

Te Huringa o Te Ao – Supporting Men's Behaviour Change

Ako Insights | March 2026

What we recognised when we reflected together

Reflecting on tāne and whānau voice alongside provider and MSD kōrero helped surface shared patterns across practice, workforce, and system settings.

Behaviour change is relational, long-term, and identity-based

Across kōrero, change was recognised as emerging through sustained relationships, time, and reconnection with identity, mana, and purpose. Short-term or transactional approaches were consistently seen as misaligned with how meaningful change unfolds.

Tāne change and whānau safety are deeply interconnected

It became clearer that tāne behaviour change cannot be separated from whānau safety, accountability, and healing. Tāne, wāhine, and tamariki experiences were recognised as interconnected, requiring approaches that work with the whole whānau rather than individuals in isolation.

Trust is foundational and shaped by how the system shows up

Trust was recognised as both a condition for engagement and an outcome in itself. Relationships with kaimahi, providers, and the wider system, including MSD, strongly influenced whether tāne and whānau felt safe to engage, stay, and change.

Lived experience and cultural grounding enable engagement

Lived experience kaimahi and culturally grounded approaches were recognised as central to building relevance, safety, and credibility. These approaches were seen as particularly important for engaging tāne who have disengaged from clinical, standardised, or mandated pathways.

Workforce capability is relational and emotionally demanding

Effective practice was recognised as relying not only on skills and knowledge, but on reflection, supervision, cultural grounding, and wellbeing support. The emotional and relational load of this mahi was consistently acknowledged as requiring collective care and sustainability.

One size does not fit all. Flexibility and locality matter

Variation in readiness, context, and community realities across rohe was clearly recognised. Flexible, locally designed approaches were seen as essential to responding meaningfully to diverse experiences, particularly in small, transient, or marginalised communities.

What learning is inviting us to respond to

These recognised patterns are shaping how providers and MSD are leaning forward together in practice, workforce learning, and system support.



Strengthening trust through flexible, whānau-centred practice

Continuing to build trust by upholding and advocating for flexible, community-led processes that respond to local realities.



Strengthening workforce capability and sustainability

Workforce learning highlighted the importance of growing capability through collective learning, cultural grounding, lived-experience leadership, supervision, and wellbeing support. Sustaining this mahi requires recognising the emotional and relational demands placed on the workforce over time.



Testing trust-based ways of working

Continuous improvement was described as ongoing listening, reflection, and adaptation, guided by tāne and whānau voice. This learning is informing how providers and MSD continue to test trust-based partnerships, including how feedback, evidence, reporting, and system presence can better support learning without undermining relationships or causing harm.

What we're learning about how change happens

Across the Ako, learning focused not just on what is delivered, but on how we listen, reflect, and adapt alongside communities.



Voice before Solutions

Centring tāne and whānau voice as the starting point for learning, design, and improvement.



Trust is built through relationships

Trust grows through consistency, presence, and how the system shows up not through compliance alone.



Learning is collective

Providers and MSD learn alongside each other, sharing insights across rohe rather than working in silos.



Adaptation over standardisation

Continuous improvement relies on listening, reflecting, and adapting to local context. One size does not fit all.



Doing no harm

Learning includes recognising where systems may unintentionally cause harm, and adjusting how support is offered.



Change takes time

Sustainable behaviour change, workforce growth, and trust develop over the long term, not through quick fixes.

“We don't need you to fix us we need you to listen to us.”

Family violence provider feedback

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He Tirohanga Whakamuri, He Anga Whakamua – Tāne, Whānau & Provider Voices

Across rohe, tāne and whānau spoke about wanting to restore mana, reconnect with identity, and create better futures for their whānau, particularly their tamariki. Their kōrero reflects lived experiences of harm, trauma, and disconnection, alongside a strong desire for change when people feel safe, respected, and listened to. These voices call for long-term, relational, and culturally grounded support that honours dignity, trust, and whānau wellbeing, and they provide essential context for the themes shared below.

Themes	Insight
Identity, Mana, and Reconnection (Ko wai au)	Across all regions, tāne speak about the need to reconnect with identity, whakapapa, culture, and personal values as the foundation for change. Loss of mana, disconnection from culture, and confusion about what it means to be a “real man” are common experiences, while restoration of identity is described as essential for healing and wellbeing.
Fatherhood and Legacy as Key Motivators	Tāne consistently describe their tamariki and mokopuna as their strongest motivation for change. Being a better father, breaking intergenerational harm, and being remembered well by their children are powerful drivers that sustain engagement and behaviour change.
Safety, Trust, and Non-Judgmental Spaces	Tāne and wāhine emphasise the importance of safe spaces where people are listened to without judgement, labels, or immediate fixing. Trust is built through authentic relationships, consistency, and respect, not compliance or mandated processes.
Long Term, Relational Support Over Short Term Programmes	Voices across rohe stress that meaningful change takes time and cannot be rushed or confined to short, standardised programmes. Tāne and whānau value ongoing, relational support that allows for setbacks, growth, and sustained connection.
Lived Experience and Cultural Grounding Matter	Tāne respond strongly to kaimahi and services grounded in lived experience, culture, and kaupapa Māori or Pacific approaches. There is repeated resistance to overly clinical or transactional models, with strong support for approaches that “look and sound like us.”
Trauma, Vulnerability, and Emotional Pain Beneath Behaviour	Many tāne describe complex trauma, including childhood abuse, neglect, colonisation, isolation, and shame. While it is often difficult to bring trauma to the surface, tāne acknowledge that healing requires confronting painful experiences rather than suppressing them.
Whānau Centred Change, Not Individual Isolation	Whānau voice highlights that violence and healing do not happen in isolation. Tāne, wāhine, and tamariki are interconnected, and support needs to reflect this. Many whānau want violence to stop without being separated and want aligned outcomes across services working with the whole whānau.
One Size Does Not Fit All	Voices repeatedly stress that tāne, wāhine, and whānau are at different stages of readiness and live in diverse contexts. Flexible, tailored approaches - responsive to community, culture, and individual circumstance - are seen as essential, particularly in small, transient, or marginalised communities.
Connection, Belonging, and Community as Healing Forces	Belonging to whānau, culture, brotherhood, community, and place is described as central to wellbeing and change. Tāne speak about the power of connection with other men, while whānau emphasise collective support, collaboration, and shared responsibility rather than siloed services.