

Ngā Tāne o Te Tairāwhiti Community Discovery Project



Project Summary Report

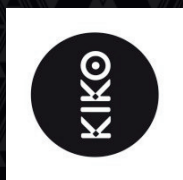


Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	5
Background	5
The Project	6
Work Done to Date	9
This Report	12
Insights	13
The Importance of Community-Led Preventative Strategies	14
Culture is Medicine	15
Exploring Alternative Avenues for Emotional Expression and Connection	16
The Need for Alcohol-Free Spaces	17
Empowering Families and Building Self-Sufficiency	18
Addressing Unmet Mental Health Needs and Addictions	19
The Transformative Power of Storytelling and Shared Narratives	20
Navigating a Fragmented Support Landscape	22
Reclaiming Our Roots, Fortifying Our Future	23
Where to From Here	24
Cultural Reclamation and Indigenous Knowledge	25
Creating Alternative Spaces for Connection	25
Holistic Mental Health & Addiction Support	26
Amplifying Local Voices & Storytelling	26
Continual Community Engagement	27
Addressing Fragmented System	28
Conclusion	29
Appendices	30

Executive Summary

This report presents insights gathered to date as part of the 'Ngā Tāne o Te Tairāwhiti' Community Discovery Project, which has brought together diverse community members to share perspectives and insights related to the prevention of domestic violence in the Tairāwhiti region.

Executive Summary

The activities and insights undertaken to date have highlighted the critical importance of community-led, preventative strategies that address the root causes of violence rather than solely reacting to incidents. Building off key themes that emerged from initial exploratory conversations, and deep diving through a series of action based engagement activities, the insights gathered to date have emphasised the healing powers of cultural reclamation, indigenous knowledge, creative outlets, and reconnecting with the natural environment as pathways to break cycles of violence. Key themes have emerged around the need to explore alternative avenues for men to build trust, connect emotionally, and express themselves in judgement-free spaces away from alcohol. Initiatives incorporating physical activities, outdoor pursuits, and hands-on projects were highlighted as promising examples.

The interconnectedness of domestic violence with mental health, addictions, and societal issues like drinking cultures was acknowledged. Participants advocated for holistic, destigmatising support systems to promote comprehensive healing and wellbeing. The transformative power of storytelling and elevating local narratives was a resounding message. Sharing personal journeys fostered connection, understanding, and inspired community growth. Celebrating local male role models who embraced healthy masculinity was seen as crucial for lasting change.

However, to truly mobilise and empower this groundswell of community-driven prevention initiatives, a significant reorientation of resources, networks and investment is critically needed. Rather than funnelling the majority of funding into reactive, crisis-response services, greater investment must be directed towards proactive, community-controlled preventative strategies rooted in local context and cultural values. Rigid top-down approaches must give way to an adaptable model that allows communities to experiment, take risks, learn and evolve based on real-time insights.

This could take the form of a distributed network facilitating both grassroots activities and pathways for sharing intelligence across the wider ecosystem. A dynamic knowledge commons to crowdsource ideas, distribute learnings and rapidly scale what works is also needed. Only by nurturing an environment of trust, autonomy and shared power can the full ingenuity within communities be unlocked to redefine masculinity, heal intergenerational trauma and interrupt cycles of violence before they begin.

By analysing these powerful insights from the diverse community voices, and mobilising the necessary resources and frameworks, this report aims to empower local communities, amplify local narratives, and foster an environment where healthy relationships and non-violence can flourish across Te Tairāwhiti.

Introduction

Background

Domestic violence is a pervasive issue that requires a comprehensive and community-driven approach to address its root causes and promote lasting change. Research has shown that social change campaigns and community development responses are effective methods for preventing family violence when they are grounded in evidence-based practices and principles.

While a single campaign may not be able to tackle all the contributing factors and reinforcing elements that perpetuate domestic violence, a targeted and cohesive approach can make a significant and positive difference. Community-led prevention strategies are a relatively new concept, and the body of evidence surrounding effective prevention strategies and social change responses is still growing.

For decades Te Tairāwhiti has had among the highest rates of reported family violence anywhere in the country. While there have been some improvements in family violence rates in recent years, there is still much work to do. The focus now is on deepening our understanding of the root causes of the complex issues facing whānau to enable proactive and preventative community-led responses. Through taking an action-based, longer term approach to this discovery and intelligence building exercise, we aim to better understand and create a comprehensive and inclusive response that resonates with the diverse needs and realities of our various communities across the region. Through cultivating a deeper analysis of the key factors and sharing them widely, the aim is to promote greater community leadership and collaborative efforts, capacity-building, and the amplification of local narratives.

The Project

Tauawhi Men's Centre and Tāiki e! Impact House are working in partnership to support greater community leadership in the space of preventing and reducing domestic violence in our community. We're bringing together diverse groups of community champions in small cohorts to explore what the issues are in our community and to generate new ideas that build greater preventative capacity in our community. We're focused on how the community can play its part in supporting lots of small and practical preventative measures, especially those that support our tāne to be well and violence free. Our goal is to facilitate a number of community-led cohorts over the next 5-10 years that can continue to explore more of the issues and work towards building a strong and connected local ecosystem of support for tāne and whanau in our community.



The Project

This Community Discovery Project seeks to understand what the enablers and barriers are to sustaining change beyond individual programmes, interventions, and services. Through this initiative, we want to discover the conditions where people live, learn, work, play and connect that help men to be violence free and safe in relationships. We ultimately seek to generate actionable findings that support these conditions to grow in communities. Guided by this design, we aim to deliver this initiative so that we:

- Understand the community conditions that support men to be violence free and safe in relationships
- Hear from people and networks beyond the current family violence support system
- Enable people with lived experience to engage on their terms, in their time and in language that works for them
- Ensure the development and naming of insights is done by those affected to be most meaningful and actionable
- Enable and work with people and organisations that have an interest in a future state that enables more men to be violence free and safe in relationships
- Support mobilisation of people around the challenge and produce outputs that engage people and provide a platform for people and organisations to actively contribute to developing key opportunities for change.

This community discovery project takes an experimental, long-term approach to building local leadership capacity to reduce domestic violence. Rather than a linear, time-bound process, it creates space for an ongoing 10-year 'conversation' across diverse parts of the Tairāwhiti community. The goal is to activate and sustain a series of interconnected, community-led preventative strategies that deal with the root systemic causes driving family harm, ultimately resulting in reduced violence prevalence.

Using design thinking principles, the project implements shorter, iterative learning loops with different cohorts of tāne. It aims to take them through cycles of problem understanding, solution ideation, and prototyping, testing, refinement, and sharing learnings back with the wider community. By trialling diverse engagement methodologies, it generates meaningful dialogue, collective analysis and intelligence sharing to identify what preventative approaches work best in the local context.

The Project

This experimental space focuses on finding innovative ways to build community-led solution-making capacity, especially in the preventative space. The idea is to activate a multitude of small preventative initiatives, constantly capturing insights that can be amplified and scaled for greater impact over the 10-year period. It is an adaptable, community-driven effort rooted in the philosophy that solutions will emerge from fostering sustained conversations and granting autonomy to local participants to collaboratively define and address their priority needs.

Our project is specifically aimed at engaging community participants and leaders who are not traditionally engaged in the space of helping to reduce domestic violence. We have, by intention, focused our attention on prevention and taking a strengths based approach rather than focusing heavily on violence, or on violence intervention strategies.

The diversity of participants who have engaged up to this point – all walks of life, ethnicities, income and professional backgrounds, has created a diverse range of perspectives and insights. Community challenges are being faced by the community, without any defined roles of ‘researcher’, ‘subject’, ‘client’, etc. Community strength and leadership is utilised by holding discussions in diverse ways e.g. while walking, painting, cutting meat or podcasting. Curating lightness into the way these discussions have been held has been important.



Work Done To Date

We began work on this project at the end of 2021 with exploratory discussions engaging a wide variety of tāne, especially those not traditionally involved in this space. Covid-19 and then Cyclone Gabrielle have been disruptive to our planned activities and timeframes. Despite disruptions, we have constantly innovated, such as moving to doing the podcasts during the lockdowns, and undertaking Walk-and-Talks to hold discussions outdoors.

Generating different outcomes requires being innovative with our approach, not just our strategies or activities. Knowing when and how to hold these conversations is critical to generating buy-in and creating the right environments for the kōrero to be had. The core principle is maintaining flexibility to iterate our process based on changing circumstances and insights from the community itself. This adaptability extends to being nimble enough to invest energy where organic momentum emerges organically, rather than strictly following a pre-defined linear plan.



Work Done to Date

So far we have pulled together a number of activities to explore what some of the key issues are for men in our community including:

- Held a whakawhanaungatanga session with 12 men from diverse backgrounds
- Hosted a workshop session with 20 men to share kōrero which resulted in a graphic notes poster being created that captured key themes
- Facilitated a Walk-and-Talk event with 25 men which included small groups participating in six sessions, with questions and themes derived from the earlier workshop session
- Held an arts-based wahine night with 12 wahine to gather their insights and whakaaro in regards to key issues relating to men in Tairāwhiti
- Initiated a podcast series with men from the tāne roopu to capture and share their stories and insights
- Supported various community-led activities which were targeted towards tāne and included data collection methods, including dads and pēpē, Meat Cutters club, golfing days, marathons and tramping, and physical fitness based activities.
- Explored various other community-led activities such as a comedy night series and neighbourhood BBQs which for one reason or another have not eventuated to date.
- Held a two day Unconference with keynote presentations from a wide variety of community champions, as well as an array of exploratory discussions driven by community participants

He aha tēnei mea te tātaitanga?

Sharing Stories

COMMUNICATION

Changing patterns & cycles of communication

vulnerability

Expressing gratitude

We need to find better ways

friends

Cultural dislocation

"Change the narrative about what it is to be a Man/Māori"

"Men provide"

MASCULINE

\$\$\$

COLONISATION

CAPITALISM
06 02 1850
CONSUMERISM



"We have lost our voice"



Disconnect from roots



Role Models



CONNECTION

Mateship



'Healing helps others'



Koha
real giving



MATAURANGA MĀORI



'Be a Man'

STRESS

"We need spaces of joy & play"



CLIMATE CHANGE

COVID



RESILIENCE

Steph Mary Barnett

This Report

This report synthesises the key findings and insights gathered from the Ngā Tāne o Te Tairāwhiti Unconference held in October 2023, which brought together many different community representatives and presenters to share their mahi connected to the Community Discovery Project. Through an in-depth analysis of the rich data obtained from this hui, this report aims to deepen our collective understanding of the complex root causes contributing to domestic violence in the Tairāwhiti region. Moreover, it seeks to identify promising, community-led preventative strategies and approaches that can foster lasting positive change.

The Unconference provided a powerful platform for diverse voices from across the community to share their unique perspectives, lived experiences, and innovative ideas. The discussions underscored the critical importance of preventative, community-driven efforts that address underlying issues rather than solely reacting to incidents of violence. Participants highlighted the healing potential of cultural reclamation, indigenous knowledge, creative expression, and reconnecting with the natural environment as pathways to breaking cycles of violence.

Furthermore, the data revealed a need for exploring unconventional avenues that allow men to build trust, connect with one another, and express their emotions in safe, judgement-free spaces. Initiatives incorporating physical activities, outdoor pursuits, and alternative settings emerged as promising examples of such innovative approaches. Importantly, the conversations shed light on the interconnectedness of domestic violence with other pressing social issues, such as mental health challenges, addictions, and the pervasive drinking culture within certain communities. Participants emphasised the necessity of holistic, destigmatising efforts that provide comprehensive support systems and promote healing across all aspects of individual and community well-being.

By analysing and building upon these rich insights from diverse community voices, this report aims to further our collective understanding of the multifaceted factors contributing to domestic violence in Te Tairāwhiti. It seeks to distil actionable recommendations and strategies that can empower local communities, amplify local narratives, and foster an environment where healthy relationships, respect, and non-violence can truly flourish.

Insights

Several key themes emerged from our Unconference wānanga regarding factors and strategies for preventing domestic violence in the community. The following key findings provide insights into these themes.

The Importance of Community-Led Preventative Strategies

The presentations highlighted the significance of community-led preventative strategies in addressing complex social issues such as family violence, mental health challenges, and cultural loss. Speakers emphasised the need for proactive measures that tackle root causes rather than reactive responses. They advocated for creating safe spaces, fostering connections, and encouraging open conversations to promote healing and positive change.

Furthermore, the presentations underscored the importance of collaboration, shared accountability, and collective efforts within communities. There is a need for increased visibility of existing initiatives and the importance of staying agile and adaptable to changing circumstances. By engaging in long-term conversations, experimenting with different approaches, and leveraging the collective wisdom of the community, these initiatives strive to create a safer, more nurturing environment for all.



Culture is Medicine

Several speakers at the hui emphasised the significance of cultural reclamation and indigenous knowledge in promoting personal growth, healing, and community well-being. Daniel Procter shared his family's journey of embracing tikanga Māori and te reo Māori as a means of transitioning from an environment of domestic violence to one of security and cultural renaissance. Paora Peipi discussed the importance of creating functional artworks that incorporate Māori culture, normalising traditional Māori knowledge, and finding ways to bring these stories and teachings into everyday life. He highlighted the significance of the Maramataka (Māori lunar calendar) and the positive impact of toi Māori (Māori art) on healing and emotional expression. Haimona Ngata spoke about the role of physical activities like cycling in connecting with nature and gaining a deeper understanding of one's place in the world. He emphasised the importance of inspiring the next generation through community initiatives that encourage Māori involvement in outdoor activities.

These presentations showcased the healing power of cultural reclamation and the integration of indigenous knowledge into various aspects of life, from parenting and education to art and physical activities. By reclaiming and embracing their cultural heritage, individuals and communities can find strength, resilience, and a sense of identity that contributes to overall well-being.

Exploring Alternative Avenues for Emotional Expression and Connection

The presentations highlighted the need to think outside the box when it comes to creating spaces for men to express their emotions and build meaningful connections. Traditional settings and activities were challenged, and unconventional approaches were proposed to encourage emotional vulnerability and foster a healthier relationship with masculinity. Incorporating physical activities like golf and cycling was suggested as a way to facilitate conversations about emotions in a more comfortable and natural setting. The idea of Chip-and-Chat to prompt conversation during a round of golf or leveraging the solitude of long-distance cycling rides was presented as a means of breaking down barriers and providing a safe space for self-reflection and emotional expression.

Creative outlets such as art and carving, or other physical activities such as the Meat Cutters Club, were also emphasised as potential avenues for emotional release and connection. These hands-on activities were seen not only as forms of self-expression but also as platforms for creating safe spaces for discussion and sharing experiences. Tāne were drawn to physical activities where they were able to build trust and confidence with others, which provided space for the opening up of kōrero about deeper issues and sharing experiences and perspectives.

The Need for Alcohol-Free Spaces

The presentations highlighted the need to address and challenge the drinking culture within our communities, particularly male dominated spaces like certain industries and sports. This recognition underscores a broader issue: the lack of inclusive, alcohol-free spaces for men to gather and engage in vulnerable conversations. Alcohol has long been intertwined with many social activities and gatherings, and nowadays plays an increasingly larger part in many cultural activities such as tangihanga. While it may provide a temporary sense of camaraderie, it often serves as a barrier to genuine emotional vulnerability and deep connections. The presentations acknowledged that creating spaces where alcohol is not a central focus could foster a more conducive environment for emotional expression and meaningful dialogue.

Mitch's proposal of accreditation systems and responsible drinking initiatives within sports clubs, is one example of how to shift the culture towards moderation and create spaces where individuals can connect without the influence of alcohol. Ultimately, the call for alcohol-free spaces is not about vilifying or eliminating alcohol altogether but rather about creating more balanced and inclusive environments. By providing accessible and welcoming spaces where alcohol is not the primary focus, these initiatives aim to foster a culture of open communication, emotional vulnerability, and genuine human connection, free from the potential barriers that excessive drinking can create.

Empowering Families and Building Self-Sufficiency

A key theme to emerge was the importance of empowering families and promoting self-sufficiency within communities. This approach recognises that strong, self-reliant families are the foundation of a resilient and thriving society. The initiatives discussed aimed to accomplish this goal through a multi-faceted approach. Firstly, there was a focus on creating safe spaces and providing practical skill-building opportunities for families and youth. Initiatives like the Meat Cutters Club not only imparted valuable skills but also fostered a sense of community and enabled knowledge-sharing among participants. Secondly, the presentations highlighted the need for supportive environments that promote self-care, particularly for men. By offering timeout spaces, celebrating positive role models, and supporting survivors of violence, these initiatives aimed to equip individuals with the tools and resources necessary to navigate life's challenges and strengthen family units.

There was an emphasis on fostering supportive networks and facilitating resource provision within communities. By encouraging collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and access to necessary resources, community initiatives aimed to empower families to become more self-sufficient and resilient. It's not about fixing men, it's about giving men and their whānau the tools that they require to lead healthy and successful lives. True empowerment and self-sufficiency cannot be achieved through top-down approaches but rather through community-led efforts that address the specific needs and strengths of each whānau and individual. By focusing on skill development, resource provision, and creating supportive environments, these initiatives aimed to build strong foundations at home, equipping families with the tools and knowledge necessary to thrive and overcome challenges together.

Addressing Unmet Mental Health Needs and Addictions

While the primary focus of the presentations was on violence prevention, there was a recognition that unmet mental health needs and addiction issues are significant contributing factors that must be addressed. The testimonies and initiatives shared, highlighted the pressing need for comprehensive support systems and destigmatisation efforts within communities. Mental health challenges and suicide prevention were brought to the forefront through the work of the organisation Hear4U. Their engagement with a large number of clients, predominantly men, underscored the prevalence of these issues and the urgent need for tailored, accessible support services. Initiatives such as The Strong Wahine Tour and the Frocks on Friday movement aimed to raise awareness, foster supportive environments, and challenge the stigma surrounding mental health struggles.

Presenters emphasised the importance of creating safe spaces where individuals could share their stories and experiences without fear of judgement or discrimination. Approaches rooted in kōtahitanga, acceptance, respect, and active listening were deemed crucial in facilitating meaningful change and in promoting healing.

While the primary goal was violence prevention, the presentations recognised the interconnectedness of various social issues and the need for a holistic approach that addresses underlying mental health needs, addictions, and the societal factors that contribute to these challenges. By fostering supportive communities, providing accessible resources, and challenging stigmas, these initiatives aimed to create a more compassionate and understanding environment for individuals struggling with mental health and addiction-related issues.

The Transformative Power of Storytelling and Shared Narratives

Throughout the presentations, a powerful underlying message emerged: the transformative potential of storytelling and shared experiences. Amidst discussions on violence prevention, mental health, and community empowerment, the act of openly sharing personal narratives was recognised as a catalyst for connection, healing, and growth. The speakers acknowledged that creating safe spaces for vulnerability and open dialogue is not always socially accepted or encouraged, particularly for men. However, initiatives like podcasts featuring personal stories, neighbourhood gatherings, and platforms for individuals to share their journeys aimed to challenge these norms. The recognition that true change cannot occur without first fostering a deep sense of understanding and empathy underscored the importance of these efforts. Testimonies like that of Buck Jacob showcased the profound impact that sharing one's experiences can have on others facing similar challenges. By courageously opening up and allowing their stories to be heard, individuals not only found solace in the knowledge that they were not alone but also inspired and empowered those around them.

Beyond fostering a sense of community and belonging, the act of storytelling and shared narratives was seen as a powerful tool for personal growth and healing.

By creating spaces where individuals could express themselves without fear of judgement, these initiatives encouraged self-reflection, emotional vulnerability, and the cultivation of a deeper understanding of one's own journey.

The Transformative Power of Storytelling and Shared Narratives

Building off of this, there was also a focus on the importance of elevating local voices, experiences, and role models from within the Tairāwhiti community itself. There was a recognition that true transformation and healing can only occur when the narratives and journeys of those closest to the challenges are given a platform and made visible. The presentations emphasised the significance of celebrating and amplifying local role models – men who had overcome adversity, embraced healthy masculinity, and were actively working towards positive change within Te Tairāwhiti. This focus on local narratives and role models was rooted in the understanding that lasting change cannot be imposed from external sources but must be driven and sustained by the very people who intimately understand the nuances and complexities of the challenges faced. By shining a light on these individuals, the initiatives aimed to challenge societal norms, inspire others, and provide tangible examples of what it means to be a positive male influence within the community.



Navigating a Fragmented Support Landscape

A consistent challenge that has emerged from the discussions is the difficulty men and whānau face in navigating the fragmented landscape of available support services and resources. This issue underscores the lack of a cohesive, centralised access point that can effectively triage the diverse needs of men and families and connect them with the most appropriate support pathways. The current system comprises a patchwork of services across different providers, each with their own specialised focus areas, eligibility criteria, and modes of delivery.

For those seeking support around parenting, relationships, mental health, addictions, employment, housing and so forth, the process of identifying and accessing the right care can be daunting and discouraging. This is further compounded by challenges like transportation barriers, scheduling conflicts with work or childcare, and stigmas around help-seeking. What was highlighted is the need for a more streamlined, holistic model that provides a single point of entry tailored to seamlessly guiding each individual or whānau to the comprehensive suite of services and resources best suited for their specific circumstances. Improved service integration, centralised case management, and consolidated community hubs could all help overcome the current siloed and fragmented approach.

The insights emphasise the importance of designing support pathways rooted in the lived realities and contexts of local tāne and whānau. Top-down service models often fall short in their ability to resonate with the nuanced needs, values and help-seeking preferences of different demographics. True sustainability and efficacy requires an intimate understanding of what motivates and empowers each community to proactively engage with support services. By prioritising the co-design of a cohesive, locally-attuned support ecosystem in collaboration with, and driven by, the community itself, there is greater potential to reduce barriers, destigmatise help-seeking behaviours, and ultimately enhance outcomes for men and whānau across Te Tairāwhiti. An integrated, holistic and humanised support landscape is crucial for maximising accessibility and fostering an environment where healthy relationships can truly thrive.

Reclaiming Our Roots, Fortifying Our Future

Throughout the discussions, a resounding message emerged: the importance of reconnecting with and revitalising the rich histories and cultural identities of our region that have nourished and guided Te Tairāwhiti communities for generations. Too often, the erosion of identity, displacement from indigenous practices, and disconnection from ancestral knowledge systems have left a void. This vacuum has been filled by corrosive narratives and cycles of hurt perpetuated across families and generations.

By building upon the wisdom embedded within our own rich histories and traditions, we can rediscover the antidote to violence and dysfunction that already exists within our collective past. It is about dynamically reinterpreting and adapting the enduring philosophies, values and ways of being that emanate from our tīpuna. Aroha and the principles of collective care and responsibility are central to our identity. Only through this active process of reclamation can we instil in current and future generations a deep sense of belonging and self-assured cultural confidence - critical insulating factors against adopting harmful behaviours. Our past holds the keys to cultivating a positive, prosperous shared future.

Where to from here

The rich insights gathered from the Ngā Tāne o Te Tairāwhiti Community Discovery Project point towards several key community-led preventative strategies that can be further explored and implemented to help reduce violence in our communities:

- Cultural reclamation and indigenous knowledge
- Creating alternative spaces for connection
- Holistic mental health and addiction support
- Amplifying local voices and storytelling
- Continual community engagement
- Addressing a fragmented system

Cultural Reclamation and Indigenous Knowledge

There is significant potential in continuing to revitalise cultural practices, language, art, and traditional knowledge as vehicles for personal and community healing. Initiatives could include:

- Expanding offerings of cultural immersion experiences, workshops on topics like Maramataka (Māori lunar calendar), and intergenerational learning spaces
- Commissioning more public art/cultural installations created by local Māori artists
- Developing programs that combine outdoor activities with indigenous pedagogy to connect people to the environment

Creating Alternative Spaces for Connection

To break down barriers and foster vulnerability, new inclusive gathering spaces should be created that are activity-based and avoid centering around alcohol, such as:

- Regularly hosting events like Chip-and-Chat golf meetups, cycling groups, outdoor excursions
- Establishing community workshops focused on hands-on skills like woodcarving, meat cutting, etc.
- Transforming existing male-dominated spaces like sports clubs through responsible drinking accreditation programs

Holistic Mental Health & Addiction Support

Greater community-led, culturally-grounded mental health resources and addiction support systems are needed, including:

- Expanding peer-led support groups and training more community mental health workers
- Launching local awareness campaigns to destigmatize mental illness and help-seeking
- Developing holistic wellbeing initiatives that combine personal growth, physical activities, counselling, and cultural connectedness

Amplifying Local Voices and Storytelling

Platforming the personal stories and testimonies of local men who have overcome challenges can inspire and unite the community, such as:

- Creating a dedicated storytelling podcast/video series highlighting diverse local voices
- Hosting regular community-sharing events or "open mic" nights
- Public artefact displays and exhibitions elevating the journeys of local male role models

Continual Community Engagement

To build on the momentum, there is a need for ongoing inclusive dialogue to crowdsource more preventative ideas from the grassroots level:

- Convening further community hui, wānanga or "World Cafe" style dialogues regularly
- Conducting street interviews, surveys and canvassing diverse neighbourhoods
- Partnering with local schools, churches, clubs to gather input from different community spheres



Addressing a Fragmented System

Addressing the fragmented nature of the current support landscape for men and whānau must be a key priority moving forward. The insights highlight that simply having a multitude of disparate services is insufficient if the pathways to accessing the right care are unclear, stigmatised or ridden with barriers. To truly foster an environment conducive to healthy relationships, a more cohesive and integrated support ecosystem is required. Some potential strategies include:

- Developing an online portal and database that enables tāne and whānau to navigate what support services are available, including many of the community organisations and activities that take place.
- Exploring the establishment of a single centralised hub, physical and/or virtual, that serves as the gateway for triaging all tāne support needs and connects into a network of “houses” and “spaces”.
- Investing in mobile outreach services that meet men where they are.
- Partnering with diverse men and whānau representatives through participatory co-design processes to reimagine how support pathways are structured and delivered.
- Launching community-led social marketing campaigns that provide judgement-free education while normalising vulnerability and help-seeking behaviours for men.
- Implementing secure data-sharing systems and protocols to facilitate coordination between different organisations and service providers that can enable a “no wrong door” policy

The key will be fostering an ecosystem of community-owned solutions rooted in local context, narratives, and cultural values. By embracing an adaptable, long-term, collaborative approach, the community can unite and mobilise around shared aspirations for more connected, violence-free whānau in Te Tairāwhiti.

Conclusion

The insights gleaned from the Ngā Tāne o Te Tairāwhiti Community Discovery Project underscore the immense potential and desire within our local communities to take the lead on innovative, prevention-focused efforts to reduce violence. However, to truly mobilise and empower this groundswell of community-driven initiatives, a significant reorientation of resources, networks and investment is required.

Rather than continuing to funnel the majority of funding into reactive, crisis-response services, greater focus and investment must be directed towards proactive, community-controlled prevention strategies. The voices from the project have shown there is no shortage of creative, locally-relevant ideas - from cultural revitalisation to alternative gathering spaces to storytelling and more. What *is* lacking are the resources and sustained commitments to bring these concepts to fruition.

Beyond just funding, an outmoded top-down approach needs to be replaced with an organising framework that allows for a more organic, iterative, and collaborative process to take root in our communities. Strict long-term plans and rigid output targets must give way to an adaptable model that provides the scaffolding for communities to experiment, take calculated risks, learn, and evolve based on real-time insights.

This could take the form of a distributed network of community activators and backbones that coordinate both grassroots input/activities and facilitate pathways for sharing intelligence across the wider ecosystem. A dynamic knowledge commons could be established to crowdsource preventative ideas, distribute learnings, and create feedback loops to rapidly scale what works.

Only by nurturing an environment of trust, autonomy, and shared power can we unlock the full ingenuity and potential within our own communities to redefine masculinity, heal deep intergenerational wounds and interrupt cycles of violence before they begin. The time is now to make the bold investment into cultivating a vibrant, community-led prevention movement resilient enough to drive lasting transformation for families across Te Tairāwhiti.

Appendices

Unconference Summaries

Summaries of the keynote presentations from the Unconference Wānanga held in October 2023.



Tim Marshall

Tim Marshall is the Kaihautu of Tauawhi Charitable Trust. Tim set the context for the unconference as well as for the work of Tauawhi in the community. Tauawhi's goal is to create a community of caring men who prioritise self-care and care for others.

In 2006, the wider Tairāwhiti community was deeply affected by three traumatic instances of family violence that resulted in the deaths of two women and three men. These events created a renewed sense of urgency around tackling family violence within the community. What emerged was Tauawhi Men's Centre. Tim highlighted the importance of prevention and creating safe spaces for men to have conversations with each other. He also provided an overview of the various initiatives that Tauawhi have undertaken over the years, such as providing timeout spaces for men, supporting survivors of violence, hosting events to celebrate positive male role models, and organising charity surf competitions.

Tim also shared his experience at this year's Startup Weekend Tairāwhiti where their team pitched an idea to support 1000 dads during the first thousand days of their child's life - 1000 Dads, 1000 Days. Through working in a diverse group, the group came up with the idea of creating activities for dads to interact with their babies, which the group has gone on to do by providing taonga puoro koha boxes to parents. He expressed gratitude for the supportive village that is helping to grow his own mokopuna and emphasised the importance of everyone being part of creating solutions.

Cain Kerehoma

Cain discussed the importance of proactive and preventative measures in addressing issues in the community. He emphasised the need for community leadership in the space reducing domestic violence, through addressing root causes and adopting a greater focus and investment on community-led preventative strategies. He spoke of generating many small actions rather than a few big ones to create meaningful change. He also spoke of the need to engage in a long (10 year) conversation with the community that enabled deeper engagement, analysis and experimentation of things that worked (and didn't) in this space.

The focus is on creating safe and positive spaces for connection, healing, and sharing. He mentioned various topics that have come forward from the engagements to date, including trauma, stress, communication, masculinity, sleep, colonisation, and storytelling. Cain shared examples of initiatives they have undertaken such as interactive discussions, Walk-and-Talks, podcasts featuring personal stories, and neighbourhood BBQs. He highlighted the challenges of connecting with men on a deeper level, particularly where it didn't involve alcohol, and expressed the need for more accessible spaces, resources and support systems that fostered such behaviour. He observed the initial awkwardness that comes with meeting new people but emphasises how the groups, particularly where it involved some kind of activity or movement, usually resulted in men opening up and engaging in deep conversations.

Cain spoke of the need to stay agile in our approaches so that changes could be made quickly based on changing circumstances and needs. For example Covid-19 meant that physical contact was limited so the team used outdoor approaches, as well as technology, as ways of continuing to find dynamic solutions. Communities were good at being adaptable - it was the systems that needed to match or at least enable that agility. He finished by highlighting the need for greater collaboration, for increased visibility of what is already out there, and for the community to take greater accountability for addressing its challenges and achieving collective goals. Cain also spoke of experimenting with different approaches and creating spaces for sharing experiences. Lastly, he stressed the importance of having strong men in the community to encourage collaboration and a supportive network.

Alex Ness

Alex spoke of his personal background and how he became involved in promoting change. He expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share emotions and stories, which is not always socially accepted. He reflected on his previous work as a counsellor and the importance of building strong relationships for effective change. He also acknowledged the need to engage with everyone and address failures in order to create lasting impact. Alex talked about his involvement in the Change is Possible campaign against family violence. He covered the phases and success of the campaign, as well as the need for continued efforts in addressing social norms that perpetuate violence. The focus now is on working with men to encourage healing journeys, promote healthy masculinity, mobilise influencers, create supportive environments, and challenge societal norms around gender roles.

Alex also provided an overview of the Changemaker Fund that supports community-led initiatives. He discussed the concept of change and how it is possible in various aspects of life. He emphasised the importance of partnership and community involvement in creating lasting change, and encouraged others to join the movement and learn more about it on their website. Overall, he highlighted the power of collective efforts to make a difference in society.

Keelan Poi

Keelan Poi is the CEO and founder of the Bush Kura Charitable Trust. His aim is to create a safe space for whānau and rangatahi, and empower them with new skills. He aims to strengthen families at home by providing opportunities for parents to bond with their children while learning practical skills. The organisation works with communities in the bush to teach self-sufficiency and enhance their abilities. Keelan hopes that through this initiative, he can make himself redundant as community members gain the skills to continue these projects independently.

One of the programs that he has developed includes setting up a Meat Cutters Club near Te Karaka. The program includes teaching meat cutting skills and providing resources such as knives and benches. Participants have expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn these skills and pass them on within their own communities. The ultimate goal is to build stronger foundations at home by empowering individuals and creating a supportive network within the community.

Mitch Purvis

Mitch opened his address by discussing his past research into identity and masculinity in Māori men and non-Māori men involved in sports. He talked about the benefits of sport, specifically rugby and boxing, for personal growth and breaking down barriers around sharing emotions. In the context of community preventative strategies, Mitch proposed an experiment called Chip and Chat using golf as a platform to challenge perceptions of masculinity and create opportunities for conversations about emotions among males. He outlined how this experiment will be conducted during a round of golf with discussion points at each hole. He mentioned previous activities similar to this idea that have been done in gym settings or community centres.

Finally, Mitch talked about drinking culture and a number of alcohol-related issues that are attached strongly to sports. He also discussed work that he was doing to address the culture of drinking within rugby clubs in Te Tairāwhiti. He proposed an accreditation system for clubs, starting with a poster on the wall (level one), providing transportation to prevent drink driving (level two), and creating a space for moderation rather than excessive drinking (level three). This was a similar accreditation system to that at Sport Otago in Dunedin. He emphasised the importance of individual club members promoting responsible drinking. He talked about his intention to trial these ideas with a rugby team and eventually expand it to the community. Mitch invited others to join their initiative and thanked everyone for attending the discussion.

Paora Peipi

Paora spoke about his journey through art and the impact that it has had on his life at various levels - family level (creating artwork for relatives), community level (creating artwork for events), iwi level (participating in renovations of cultural spaces), and national level (designing artworks for different organisations). He emphasised the importance of encouraging men to be creative and express themselves through art. He highlighted the significance of creating functional artworks that incorporate Māori culture to normalise being Māori in society, of finding ways to bring those stories and teachings into everyday life.

Paora also discussed the importance of normalising traditional Māori knowledge and specifically mentioned the Maramataka. He talked about his personal experience with carving and how it has created safe spaces for kōrero and expression. Toi Māori had a significant impact on their life, especially after experiencing loss and he spoke of the need to have creative outlets for men, especially in relation to healing and dealing with emotions.

Haimona Ngata

Haimona has been a cyclist for over 35 years, and discussed how he used cycling to deal with the trauma he experienced as a child being raised around violence. He described pouring his emotions into cycling and finding solace and solitude in it. He spoke of the lasting impacts that his childhood environment created, and that the emotional challenges far outweighed the physical challenges. He stated “mamae has been the steam to power my dream”, describing himself as a bit of a loner but also finding problem-solving best when by himself, highlighting that everyone is different and needs different approaches.

Haimona described how long distance rides create a flow state where his mind becomes clear and calm. He also emphasised the importance of connecting with nature and using physical activities like cycling to gain a deeper understanding of our place in the world. Lastly, he talked about inspiring the next generation through community initiatives like building skate parks around the region and encouraging more Māori involvement in outdoor activities.

Daniel (Raniera) Procter

Daniel spoke about his lived experience of being raised in a home that transitioned from being a place that was uncertain to being one with a lot of security, which was principally driven by a renaissance of tikanga and te reo Māori within the home. Daniel spoke of his parents' struggle with domestic violence and anger issues during their childhoods, and their strong commitment to as well as their involvement in the Māori renaissance movement.

He provided a perspective around the healing powers of cultural reclamation within the whānau. He discussed the importance of prophecy and leadership in their culture, as well as the healing power of intermarriage between two families. He spoke of his father's journey, including his relationship with his wise grandfather. The impact of colonisation on Māori identity was discussed, along with the efforts to reclaim cultural heritage and language. Their creation of a kura (school) provided a bridge for other families seeking wellness through decolonisation methods. The significance of indigenous pedagogy and elders' influence on parenting was also emphasised, and the need to create more of these intergenerational spaces of learning. Despite challenges, the family perseveres towards wellness and self-empowerment while paddling together towards a common destination.

Krissy Mack

Krissy was our only wahine presenter, and spoke of her diverse background, as well as her personal experiences with mental health challenges and suicide attempts. She spoke of the charity work that she does, which included establishing Hear4U, a community-led effort focused on suicide prevention and breaking the stigma around mental health. The charity has been running for four years and has received funding from community grants and recently from the government. She spoke of their plans to build a new headquarters to provide support and refuge for those in need. To date they have engaged with over 3000 clients, mostly tāne. Their approach is tailored, accessible, and community-led. They emphasise the importance of engagement, acceptance, respect, and listening to people's stories in order to bring about change. Krissy also highlighted the need for prevention and intervention programs as well as long-term funding for their organisation. She expressed gratitude towards supporters while advocating for national policy changes related to mental health.

Krissy also showed a video of one of their tāne champions, Buck Jacob, speaking about the challenges faced by various industries and communities, as well as the difference that Hear4U had made. He emphasised the importance of support for mental health struggles and highlighted the increasing loneliness caused by social media. Buck also mentioned the various preventative initiatives that Hear4U had run to bring awareness and support for mental health support, including The Strong Wahine Tour and Frocks on Friday movement. These initiatives brought communities together to help break the stigma surrounding men's mental health issues. Buck expressed his dream of creating a tailored service where individuals can seek help regardless of their background or ethnicity.