not indiscriminate acts of violence. War and struggle between tribes was also significantly different from how warfare is operated within contemporary societies. For example, pre-colonization intertribal battles were in the form of hand-to-hand struggle whereby combatants could see "the whites of the eyes" of their enemies. Cultural practices often meant that few deaths occurred, and in many instances arranged partnerships were formed to lead whānau within tribes to forge new and long-term relationships. Such arrangements were agreed upon and referred to as *te tatau pounamu* (the greenstone door), because such politically arranged relationships acted as a door to peace between the tribes.

We are not seeking to be idealistic in our discussion within this chapter, but to show that in a society based upon extended family relationships, acts of violence were clearly not acceptable within that unit. Research tells us, in fact, that before colonization family violence was rare within Māori society.

Whānau are cultural structures that traditionally supported both prevention and intervention. They provided for collective responsibility, obligations, and accountability. As an extended family structure, whānau is based within whakapapa (genealogical) relationships. Whakapapa is not a linear relationship like that of our colonizers, as we are led to believe by white anthropologists and ethnographers. Whakapapa is literally about layers of relationships that are culturally complex. Those relationships are highlighted within

te reo Māori, the Māori language. For example, the term for mother is *whaea;* the term for our aunties and other women of the same generation within the whānau may also be *whaea*. Likewise the term for father is *matua*, which is also the term for uncles or men of the *same* generation within the whānau (there are tribal dialects that may use different terms for mother). What this tells us is that it is not only birth parents who care for and nurture children. In fact, within Māori society the role of raising children was collective and intergenerational, often with birth parents having a lesser daily role than that of the grandparent generation. The point is that our relationships within whānau were multiple and about collective well-being.

Cultural values, protocols, lore, and worldviews ensured that there were mechanisms by which to acknowledge and care for each generation. There are many traditional sayings that tell us of the sanctity of people. One often-quoted saying from the Northern tribe Te Aupouri is:

Hutia te rito o te harakeke
Kei hea te kōmako e kō?
Kī mai koe ki ahau
He aha te mea nui o te ao?
Māku e kī atu
He Tangata, He Tangata, He Tangata

Pluck the centre shoot from the flax bush
Where will the Bellbird sing?
Ask me
What is the most important thing in the world
I will say
It is people, It is people, It is people

This saying draws upon the metaphor of the *harakeke* (the flax plant) as a symbol of the whānau. When harvesting harakeke for weaving, the center shoot of the plant must never be removed, as it is the core from which the entire plant grows. It is likened to the whānau, with the middle shoot being the new growth or child, the surrounding leaves being the parents, and grandparents being the outer leaves. To remove the center shoot will remove the ability of the plant to grow and flourish. The proverb relates directly to the desire for a particular relationship that, if denied, would mean that future generations would not flourish. The sanctity of future generations is clear.

Whānau violence within Māori worldviews is not viewed as only physical forms of violence. It includes violence that occurs on multiple planes. For example, in an oral tradition such as that of our ancestors, the power of the word is clearly articulated. The following two *whakatauakī* give examples of how our people view the power of language:

Ko te pūtake o te Māoritanga ko te reo Māori, he taonga tuku iho nā ngā tūpuna
The root of Māori culture is in the language, a gift from our ancestors.

He wero o te tao e taea te karo, te kī e kore e taea
The flight of the spear can be parried, the spoken word cannot.

The power of verbal insult is acknowledged within Māori traditions. Insults or transgression in regard to disrespectful ways of behaving towards whānau were considered unacceptable. There are many stories of both women and men leaving relationships and

Denise Wilson on the impact of violations to the womb:

Any violation of te *whare tangata* (that is the house of the people), such as abuse of the genital area and rape, has the potential to create distress amongst Māori women. This distress is not only physical or psychological in origin, but also spiritual and has multiple dimensions to it. Not only is this a violation of the woman herself, but also a violation of her *tupuna* (ancestor) and her future generations. Spiritual distress is often a dimension that is neither recognised nor acknowledged, but one that impedes recovery and healing.

returning to their own people after feeling aggrieved. One of our ancestors, Ruapūtahanga, left her partner Whatihua after being insulted by his behavior. She returned to our tribal lands in *Taranaki*, a tribal region on the West Coast of the North Island.

Acts of physical and sexual violence are violations of an entire people. Denise Wilson, a Māori woman working in health, notes that such acts were deemed traditionally as acts of violation against the entire whānau, hapū, and iwi. Within Māori society the womb is referred to as *Te Whare Tangata*, "The house of the people." The sacredness and status of the womb is central to providing us with an understanding of the key position of Māori women in Māori society. Any violation is therefore a violation of the people.

Māori activist and counselor Mereana Pitman provides a view of abuse as acts of transgressing *mana* (the status and dignity of people). It was therefore addressed directly with severe consequences. She highlights that sexual violence is also imposed more broadly upon Māori collectively, through the many forms of rape that occur through the act of colonization.

What is clear is that whānau violence was seen always within the context of wider relationships and dynamics. It was never seen as violence only against that individual. Balzer and others place family violence in this manner:

> A person was not believed to exist as an individual, but was linked through their whakapapa to their whānau, hapū, iwi, and ecosystem. A slight or attack on one member of a hapū would therefore be considered an attack on the whole hapū and collective retaliation might be considered warranted. On other occasions the whānau or hapū of the offender might be expected to impose sanctions of their own in order to save face with the offended group. Preservation of the people was paramount and the life-giving roles of land and women were therefore revered. It would appear that the ties to whakapapa, the need for the preservation of the people and the social order of Māori communities would, if not totally obviating violence against women, at least limit its occurrence.

In their report *Māori Family Violence in Aotearoa*, Balzer et al. note that when people transgressed boundaries, the response was swift:

In radical cases of violence they go to that person with a *whāriki* (mat) or coffin, have a *tangi* (grieving at death) to them and from there on treat them as they weren't alive and within months they would die... certainly *utu* (reciprocity) was really swift. If you abused someone in the old days then you were abusing the whakapapa, therefore the retributions were quite strong.

In the rare cases that such violence did occur, it was dealt with collectively and swiftly. Such cultural responses indicate that violence within whānau was not condoned or socially sanctioned, and that was reflected in the collective response to such actions. Our people speak of responses in regard to the well-being of not only the individual and whānau affected, but also of the need to protect future generations.

Mereana Pitman argues that dealing with such transgressions was grounded in cultural protocols and included:

> [The calling of] *Wānanga* (gathering for discussion) so all those affected by the transgression could vent their shame and their anger at the actions of the abuser(s). Resolutions were agreed upon and sacrifices were made through death, through the taking of land and resources as payment, the destruction of the mana through enforced exile from tribal home-lands, the holding of the abuser's *tangihanga* (funeral) while he still lived. And upon death the abuser's body being buried standing up or face down to always face the womb of Papatūānuku and wear the shame.

Reflecting on these examples of traditional

responses to family violence shows that it was deemed a cultural transgression that must be dealt with directly and severely in order to ensure the well-being of whānau and future generations.

ACTIVITY:

How were acts of violence within families and between partners seen and talked about historically for your people? What are some of the cultural mechanisms used to both prevent and intervene in such acts of violence?

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F. Colonization and Family Violence

Both our traditional stories and our proverbs support the position taken by Māori specialists working in the area of whānau violence that such behavior was unacceptable prior to colonization. Rangimarie Turuki Pere puts it succinctly:

> *I te wā i haramai ngā mihingare mai i Ingarangai i ērā whenua. I tīmata mai ēnei tu āhuatanga i a rātou, kāore i hanga mai i a ngai tāua, te tamariki he ariki katoa, te tamariki he rangatira katoa kāore kē e pā atu i a rātou ringaringa, kāore rātou e tūkino ana i tēnei mea te tamariki. I te wā i tae mai te Pākehā, kātahi ka tā mata ki te whakaaro pai kare kei te raruraru tātou. Ngā tamariki mokopuna me whakatikatika ki a rātou i te kōrero a ngā mihingare me patua e koutou. Kāore e tika kia mahi pērā ngā tamariki mokopuna i tīmata mai i te wā i tae mai a tauiwi i tae mai ngā Pākehā ki tēnei whenua. Ka mutu!*

This behavior came with the arrival of missionaries from England. It did not exist in our culture, as children were revered. Children were considered chiefly and so we would never hit them or expose them to abuse. However, through colonization we experienced significant changes that have caused problem for us. Our children were chastised by order of the missionaries. It was not our way, but rather, it began with the arrival of Pākehā. That's it!

Colonial belief systems impacted Māori society in other major ways, as well. The imposition of the nuclear family unit has undermined Māori structures and consequently weakened traditional educational systems that were dependent on the whānau concept. As a unit, the nuclear family isolates Māori whānau from each other and from the nurturing, knowledge, and support provided within those structures.

The Land Wars instigated by the theft of Māori land were devastating to many hapū and iwi. Acts of legislation by settler governments saw the confiscation of lands of any iwi who were considered "rebels." Much

of what land remained was created as Reserve lands and leased to settler families at minimal cost or put into individual ownership through various Native Land Acts. The idea of individual title and ownership of property, let alone women being treated as property, was completely foreign to Māori people. One intent of these acts of colonial oppression was to create instability within Māori structures as a mechanism by which to ensure the imposition of colonial rule through both violent and assimilatory means.

What is clear for Māori is that imposed colonial-centered values, beliefs, and worldviews have brought about major changes in the ways we relate to one another. Many of our beliefs in the sanctity of whānau have been undermined and replaced with practices that are both unhealthy and harmful. Living in a nuclear family structure has facilitated that process. The nuclear family as a supposedly "normal" family has both domesticated and privatized our ways of being. Living in houses that accommodate only immediate family has meant that the support and knowledge that comes with grandparent generations and wider whānau being present in a daily way is rarely experienced by our people. The idea of private relationships denies any form of collective responsibility and accountability. It is often asserted that what happens in one's home is "no one else's business." This provides an environment whereby violence and forms of abuse can be hidden and where it is difficult for others to intervene.

The nuclear family has served to undermine the collective relationships of whānau by creating an idea that the normal family is the colonial two parent and children unit that is separated culturally, economically, materially, and physically from the wider extended and tribal structures. The family, then, became defined by colonial gender beliefs whereby men were deemed the "head of the household" and "breadwinner," and women the "domestic servant" and sole child-rearer. These ways of believing what constituted a family actively undermined our collective relationships for many of our people.

One of the earliest moves to undermine whānau came with the establishment of Mission schools in 1816 and later the transfer to Native Schools in 1847. Linda Smith described Native Schools as "Trojan horses" within Māori communities. Native Schools promoted colonial ideas of family within Māori communities as the model of civilization. Missionaries preached the superiority of white men and actively denied Māori women's roles as *rangatira*, chiefly positions, within our tribal communities. The idea of God as white and male permeated all parts of colonial society both in ideas and in policy. The colonial view of women as chattels, as property of their husbands, was embedded in all colonial institutions including that of marriage; women were to succumb to the demands of their husbands and men had the right to beat their wives. The system of colonial rule was grounded in violence.

ACTIVITY:

Discuss and list ways in which colonial thinking has changed the roles of women and men within your People/nation.

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What are some of the ways in which colonial settler schooling systems have impacted your People/nation?

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The impact of colonization on our relationships is clearly seen in the current statistics related to domestic violence, family violence, and sexual violence within and amongst our people. There is no doubt that family and domestic violence has taken hold within our communities. Current data in the report "The Scale and Nature of Family Violence in New Zealand" highlights that Māori people are more likely to report all forms of domestic assault. Māori women are nearly twice as likely as non-Māori to report "intimate partner violence." It is also known that there is a high degree of violence within and upon our people that is never reported and therefore never appears in the statistics.

The Second Māori Taskforce on Whānau Violence, which was a taskforce of respected Māori people working in the area of family violence prevention and counseling, referred to whānau violence in our whānau, hapū, iwi, and urban communities as an epidemic. They used the term "epidemic" because of the "magnitude and serious nature" of such violence amongst Māori. This taskforce described whānau violence as both the violence amongst Māori whānau and also the violence that is imposed upon our whānau by the state. The impact of such violence on our people is devastating and is, in their view, a direct outcome of colonization.

It is clear that in order to deal with the impact of all forms of violent relationships within our whānau, within our Indigenous families, we must find ways to unlearn the behavior. We have to decolonize our relationships. We have to decolonize our practices towards one another. We have to stop abuse amongst

our families, our whānau, our tribes, and our people.

In order to work towards decolonizing our relationships, it has become clear that we must explore key ideologies and practices through which the process of colonization imposed foreign values, language, and social structures upon our people. This has occurred on multiple levels in multiple ways, and therefore this chapter needs to be read alongside the other chapters in this book that explore a wide range of facets of our lives that need decolonizing attention.

One Māori social service provider organization, Tū Tama Wahine O Taranaki, grounds their work within the history of the Taranaki region. Tū Tama Wahine provides a range of counseling, mental health, and social services programs to support well-being for whānau. Being located within the Taranaki region means working alongside eight Iwi and a wide range of Māori who have come to the region from other tribal areas. The incidence of family violence amongst our people is disproportionately high, as is the case across Aotearoa. The history of Taranaki is one of invasion and confiscation. The impact of historical trauma shows itself daily amongst our people and tribes in the oppressive acts of successive national and local governments.

The name _Tū Tama Wahine_ was gifted by tribal elders Matarena Marjorie Rau-Kupa and Dr. Huirangi Waikerepuru. It is a name that affirms the position of women in Taranaki. Derived from the response of Taranaki women to the invasion of our people at Parihaka, it is a name that acknowledges and recognizes an act of historical trauma. It acknowledges the forced invasion, illegal arrests, and imprisonment of

the men of Parihaka who were taken in chains on colonial ships to Dunedin in Te Waipounamu (referred to as the South Island), a great distance from their tribal homelands. The name derives from the proverb spoken by Te Whiti O Rongomai, a renowned leader of the Taranaki people and an advocate of peaceful resistance. The proverb *E tū tamawahine i te wāo te kore* was coined at the time of the invasion in acknowledgment of the role of our women to stand strong at the time of the removal of the men from the village. It may be translated as "Stand women in the time of the void," and relates to a state where women of the tribe took on all roles for the people in the absence of their male kin.

This history and tribal experience is the basis for the way in which Tū Tama Wahine was formed and now operates. It provides a foundation built on the words and actions of our ancestors. It promotes the central place of whānau. It promotes the philosophy of non-violent intervention. It affirms the place of women and children in the future of our people. These cultural beliefs and practices give those who work within the area of family violence a basis from which to act.

A report on family violence by Te Puni Kōkiri (Ministry of Māori Development) described Tū Tama Wahine's work:

> It is this historical commitment to whānau in a time of adversity, and an ethos of non-violence, which has shaped and guided Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki. In today's contemporary world, staff see themselves as continuing the legacy of non-violence (that is, of stopping violence within whānau), caring for whānau and drawing practical strength and application from ngā mahi a ngā tūpuna me ngā tikanga o mua (from the deeds of ancestors and historical cultural practices).

In seeking whānau well-being, Tū Tama Wahine provides a range of programs and services that incorporate both individual and collective healing. One program focuses on providing a space for Māori men who are perpetrators of violence to come to terms with both their actions and what underpins their acts of violence against their whānau. The program is based upon traditional values and practices with a clear decolonizing intent.

We know that many of our people do not have access to Māori language and culture. We also know that to seek to understand our traditions we must also have an awareness of the depth of the impact of colonialism. We need to be able to identify those places and spaces within our culture that have themselves become reflective of colonial thinking. When dealing with whānau relationships, and in particular gendered relationships, Māori women activists have for some time cautioned us to be aware of the insidiousness of colonial beliefs about the roles of women. In the programs offered by Tū Tama Wahine, building such an awareness is critical. So too is developing a sense of both individual and collective responsibility amongst those Māori men who act in violent ways towards their own.

G. Tū Tika o Aro Tika

Tū Tika o Aro Tika is a program for Māori men who have been directed to attend by the courts under the 1995 Domestic Violence Act. The program has a strong Kaupapa Māori approach and uses a methodology that seeks to address violence from a Māori cultural worldview. It is structured around tikanga Māori, our cultural values and practices, which assist in facilitating learning and self-examination. The program is about bringing cultural understandings alongside the diverse experiences of the Māori men involved. There is an acknowledgment that the experiences of our men are diverse and varied as a direct result of colonial oppression in Taranaki.

The principles that inform the program are grounded in Māori knowledge. These principles are as follows:

Tikanga

Tikanga refers to our cultural practices. It is a set of beliefs, values, and principles that informs and guides actions and behaviors. It is also the application and use of cultural practices, which makes explicit the historical and contemporary relevance of tikanga. For example, the first session (Te Tīmatanga: The Beginning) includes the cultural practice of *whakatau* (a process of greeting) by which elders welcome the men to

the program and *mihimihi* (introductions) are made by everyone. These cultural practices locate the program within a Māori context, and demonstrate and model the application of tikanga within the program.

The term *tikanga* is based on the word *tika* or what is correct. It is the practice of doing what is correct. Throughout the program, tikanga is presented as a valid, relevant, and correct way for participants to live and order their lives. Therefore, any deviation from doing what is right or correct, such as acts of violence, is a transgression of tikanga.

Whakapapa

Whakapapa relates to our genealogical lines. It defines, determines, and connects an individual with their whānau, hapū, and iwi. Whakapapa confirms an individual's membership in hapū and iwi and provides the means for learning about the history of their tupuna. Knowledge of whakapapa is important to engender a sense of pride and belonging through understanding the roots of one's heritage. Within the program, whakapapa is about participants knowing their identity and having pride in their identity as Māori because of their ancestral links.

Whānau

Whānau is the fundamental unit of Māori society into which a person is born and socialized. It is the means by which the rules and obligations around whānau functioning are conveyed, transmitted, and enforced. Within the program, much of the discussion focuses specifically on the importance of whānau and reinforces the centrality of whānau to Māori.

For some men, one of the causes of their violence could be attributed to a breakdown in their relationships with whānau. Participants are first shown how important the whānau is to the well-being of Māori and then they are shown ways in which they can attempt to take responsibility for their action and begin to re-establish the bonds that may have been broken as a result of their violence. Men are encouraged to look at the history of violence within their own whānau. This enables them to better understand

themselves through understanding what has occurred in their whānau.

For many of the men, their experiences of whānau have not always been positive, so key to this principle is an analysis and understanding of some of the reasons why violence occurs, how they gave expression to violence, and strategies to manage and change their behavior.

Whanaungatanga

Where whānau is the extended family relationship, *whanaungatanga* is a practice of how we relate to each other. Whanaungatanga embraces whakapapa and focuses on relationships. Whanaungatanga defines the relationships, obligations, and responsibilities between whānau members. Whanaungatanga within the program emphasizes the importance of whānau and whānau relationships. The men are asked to talk about their cultural identity—who they are; their whānau (immediate and extended); where they come from; their connections to the land; and how they are connected to others. It is about the knowledge the men have about themselves—their identity, their roles within their whānau, their knowledge of the Māori world, their tribal links, and their connectedness to all those things. Whanaungatanga is not just about the individual, but is about all those connections we each carry, and coming to understand those things. Whanaungatanga is not only about how people are related to each other, but it also encompasses how people relate to others, the way they express themselves, and the manner in which they interact. The principle of whanaungatanga is about constant building of relationships with your whānau and others, and with the land and environment to which we connect.

Taranakitanga

The term *Taranakitanga* literally encompasses all that it means to be of Taranaki descent and includes Taranaki protocols and practices, our ancestors, history, traditional stories, etc. The program draws on tribal knowledge to affirm participants' identity as Māori of Taranaki descent; it connects and links all

to whānau, hapū, and iwi of the region. It highlights the historical deeds of our ancestors and links those deeds to a contemporary context. It identifies tribal focal points such as *maunga* and *marae* to reinforce a sense of pride and belonging in being Māori and being of Taranaki descent. The weaving of the history and stories of Taranaki fosters a sense of place, pride, and respect for what it means to belong to this land and its people, and to live amongst them. Through this principle are many opportunities to contextualize stories of Taranaki—its land and its people. The stories can relate to current times.

Mana

Mana is an external expression of achievement, power, and influence. In Māori terms we understand mana in a number of ways. It is that which is bestowed upon us at birth—in this sense it comes from whakapapa. Then there is the mana that comes from being descendants of tupuna, our ancestors, who are well-known for their actions and deeds. Some whānau are known for certain traits, abilities, and skills, which can bring mana to that particular whānau.

All people have mana. Mana can be enhanced by one's actions and achievements, and it influences the way in which people and groups conduct themselves.

Personal and group relationships are mediated and guided by the high value placed upon mana. To violate the mana of an individual is to violate the mana of the whole whānau, including your own inherent mana. Restoration of mana in a context of family violence is crucial. For men to take their rightful place as fathers, as partners, as grandparents, there needs to be a restoration of their mana so that they have a strong sense of who they are and the roles, responsibilities, and obligations that go with each of these positions in the whānau.

Personal Responsibility

Men taking personal responsibility for their actions is a key principle. Throughout the program the men are encouraged and challenged to stop blaming others within their whānau for what they do or have done. The key messages are that change is possible and that change starts with them once they own their behavior and stop blaming others. It is also a form of empowerment enabling them to embrace their actions and take full responsibility for themselves. Developing an awareness of the six aspects discussed above is key to taking personal responsibility and for seeing the collective impact of violent behaviors within whānau.

ACTIVITY:

Identify initiatives within your tribal nation that draw upon traditional knowledge and original instructions as the basis for healing in the area of family violence.

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What are some of the key cultural practices and original instructions that can inform a process of decolonizing our relationships and support the prevention of family violence within your community?

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The work of Tū Tama Wahine in this program focuses on sharing with Māori men knowledge of themselves, their people, their history, and their connections. Working from this point enables a grounding for understanding collective tribal relationships and a recognition that those around them also carry with them ancestors, histories, and connections. This awareness provides a basis from which to explore the impact of colonization on those relationships and collective responsibilities and to question the basis upon which these men have come to justify perpetrating violence against other family members.

To undertake such decolonizing work requires us to be aware of who we are, where we are from, and our presence in this world and on Indigenous lands as reflections of our ancestors, and to come to understand that for Māori any form of abuse on any of our whānau is an abuse of generations past and generations to come. We must come to know that to be healthy as a people we must be healthy within our whānau—in our relationships to all within our whānau and more widely to all our relations. We can no longer accept Western colonial family structures as the models for our way of living, but must return to relationships that carry with them collective caring and obligations that affirm that we are all related; affirm that we carry the status and dignity of our ancestors and that we pass that dignity to future generations yet to be born; affirm our right to be Māori, our right to be Indigenous, our right to be who we are fully on our own lands.

That is the work that is ahead for our people if we are to intervene in the occurrence of family violence and child abuse that plagues our people, and to prevent this behavior in the future. What is clear is that the approaches that have been taken by successive colonial governments in this country have done nothing to transform this context, and the reality is that they never will as they have no interest in our people affirming our language, our culture, and our cultural identity. The work remains with us as Indigenous Peoples globally to decolonize and reassert those cultural ways of being that will bring well-being to this and future generations.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini kē

My accomplishments are not mine alone, but are those of many.

H. Glossary

Aotearoa: Land of the long white cloud: The Māori name for New Zealand

Hapū : Groupings of extended families (linked through common ancestors, sub-grouping of Iwi); Pregnant

Harakeke: Flax plant

Iwi: Nation (linked through common ancestor); Bones

Kaumātua: Elders

Kaupapa Māori: Māori philosophies, Māori approaches, and Māori ways of being

Mana: Status/power/influence

Māori: Indigenous People of Aotearoa; Pure; Normal

Marae: Communal gathering place

Matua: Father, uncles, or men of the same generation within the whānau

Maunga: Mountain

Mihimihi: Greetings

Moko: Permanent cultural form of skin carving

Mokopuna: Grandchild

Papatūānuku: Mother Earth

Pēpeha: Proverbial saying of introduction

Pono: Faith/belief

Pūrākau: Traditional story

Rarohenga: The underworld

Tamariki: Children

Tāngata Wenua: People of the Land

Tāniko: A form of weaving

Taranaki: A region located on the West Coast of Te Ika ā Māui (North Island)

Taranakitanga: Practices and protocols related to the Taranaki region

Te Ao Mārama: The world of light

Te Reo Māori: Māori language

Te tatau pounamu: The greenstone door

Te Whare Tangata: The house of the People; Womb

Tika: Correct/right

Tikanga: Protocols/cultural practices

Tupuna: Ancestor

Whaea: Mother, aunties, and other women of the same generation within the whānau

Whakatau: Cultural process of greeting/welcome

Whakapapa: Cultural genealogical relationships

Whānau: Extended family

Whanaungatanga: Relationships

Whenua: Land and Afterbirth

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