



E Tū Whānau

Protecting our whānau

*Using tikanga and traditional Māori
values to keep whānau safe*



Tē Mana Kāha o te Whānau



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1. Background

E Tū Whānau seeks to help rebuild and strengthen protective factors for Māori by restoring traditional whānau values and giving them a ‘new lease of life’ that makes sense in today’s world.

Violence is not traditional

We know from literature and research that violence against whānau was not traditional for Māori. Although historically warfare and violence occurred, it was not perpetrated on whānau. In fact tikanga and other traditional values provided a social system and structures that actively discouraged any wrong-doing against whānau and there were harsh sanctions for those who transgressed. Whānau health and well-being was maintained through a balance between: te taha wairua (the spiritual dimension), te taha hinengaro (emotional or mental dimension), te taha tinana (the physical dimension) and te taha whānau (the extended family dimension). In the time since first contact with Pakeha, traditional systems of whānau have been diminished. The effects of urban migration together with the fragmentation and separation of whānau have compounded this for Māori, leading to:

- distortion of roles
- undermining of traditional values
- less responsibility for actions, where now offences are against “the law” and not a transgression against whakapapa.

Our E Tū Whānau values are uniquely Māori but also universal

The specific values that underpin E Tū Whānau came from kōrero at hui all around the country about those things that characterise strong whānau – the positive actions and behaviours that are ‘seen and heard’. The different stories, ideas and thoughts were gathered together and analysed to find the common themes.

Six strong themes or values emerged from this kōrero - **aroha, whakapapa, whanaungatanga, mana/manaaki, kōrero awahi and tikanga**. Together they create the foundation or ‘rope of life’ that joins whānau together and strengthens them. We found that these values correlate closely to the qualities and characteristics that have been identified in strong families by international research, particularly around protective factors for families. However, we also know that there are cultural differences that impact on the expression of these qualities such as:

- the extended family versus the nuclear family
- collective responsibility, decision-making and action versus individual responsibility, decision making and action
- the whānau is accountable to the hapū whereas the family is only accountable to itself
- the vital inter-relationships between the physical, spiritual and psychological dimensions for Māori.

This booklet helps us to see how our E Tū Whānau values align with international evidence about protective factors for families – the ways that we as Māori strengthen and protect our mokopuna, tamariki and whānau.

2. Our E Tū Whānau values

Aroha

Aroha is about showing your affection and appreciation of other whānau members without reserve. Aroha is unconditional, based upon the understanding that all members of the whānau belong to you and you to them. There is a collective feeling of love, regard and respect for one another that is totally accepting no matter what. Strong whānau let each member know on a daily basis that they are loved and appreciated.

Kōrero awahi

Kōrero awahi is about being able to communicate clearly, positively and with compassion both verbally and non-verbally. Strong whānau spend lots of time in conversation. They talk about the small, trivial matters as well as the complex, serious issues in life. Kōrero awahi helps whānau to relate to and feel connected to each other. Kōrero awahi also raises the expectation that the whānau will put their words into action and act with integrity by doing what they say they are going to do - 'walking the talk'.

Whakapapa

Whakapapa is an unbreakable web that connects whānau to the very first human and, beyond that, to the creation of all things - the heavens above and all that lie below. It is through whakapapa that whānau gain their identity, history and knowledge about where they come from and where they belong. With whakapapa come certain responsibilities such as making sure that the environment is preserved and protected, the lands are intact, the traditions and customs are thriving. Strong whānau plan for the future, they live healthy lifestyles so that they can be great role models and build a positive attitude for their children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and future descendants to emulate.

Whanaungatanga

Whanaungatanga considers the extent to which whānau will go to support each other. It embodies the understanding that we are not alone and that collectively the whānau makes decisions and acts in ways that support the betterment of the whānau. Strong whānau invest their time and energy in activities they can do together. Above all else whanaungatanga is about relationships - enjoying one another's company while having a cuppa, a meal, a hui or for those special occasions like 21sts, weddings and tangihanga.

Mana / manaaki

Mana / manaaki is about upholding people's dignity and giving of yourself to others. Strong whānau offer support and assistance to each other whenever they can, especially in times of need. They are known for the hospitality that they give to others, however humble. What the whānau say and do demonstrates a regard and respect for the sanctity and dignity of others – it would never harm or damage their mana.

Tikanga

Tikanga is concerned with the safety and protection of the whānau. It is about the rules, rituals and customs designed to keep whānau safe from harm, both physical and spiritual. There is tikanga in the whānau home just as there is tikanga on the marae. Today however, many people have forgotten that tikanga in the home is just as important (if not more so) than that on the marae. Strong whānau today live according to their values and beliefs and have traditions or routines in place to ensure that everything is done in the proper manner.

3. How E Tū Whānau values protect whānau

Aligning our values with protective factors

E Tū Whānau values

E Tū Whānau strengthens whānau by focusing on unique Māori values – **aroha, whanaungatanga, whakapapa, mana / manaaki, kōrero awahi and tikanga**. These traditional values are part of who we are and what makes us strong. They kept our whānau safe in the past and have the power to do so again. They are protective factors for Māori.

<i>Aroha</i>	expression of love/feeling loved
<i>Whanaungatanga</i>	about being connected to whānau
<i>Whakapapa</i>	knowing who you are
<i>Mana / manaaki</i>	upholding people's dignity/giving of yourself to others
<i>Kōrero awahi</i>	open communication, being supportive
<i>Tikanga</i>	doing things the right way, according to our values

Protective factors

Research from across the world also identifies key protective factors that make people and families stronger and more resilient. Families with these factors can resist harm more easily and can deal better with any adversity.



Our values align with protective factors

The E Tū Whānau values are strongly aligned with these protective factors. They both tell us that people are more resistant to harm and better able to bounce back from adversity when they:

- feel like they belong
- are comfortable in their cultural identity
- feel like they have value as individuals
- feel they understand their place and role in the world
- feel supported by whānau and friends in bad times
- are part of a wider group that values and accepts them.

The protective factors identified by international research focus on the same strengths as the E Tū Whānau values. Like our values they are all interconnected¹ and there is considerable overlap – if one of these factors is present then many others are likely.

The way that our values, and how we express them, relates to each of these protective factors is discussed on the following pages.

¹ We have depicted them as a 'rope of life' or DNA helix 'Te Herenga o te Whānau' – whereby the different dimensions or values are all inherited from our ancestors and intertwined, working together to strengthen whānau in each generation (Appendix 1).

Family stability

Healthy, loving whānau

Family stability plays an important role in fostering healthy whānau.

Families are more likely to see positive outcomes for children when:

- There is a high level of marital/relationship satisfaction between partners
- children are close to their caregivers and
- there are regular, predictable routines.

Family stability also protects children's development in the midst of other difficulties and disadvantages. For example, where a parent suffers from depression, family stability significantly reduces any negative impacts on children's behaviour.

E Tū Whānau values that support family stability

- *Aroha*
- *Mana / manaaki*
- *Kōrero awahi*

Some of the things we do to build these values in our homes and communities:

- We understand and respect the roles each whānau member plays in the home
- We show our tamariki our love and support for one another as a couple, by the way that we treat and respect each other
- We make each other feel special
- We encourage whānau kōrero at the dinner table – asking our tamariki “what went well for you today, what didn’t go so well?”
- We keep our houses clean – each whānau member contributes to this and knows their role
- We give each other enough time to complete necessary tasks
- We abide by tikanga through karakia, mihi mihi
- We enjoy helping other whānau members
- We read to our young tamariki and mokopuna and we tell them stories about their whakapapa
- We do our best to be financially stable and independent.

Social support

Being supported by whānau and friends

Social support plays an important role in:

- the prevention of illness, and
- better physical and mental health.

Social support improves the resilience of those who have experienced stress or trauma.

In families with children with serious emotional problems, social support is a protective mechanism that has positive impacts on family wellbeing, the quality of parenting and child resilience.

E Tū Whānau values that provide social support

- *Whanaungatanga*
- *Kōrero awahi*
- *Mana / manaaki*

Some of the things we do to build these values in our homes and communities:

- We draw on the connections (whakapapa) we have to strengthen our bonds
- We think and act in a whānau / hapū context to draw on the strengths of the collective
- We operate through wairua in areas of vulnerability to ensure we uphold the mana of the whānau
- We enjoy regular get-togethers with our wider whānau to have fun and celebrate special occasions
- We enjoy doing spontaneous things together as whānau
- We strive to uplift and build the mana of others in all that we say and do
- We know when members of our whānau need support and we rally around to provide it
- We have trusted people and places where we can go for guidance and support
- We take our tamariki to the doctor when they are not well
- We pack healthy lunches for our tamariki
- We welcome those who come to our door in need
- We talk openly about issues that are affecting our whānau and then we support members to get any help that they need
- We respect each other's point of view
- We give generously of our time and effort.

Social capital

Feeling a part of the community

Social capital is associated with positive child and whānau wellbeing, and is characterised by:

- community participation
- feelings of trust
- tolerance of diversity, and
- a sense of connectedness to other community members.

The stronger the social ties that people have to others in their community, the more likely it is that the community will have a baseline of shared standards, as well as sanctions for violating them.

Even when other risk factors are present, living in a community with strong social cohesion has a protective effect and reduces the risk of violence.

E Tū Whānau values that provide social capital

- *Whanaungatanga*
- *Whakapapa*
- *Mana / manaaki*

Some of the things we do to build these values in our homes and communities:

- We hold the role as tangata whenua and we perform duties to keep whānau and the wider community safe
- We play an advisory / education role in areas of significance and cultural matters
- We belong to sports clubs and we enjoy regular get-togethers with other whānau and club members
- We participate in community events like school fundraisers
- We support our tamariki at school, sports and cultural events
- We belong to a whānau, hapū, marae or iwi trust, or some other community organisation
- We share our culture and tikanga with all – through marae, our knowledge and partnerships
- We carry out our responsibilities to our whānau, hapu, iwi and wider community, with honour and pride
- We accept others without judgement and support them in times of need.

Parents' knowledge about child development

Growing healthy children

Where parents have accurate knowledge about child development, this fosters healthy child development.

Parents with a greater knowledge of infant and child development show higher levels of parenting skills, which in turn lead to children with:

- higher cognitive skills
- fewer behaviour problems
- more adaptive and effective coping behaviours.

Where parents hold inaccurate beliefs about, or overestimate, their children's cognitive functioning, this can undermine their development.

E Tū Whānau values that help us to understand and support the development of our tamariki

- *Aroha*
- *Kōrero awahi*
- *Tikanga*

Some of the things we do to build these values in our homes and communities:

- We share in the raising of the tamariki and mokopuna
- We listen to and learn from the wisdom of our kuia and kaumatua about ways to raise happy, healthy tamariki
- We attend parent support groups and find out about child development and how to deal with stress and behavioural problems
- It is not unusual to have many nannies and aunties
- We support our own children to raise their mokopuna – we share our knowledge with them and provide a helping hand when they need it
- Our home has clear rules about behaviour and we teach our tamariki about these with love and patience
- Our home is filled with knowledge and learning
- We support our tamariki at school – we help with their homework, we talk to their teachers and we make sure they have books to read or a library card
- We seek professional help when we are not coping with our children.

Family traits and practices

Close-knit whānau who talk to each other

Family cohesion

Emotional connections between family members are crucial to the functioning of a family. Cohesive families have higher levels of family satisfaction and lower levels of stress.

Family belief systems

Families that show persistence and perseverance and maintain hope, optimism and confidence that they can overcome the odds are more resilient when facing problems.

Family coping strategies

Confronting a problem and seeking solutions (problem-focused coping) and seeking support and planning actions (active coping) works.

Focusing on dealing with the emotional distress generated by the problem (emotion-focused) and denying, avoiding, or resorting to alcohol and drugs (disengagement coping) doesn't work.

Family communication

Effective communication is critical at times of crisis or stress.

Resilient families communicate effectively through times of crisis and stress, and ensure that the messages they send affirm rather than undermine family relationships.

E Tū Whānau values that build positive family traits and practices

- *Whakapapa*
- *Tikanga*
- *Whanaungatanga*
- *Aroha*
- *Kōrero awahi*

Some of the things we do to build these values in our homes and communities:

- We celebrate whānau achievement and milestones
- We honour kuia and kaumatua
- We share in the highs and lows that life brings
- We pass on our stories and whakapapa to our tamariki and mokopuna so they know who they are and where they belong
- We participate in our whānau, hapū, iwi and community, and we involve our tamariki
- We do things daily that keep our whānau safe, happy and healthy
- We eat together often
- We have identified our whānau values and we do our best to consciously 'live' these
- We speak up when something bad is happening in our whānau – and we deal with it 'head on'
- We support whānau members who transgress to make positive change
- We forgive each other
- We seek support from whānau, friends and professionals when bad things are happening in our whānau so that we are not alone.

Cultural identity

Strong culture, strong whānau

Cultural identity is critical to wellbeing. Identifying with culture conveys a sense of belonging and security, and helps to build trust and social capital.

A strong sense of cultural identity has been found to:

- Improve well-being and resilience in young people
- Reduce rates of suicide and improve mental health outcomes
- Improve educational outcomes and
- Improve overall health outcomes.

Groups with strong cultural identities can, however, feel excluded from society if others obstruct, or are intolerant of, their cultural practices.

E Tū Whānau values that support strong cultural identity

- *Tikanga*
- *Whakapapa*
- *Whanaungatanga*

Some of the things we do to build these values in our homes and communities:

- We feel a strong connection with our whānau
- We stay connected to our whānau and together we enjoy the unique Māori culture that we share
- We laugh a lot together
- We encourage our tamariki to join waka ama, kapa haka and other cultural groups and we support their performances and talents
- We are proud of Māori strengths and success and we share this with others
- We use te reo in our household whenever we can
- We feel a strong connection to our whānau and kainga
- We seek out and pass on information about our culture and traditions to other whānau members
- Observing family rituals and customs is important to us
- We enjoy learning about our whānau history.

Community cohesion

community
cohesion

Supporting and looking out for each other

Living in communities with strong social cohesion has a protective effect and can reduce the risk of violence, even when other family risk factors are present.

Cohesive communities can:

- Refuse to tolerate violence or abuse
- Hold transgressing community members to account for their actions
- Take a stand on issues such as alcohol and drugs
- Look out (and stand up) for other community members
- Provide informal support structures within their community.

E Tū Whānau values that support community cohesion

- *Tikanga*
- *Mana / manaaki*
- *Whanaungatanga*
- *Whakapapa*

Some of the things we do to build these values in our homes and communities:

- We operate within tikanga to keep whānau well when dealing with sensitive topics that require open kōrero and hard decisions
- We stand together to provide strength and support
- Our tamariki are very clear about behaviour that is tika in our whānau and the wider community
- We utilise our marae to facilitate kōrero and debate
- There are clear roles and responsibilities within our whānau
- We are not afraid to stand up and speak out when whānau members transgress
- There are sanctions for those who transgress; we also support them to make positive change
- We give tamariki positive messages about themselves and how to feel good without drugs and alcohol
- We try our best to be good role models at home
- We grow the strength of our whānau members and help build leaders
- We feel connected with nature and the world around us and we respect this connection
- We connect regularly with whānau - we know one another and when things are going wrong or right.

High-quality early childhood education (ECE) and schools

Education builds strong tamariki

Early childcare, education and whānau support programmes can act as buffers, providing stability and stimulation to the children and strengthening the ability of whānau to meet children's developmental needs at home.

Quality ECE and schools provide protective supports for tamariki, as key places to access targeted and intensive support.

Participation in high-quality early childhood has long-term health benefits, reduces risky behaviour, depression and substance abuse.

E Tū Whānau values that support quality early education and school experiences

- *Kōrero awahi*
- *Aroha*
- *Whanaungatanga*

Some of the things we do to build these values in our homes and communities:

- Our tamariki are surrounded by love from the minute they are born – their first experiences are positive, nurturing and loving
- We choose early childhood experiences for our tamariki that best suit our whānau – maybe they are with nannies as well as a local kohanga reo or childcare centre
- We see the education centres as an extension of the home
- We invite other tamariki and their whānau to our house
- We are confident about talking to teachers and other carers about our tamariki's progress – we go along to parent teacher conferences and we ask questions when we are not sure about anything or if we have concerns
- Every day we take the time to ask our tamariki about their day – the highs and the lows
- We actively participate in activities and events at our tamariki's school or early childhood education place
- We play together and have fun.

4. Appendix 1: *Te Herenga o te Whānau*

The diagram below represents a DNA helix to demonstrate that the dimensions of E Tū Whānau are handed down from the ancestors and are then strengthened by each generation to be handed down to future generations. It has been named *Te Herenga o te Whānau* to signify the 'rope of life' or the umbilical cord that joins whānau together.

Kōrero awahi

- Communicate positively
- Act with compassion
- Be courageously honest
- Do what you say

Whakapapa

- Identity, a sense of belonging
- Living a healthy lifestyle
- Commitment & responsibilities
- Future focused
- Know the history

Mana / manaaki

- Be the best, expect the best
- Build the mana of others
- Give generously
- Hospitality, second to none



Aroha

- Affection & appreciation
- Loving
- Nurturing
- Total acceptance

Whanaungatanga

- Connected at many levels
- Enjoy being together
- Strong relationships
- Support one another
- Participate in the wider community

Tikanga

- Do what is right
- Keep people safe & protected
- Culturally & spiritually strong
- Knowledge & skill acquisition



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*E Tū
Whānau!*

The logo for E Tū Whānau! features a stylized flourish in shades of blue and green, with a white scroll-like element in the center. Below the flourish, the text "E Tū" is written in a blue serif font, and "Whānau!" is written in a larger, blue serif font.

Te Mana Kāhā o te Whānau