

## **TRANSITION: FROM A MAORI PERSPECTIVE**

TRANSITION IS DEFINED AS “A CHANGE FROM ONE FORM OR CONDITION OR TYPE TO ANOTHER” OR THE “PROCESS BY WHICH THIS HAPPENS”.

Using the model of the “Dynamics of Whanaungatanga” I want to go through the process by which this happens from a Maori perspective. This model shows that from the time a person is conceived they begin a continual journey of change from one condition to another until the time of death where they return to where they began. This is what Maori refer to as Te Ao Hurihuri, life is a journey of going forward, but there are also times when we need to revisit our history or our past or our *whakapapa* to allow us to progress forward. (We are not linear thinking people)

Whenever we are transitioning people there must always be a *kawa* (process) put in place that addresses the things that are important to them. For Maori this is a way of life and by addressing ‘te tapu I te tangata’ we can ensure that the transition is completed in such a way that we leave the person and their whanau with their dignity and value intact.

The Dynamics of Whanaungatanga was developed in 1997 by Malcolm Peri, Pa Tate and Cecily Puku specifically for Kaimahi (iwi workers) from Taitokerau working with whanau (families) in the area of alcohol and drug addiction. Since then the participants of that course have gone on to utilise this program within all areas of supporting *whanau* to address, restore and enhance te tapu o te tangata so they may have the mana to achieve their own goals.

### **TAPU**

*Ko tona mea nui, he tapu, he tapu  
no nga tupuna mai ano engari no te Atua  
I tau te tapu ki te whenua ki te tangata hoki  
He tapu nui, tapu mana, tapu Atua*

The foundational concept of tapu relates to being  
There are 3 elements to the concept of tapu

1. Tapu relating to being
2. Tapu relating to restrictions
3. Tapu relating to value, dignity and worth by reason of being

Tapu relating to value, dignity and worth by reason of being:-

- ❖ links with Atua
- ❖ links with tangata
- ❖ links with whenua

*A person cannot stand with dignity and worth if he stands on his own. Let him not think that his personal knowledge and education will be sufficient. He will not achieve his goals, but supported by the mana and tapu of his whanau and his iwi, he will survive.*

Tapu is inherited through *whakapapa*. This inheritance obliges one to maintain certain responsibility for tapu within their whakapapa line. We are what we have come from. If we follow our whakapapa line we go back to the story of Rangi and Papa. The story of creation from IO Matua Kore is an important one. Every aspect of creation is founded in the spiritual, and can be linked back to and stems from Rangi and Papa and therefore IO Matua Kore. Every aspect of creation therefore has dignity and sacredness and must always be treated with the respect that properly

reflects the source. This is the concept of *Tapu*. *Te Tapu I te Atua* is the source of all tapu, dignity and fullness of being.

*Tapu* is being with mana i.e, with ability to effect, tapu is the being of a person having dignity by reason of their link to a higher spiritual power, the source of all the aspects that constitute its totality. The spiritual (*wairua*), physical (*tinana*), psychological (*hinengaro*), family (*whanau*) (see Professor Durie's model "*Te Whare Tapu Wha*").

*Te tapu I te tangata* is that intrinsic value. There is no adequate english translation of the word tapu and descriptions fall short of the defining concept of tapu. Tapu is a concept that has been translated as sacred or holy. This translation came from the early missionaries who recorded their observations of the practices associated with tapu and this had led to some confusion with the underlying concept.

The word *tapu* is made up of 'ta' meaning 'your' and 'pu' meaning substance. *Tapu* is that substance, that potential of a person to become. As William Shakespeare said, 'to be or not to be that is the question'. That is basically what the literal meaning of 'tapu' is saying, that through our transition from one stage of life to another our *tapu* will be enhanced if it is protected. Therefore it becomes our responsibility to protect the tapu of our whanau and as life brings its many twists and turns we will continually be addressing and enhancing the tapu of others and unfortunately there will be many times that we will have to restore te tapu o te tangata.

This is called *tapu o* which can be likened to an overcoat, or an umbrella which is an extension covering or protecting *te tapu I te tangata*. As an example a *wharekarakia* or *urupa* is *tapu* because of the links. A person who has died is considered *tapu* from the time of death till they go back into the *whenua* because of the links to *Atua*, *tangata* and *whenua*. They are all extensions of *tapu* to protect *te tapu I te tangata*. This is fulfilled by either placing restrictions to preserve *tapu* or by following a *kawa* that has already been set in place or through a ceremony.

Tapu relating to restrictions directs the responses we make in our conduct, attitude and relationships as we address, enhance or restore the tapu of *whanau*. Restrictions can be put in place and restrictions can be lifted. *Whakawatea* is to clear, free, make way for and *whakanoa* is to remove *tapu* – to free things that have the extensions of tapu, but it does not affect intrinsic *tapu*. All restrictions are for a purpose.

The placing of a *rahui* on a specific beach or area is an example of placing a restriction. This is usually because someone has died in that area and it is because of the links to the person (*tangata*), the sea (*whenua*) and *Atua*. Sometimes that *rahui* maybe be placed on a area of beach to protect *kaimoana*.

The blessing of a home after death is cleansed through *karakia* because the person who has laid there is tapu and those who have been part of the *whanau pani* are tapu so the ceremony of *karakia* is to *whakawatea* the restrictions that have been placed on them throughout the tangi, the final ceremony happens at the *hura kohatu* usually one year later and this was also a signal to the widow that they were now free from any obligations to their deceased loved one. This ceremony is simply to address and enhance *te tapu I te tangata* so they do not continue their lives feeling that they have been diminished somehow, through the death of their loved one.

*Tapu* relating to restrictions directs the responses we make in our conduct, attitude and relationships as we address, enhance or restore the *tapu* of the *whanau*.

The *kaupapa* of *tapu* is in the totality of being. Therefore to neglect a part is to neglect the whole, to violate a part is to violate the whole. If anything deteriorates from the total wellbeing of a person, it is diminished *tapu*. An example of diminished *tapu* is alcohol addiction. “*Te inua te inu mo te Tinana e pai ana*”. It is okay to drink to quench the thirst but when one drinks to ‘exhaust the *puna*’, that’s addiction. That is *tapu* diminished because it deteriorates the wellbeing of man. With addiction the dignity and values go and then the restrictions go, resulting in violation. Restrictions are for the purpose of protecting *tapu*, so in this case the restrictions are violated, there is a loss of dignity and value, and the totality of wellbeing is affected, the wellbeing of the individual and the *whanau*.

The concept of *tapu* pervaded every aspect of Maori culture and tradition. It is the concept that underpins all Maori spirituality, beliefs, values and social life, in fact the whole act of living. Unfortunately, many Maori today do not know their *whakapapa* and therefore do not understand about *Te Tapu I te Tangata* and they unknowingly desecrate their own *tapu* and that of their *whanau*, which diminishes the *tapu* of their *hapu* and *iwi*. Through the teaching of the customs and practices that our *tupuna* left us, we will begin to restore the *tapu* of our people so that they will be able to face life with dignity and value, and *tapu* that has been diminished or trampled can be restored. The principles for addressing *tapu* are *tika*, *pono* and *aroha*.

## PRINCIPLES TO ADDRESS TAPU

Principles that address the *tapu* of people are formulated out of the three concepts:-

1. Tika
2. Pono
3. Aroha

### 1. **Tika:** ‘he mea tika’

What is right and proper, by reason of the nature of being i.e.

- ❖ Its relationship to other people
- ❖ Its relationship to *whenua* and other created things
- ❖ Its link with the spiritual realm, the source of its being, IO (God), of all being, therefore, the intrinsic worth (dignity) that commands respect, and calls for response in principle and action.

### 2. **Pono:**

Pono is integrity, faithfulness to *tika* and/or *aroha*. It is the virtue that reveals reality, that motivates and challenges us with regard to both *tika* and *aroha*.

- ❖ It challenges *tika* to action
- ❖ It challenges us to be *tika* in what we do and how we do it
- ❖ It challenges *tika* to be consistent
- ❖ It challenges the exercise of *tika* towards the source of *tapu*, i.e. *maatua*, *tupuna*, *Atua*
- ❖ It challenges *aroha* to be *tika* and not to violate *tapu*; by a misplaced and/or misguided *aroha*
- ❖ It challenges *aroha* to action
- ❖ It challenges *aroha* to add joy and feeling to actions done by *tika* only
- ❖ It challenges the exercise of *aroha* towards the source of *tapu*, IO and towards other forms of creation

### 3. Aroha

- ❖ Aroha is having a regard for oneself that makes one seek one's own wellbeing; eg; to enhance one's being and to relate to people, who does or can enhance one's wellbeing. The feeling of wellbeing, gives a sense of joy, contentment and peace of mind
- ❖ Aroha is having regard for other people that makes one seek their wellbeing and gives a sense of joy, contentment and peace of mind, which contributes to one's own wellbeing
- ❖ It is having a regard for people that makes one seek the restoring, reconciliation of a diminished wellbeing, to bring them to a place of *hohourongo*. If it is not accomplished, it gives one a sense of grief or sadness that diminishes one's own wellbeing. This is *Aroha* as compassion. If restoring is achieved, it gives contentment and peace of mind that contributes to one's own wellbeing.

### ROLES AND ROLEPLAYERS

In every whanau there are people who have different roles.

Kokiri - those who make sure everyone is heading in the right direction.

Ringawera - Looking after the people, cooking, making sure their needs are taken care of

Kaiawhina – Caregiver

Kaimahi – one who cleans, helps the cooks, always in the background

Tautoko – Supporting people in their grief, ear to listen, counsellor

Whakatara – stirs the pot, sometimes referred to as the stirrer, but these people usually think of things that others haven't and so they add to or challenge the conversation

Kaumatua – knowledge of tikanga

Tohunga – knowledge of spiritual matters

Mataamua – eldest of family

Potiki – youngest of the family

All these roles play an integral part when addressing, restoring and enhancing te tapu o te tangata, this is the dynamics of whanaungatanga in action.

Many people with an intellectual disability and who live in residential services spend a major part of their lives transitioning. This can take the form of moving from one home to another, one service to another, puberty, ageing, dying and the myriad of transitional changes that come with government or organisaiton policy change.

Service providers need to make sure that the kawa (policies) they put in place are tika (correct) according to the needs of the people we support. If they are tika the policy will address te tapu o te tangata, it will enhance te tapu o te tangata not diminish it and the people within our services will be able to go through these changes feeling valued and with their dignity intact

An example of this is in the transition period between life and death.

# DYING WITH DIGNITY

New Zealand faces a major increase in the ageing population which is already impacting organisations who support people with intellectual disabilities. The rise in the number of people moving into retirement is increasing and will double in the next 10 to 20 years. Organisations who provide this support are already facing a number of issues that they have not prepared for and certainly need to address through policy and funding.

What process or policies do organisations have in place to support people who are dying, the people who live with them and the staff who support them. It is important for service providers working with people who are dying regardless of culture to get the *kawa*/process right.

Maori culture is rich in mythology and tradition. Though much has changed over the years, Maori still preserve the essence of their beliefs and traditions continue to play a significant role in Maori life. The ritual surrounding death and the mourning process is one practice that has remained more or less intact among traditional Maori. It reflects not only the endurance of Maori tradition but also reveals Maori perceptions of 'te tapu o te tangata' and the afterlife.

Looking at the principles to address tapu, we need to decide what is right and proper for this person to ensure their tapu is protected through the transition period from life to death. At the same time we need to consider how we continue to address the tapu of the people who care for and support them. This could be their family, or it could be the people they live with and the staff who support them. For many of the people we support the people they live with and the staff who support them are their family.

When someone is diagnosed as dying 'it's just a matter of time', this usually takes place when they are in hospital. Shortly after this news it is ideal to get someone the person or whanau know to come and have *karakia*, and when possible call a meeting to set the *kawa* for 'where to from here.' This is usually the manager of the home or it could be a member of the whanau. Whoever it is needs to ensure the process includes the following:-

1. *Whanaungatanga* -Meeting with all people concerned:-
  - person concerned (if possible)
  - whanau
  - health professionals
  - staff
  - kaumatua/kuia
  - minister of religion
  - manager
2. *Wairua* – Preparation of the dying person to complete their final journey back to the creator and their whanau to come to a place of saying goodbye and letting them go. It is also asking IO for guidance and wisdom in the choices that will be made for this person throughout their dying and during their tangihanga.
3. *Whiriwhirikorero* -Time to allow people to talk about their feelings. Some may be in shock or angry, or they just may want to talk about other things.
4. Will the person remain in hospital
  - go to hospice
  - go home/if home what needs to be put in place for this to happen
  - If staying in hospital or going to hospice the following factors must be taken into consideration:
    - staff they are familiar with should be given the option to be with them either in a caring role or a supporting role

- extra funding needed to replace them in the home
5. Home
    - *Taha whanau* - Discuss with other residents and their whanau
    - ❖ Family members being able to sit with them during the night/day
    - ❖ Hospitality – kaiawhina/ringawera
    - *Taha tinana* - who will care for and support them at home
    - *Taha hinengaro* - ensure funding is available for extra staff to support them not always readily available through NASC when needed.
    - *Taha wairua* - pastoral care for person dying, whanau, residents, staff, manager
  6. *Tangihanga* – what happens at time of death. This can sometimes be a contentious issue but if it is discussed and settled before death than it allows all those who are caring for the person to do so in a spirit of *rangimarie* which will impact the way the dying person transitions from life to death. This should include:-
    - ✓ After death – *karakia* to ‘*tuku*’ the *wairua* of the person just deceased
    - ✓ Funeral directors – if needed (many preparing their own *tupaapaku* if normal death)
    - ✓ Cost of casket, funeral, notice of death, transport, funeral directors
    - ✓ Where will the *tupaapaku* lie in state – if at home what will this involve
    - ✓ = this could be included in a home agreement between residents before hand
    - ✓ If going to a marae who will go with them to represent the service, bearing in mind that some of these people have lived within the services for many years.
    - ✓ It is *tika* and *pono* for some staff to go with the *tupaapaku* and to stay with them till after the burial. Maori do not allow their *tupaapaku* to be alone once they have died as the body is still *tapu* because of the links to *Atua*, to *whanau* and to the *whenua* to which they will return.

Service providers need to look at the following issues to be better prepared to provide support that ensures people who are dying are able to do so with dignity and those who need to be part of that process are able to do so without any hindrance. This is the dynamics of *whanaungatanga* in motion, it is us being *tika* and *pono* with *aroha* to ensure that to the end of that persons life we are still addressing ‘te tapu o te tangata’.

- 1) Every person has the right to die in their own home
- 2) Every person has the right to have people they love support them through the process of dying
- 3) Every person has the right to be able to live their culture in every aspect of their lives

To allow this to happen service providers need to:

- ◆ Put policies in place
  - ◆ Have a discretionary fund to allow time for NASC funding to come through
  - ◆ a pastoral care team or a list of people they can contact which would include priests, *kaumatua/kuia*, counsellors
  - ◆ Compile a directory of funeral directors and their costs
  - ◆ Document the wishes of the service users around dying ie;
    - cared for at home/hospice
    - who would they like to have care for them
    - where would they like to lie after they have died
    - what funeral director do they want to use
    - are they in a funeral fund
    - have a home agreement between residents if they wish to be at home

- Maori service users should always have the input of their whanau into these decisions. When a Maori dies they belong to their whanau, hapu, iwi

### ***Glossary of terms***

<i>Whanau</i>	family
<i>Hapu</i>	a group of whanau make up a hapu
<i>Iwi</i>	a group of hapu make up a iwi
<i>Whanaungatanga</i>	relationship, kinship
<i>Kawa</i>	a ceremony to remove tapu, protocol
<i>Whakapapa</i>	recite in proper order, recite geneology
<i>IO Matua Kore</i>	the creator also known by many other names
<i>Rangi</i>	Sky father
<i>Papa</i>	Earth mother
<i>Whare karakia</i>	house of prayer
<i>Urupa</i>	cemetery
<i>Whenua</i>	creation – normally related to papatuanuku the earth, also referred to all things created ie; mountains, lakes, river, sea, bush
<i>Atua</i>	God
<i>Tangata</i>	humanity
<i>Whakanoa</i>	to remove tapu – to free things that have the extensions of tapu, but it does not affect intrinsic tapu
<i>Whakawatea</i>	to clear, free, make way for
<i>Rahui</i>	to put in place a temporary ritual prohibition
<i>Kaimoana</i>	seafood
<i>Karakia</i>	to recite ritual chants, church service, prayer
<i>Whanau pani</i>	immediate family of the person who has died
<i>Tangi</i>	to cry, mourn, weep, mourning, grief, sorrow
<i>Tangihanga</i>	weeping, crying, funeral, rites for the dead
<i>Kaupapa</i>	topic, policy, matter for discussion
<i>Tupaapaku</i>	corpse, deceased
<i>Tuku</i>	committal – release the spirit of a person who has just died to go back to its creator
<i>Rangimarie</i>	be peaceful
<i>Whiriwhiri</i>	discuss, come to an agreement
<i>Hura kohatu</i>	unveiling of head stone, memorial service