

# Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki: Caring For Our Mokopuna Wheel



Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki (TTW) is a Kaupapa Māori community based organisation from the region of Taranaki within Aotearoa (New Zealand). To be a Kaupapa Maori organisation means that the values that underpin our work come from a pedagogy Māori, these encourage active participation and help us to build relationships of mutual benefit with whānau (families) and across the various communities and partnerships we engage with. Empowering whānau, hapu and iwi (tribal groups) is the basis for our work. Our services and projects facilitate opportunities for whānau to gain a better understanding of development and liberation from the effects of oppression and historical trauma in the context of their lives today. Our desired outcome is empowerment of all people, resulting in informed whānau who are in control of their own future.

TTW are committed to the improvement of the physical, emotional, spiritual, economic and cultural wellbeing of all peoples and the liberation of Tangata Whenua (indigenous peoples of the land). To achieve this vision requires intentional leadership, co-ordination and structural change amongst individuals and groups. We know this will take time and as an organisation we readily take up the challenge to facilitate change in our region.

## OUR APPROACH

TTW workers are encouraged to view whānau as nations waiting to discover themselves and individuals within them as activists who are at various stages of development just waiting for an opportunity to create wealth culturally, artistically, socially, and economically.

We believe whānau want the best for its members, therefore we support whānau to 'raise the bench mark' by choosing to actively pursue purposeful living; through reclaiming their birth-right to be strong and healthy whānau. Whānau who are prepared to dispel the illusion that their situation can't be changed or improved are supported to realise their responsibility to be actively involved in that reclamation. Emphasis and focus is on building whānau capacity so that they are more able to respond to challenging situations that may arise.

### *Our Vision:*

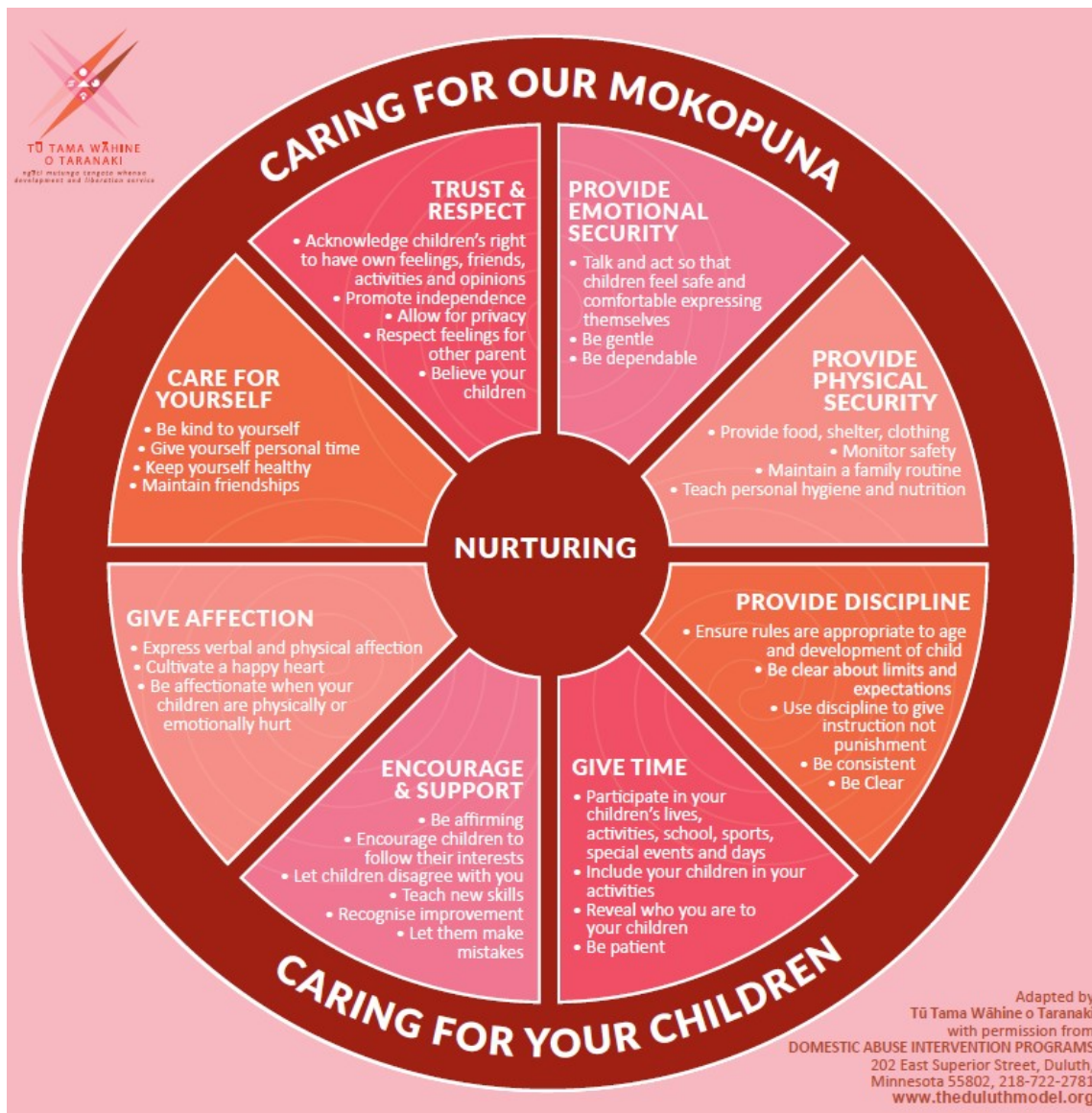
*Taranaki whānau have a secured sense of identity and connection to each other where all are able to contribute and participate in the maintenance of a peaceful, prosperous community.*

Whānau are encouraged and supported to examine and ask themselves what their current situation is, who they are, where they are/from; how have they managed to survive as a whānau? Who or what has brought them to our door, how is the whānau really coping and what is the current situation? What are the boundaries or limits within which they function and in what way do they want their whānau to move into the future? The purpose is not only to unpack and address issues, but also to identify whānau leaders, teach planning and development, nurture and strengthen the whānau ability to care for one another, in particular our elders and young children. To encourage whānau to demonstrate generosity of spirit in action, attitude and preparedness to advocate, respond, share responsibility and resources during times of stress and hardship.

Transition towards goals is seldom a linear process. Whānau are supported to understand that there is constant movement back and forth, which is **normal**. However if the whānau doesn't recognise or have an analysis of its actual situation, than goal setting will be compromised, entering into this type of planning process requires **courage**, **commitment** and **straight talk**.

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TTW has been providing Family Violence education programs for +30yrs. Women's Safety Education programs, Children's programs and Men's group Non-violence programs. The organisation has utilized the various Power and Control model wheels throughout the delivery of these programs over the years. The adaption of this wheel has not been done in isolation of the continued lived experience of delivery, interventions and education within these groups. Our programs and resources are continually adapted based on the dynamics of the groups, the cultural competency of participants and the types of lived violence experienced by adult and child victims.



### ADAPTION PROCESS:

Two adult women's focus groups were held, all participants were of Maori descent and all were mothers who had historical experiences of living with and raising children in violent relationships. Focus group one focused on the use of the original Nurturing Children wheel, with facilitated questions and discussion in relation to:

- Was the wheel relevant, relatable for them?
- Easily understood
- Easy to use
- Reflective of their cultural values
- Was it interesting (something they would remember or return to)?

Feedback was recorded and utilised to create a new draft for the 2nd focus group.

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Overall participants felt the language was understandable, clear, suggested some minor wording changes and re-ordering of lists, suggested bullet pointing, changing colours (to be more inviting/softened). Simplifying the central spoke to the overall outcome of Nurturing and felt that whilst they agreed it should be about 'caring for your children', they also spoke of the Maori worldview of 'caring for our children', that children are our collective responsibility, whether they are the parents or not. They felt the term mokopuna was more reflective of the cultural view that is inclusive of all young people (daughters, sons, nieces, nephews, cousins, grandchildren and great grandchildren etc). An edited version with suggested changes was presented at the second focus group. The wheel was then tested in both our Women's and Men's family violence group education programs and has been utilized in these programs moving forward.

One of the key adaptations to this wheel was the wording change to include the term Mokopuna, this is more culturally relevant for our population base. The term mokopuna acknowledges and encompasses the traditional Maori cultural understanding related to children. A literal translation of the word mokopuna means 'puna' pool of life/pool of knowledge, 'moko' reflection/markings. Therefore mokopuna can be translated to be our reflective pools of life and knowledge. The influence or the marking we leave in the treatment and nurturing of our collective mokopuna is a reflection on our collective cultural pool of life and knowledge.

Whilst the term mokopuna is not new, there is an increased use and revitalisation of the concepts connected to the use of this term in replace of the term children. He Mokopuna He Tupuna was a research project undertaken by Tu Tama Wahine o Taranaki (2013), it was specific to Taranaki and was carried out with the support of a range of whanau (families), who shared their time, their stories and knowledge in relation to traditional and contemporary child rearing practices of Taranaki whanau.

The phrase 'He Mokopuna He Tupuna' - is one that provides a cultural framework for understanding the positioning of children within Te Ao Māori (A Maori worldview). It is drawn from the following proverbial saying He Tupuna he mokopuna. Mā wai i whakakī i ngā whawharua o ngā mātua Tupuna? Mā ā tātou mokopuna! He mokopuna he Tupuna. This proverb draws us to the essence of the whakapapa (Maori genealogical connections) relationship between generations. It asserts that we are all mokopuna and we are all tupuna (elders/ancestors). The mokopuna will in future generations take the place of the elders. Each generation links through whakapapa to each other and we are a reflection and continuance of our ancestral lines.